My Life's Adventure
Kirwan, John, Sir (1869-1949)

A digital text sponsored by
New South Wales Centenary of Federation Committee

University of Sydney Library
Sydney

2000
My Life's Adventure

by The Hon. President of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia Author of “An Empty Land”

London

Eyre & Spottiswoode

1936
Foreword

DURING the spare moments of the last twelve months of a busy, active life, it gave me pleasure to write the comments and incidents here related. Perhaps to read them may also give some people pleasure. I hope so.

JOHN KIRWAN.

May, 1936.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOREWORD</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. ROAMING ROUND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I voyage from England, meet Arabi Pasha and reach Brisbane—An editor's beard—Bush life—Victorian country towns—A Premier's speech and a Minister's laugh—The Eureka Stockade fight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FURTHER EXPERIENCES</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE GOLDEN WEST</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early settlers’ struggles—The six families—Discovery of Coolgardie—The lure of gold—Upholding law—Kalgoorlie—Paddy Hannan tells me his story—The Golden Mile—Fabulous wealth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. PROSPECTING DAYS</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I journey to the goldfields—Coaching and dust—Remarkable shanty keeper—Kalgoorlie in 1895—Prospectors' stories—Sensational finds—Gold rushes—The Sacred Nugget mystery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. GOLD SEEKERS' ADVENTURES</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospectors' moods—Respect for law and order—A Bush mystery—Murder in a mosque—World-famous criminal — Discovery of Coolgardie's richest reef—Personal narratives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. “THE ROARING NINETIES”</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A duel averted—Comic characters—Her coffin as her wash-tub—Doctor and patient—Primitive courts of justice—Warden Finnerty—Coolgardie's first mayor—Speculators and investors—Remarkable careers — Herbert Hoover — Galsworthy—J. H. Curle—Gift to a university—A bishop's fall—I hear the story of Ned Kelly's last fight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. GOVERNMENTAL DIFFICULTIES</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. AUSTRALIA'S POLITICAL LEADERS</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An historic picture—A ship with too many captains—The angry member and the wife with the umbrella—Sir Edmund Barton's ponderous style—Alfred Deakin—Sir George Reid's humour—Three parties in Parliament—Some members—David Syme—The work done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. SEARCHING FOR A FEDERAL CAPITAL</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. WORLD WANDERINGS</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am elected to the Western Australian Parliament—Evil of centralisation—Members of Parliament—Premiers—State trading—Land settlement—First lady member.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. PASSING YEARS</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Winthrop Hackett—Founding a university—Outbreak of the Great War—A major-general's prediction—Soldiers' stories—Andrew Fisher—Trans-Australian Railway—A camel's peculiarities—War talks—Nullabor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plain—Huge caves and huge owls—Mrs. Daisy Bates amongst the blacks—An aboriginal claims me as a nephew.

XIII. THE FIRST IMPERIAL PRESS CONFERENCE 275

XIV. SECOND AND THIRD PRESS CONFERENCES 299
Two Lord Northcliffes—Interesting voyagers—Sir Wilfred Laurier—George Ham—Mr. Meighan—McKenzie King—“Imperial” or “British”—Stephen Leacock—Among Red Indians—The Australian Conference — Old acquaintances — Lord Apsley — Anthony Eden, M.P. — A. P. Herbert's humour.

XV. EMPIRE PARLIAMENTS AND WORLD PARLIAMENTS 317
An International Parliamentary Conference—Thirty countries represented—Czecho-Slovakia—Prague's past—A language strike—Reception by President Masaryk—Dr. Benes—World's most famous shoemaker.

XVI. INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE AT ROME 333
A brilliant opening — Mussolini — Goering — A touch of British humour—speeches by Japanese—Fascism—Milan—The King of Italy—Reception by the Pope.

XVII. IN LONDON FOR THE JUBILEE 358
The St. Paul's and Westminster Hall ceremonies—His Majesty King George—Speeches and impressions—Migration to Australia—An immigrant's chances—Evils of Government aid.
THE HON. SIR JOHN KIRWAN

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOHN KIRWAN,
President of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia
since August 15th, 1926.

FACING PAGE
46
My Life's Adventure
Chapter I Roaming Round

I voyage from England, meet Arabi Pasha and reach Brisbane —
An editor's beard—Bush life—Victorian country towns—A
Premier's speech and a Minister's laugh—The Eureka Stockade
fight.

I

To residents of Ireland in the eighties and nineties of the last century,
Australia was an extremely remote land. To me as a boy it was associated
with sunshine, sport and adventure. What I had heard and read about it was
confined to gold digging experiences, fights with bushrangers and deeds of
exploration. The knowledge that my elder brother and I had of it was
vague, but what ideas we had were favourable, and we hoped some day to
go and see for ourselves. Our father's landed property was heavily
mortgaged, and when, as the result of the Land League movement, tenants
refused to pay rent and the mortgagees foreclosed, the family suffered
heavily financially. Eventually my elder brother went to Australia. Letters
that came from him indicated that he was well pleased with the change. A
year or so later my father died, and my brother suggested that my
unmarried sister and myself should join him. This we arranged to do.

*       *       *       *       *

My first experience of a long sea voyage was from Tilbury to Brisbane,
where my brother was living. Of the many times I later travelled between
England and Australia that early voyage remains clearest in my memory. I
was scarcely twenty years of age, and felt deeply sensible of my
responsibilities. I had my sister, Lydia, to look after. She was a mere girl
several years younger than I. We brought with us an old and faithful family
servant, Bab, a typical Irish peasant woman, unable to read or write, and
about forty, honest and reliable in all ways. When she first came to the
family as a young girl she spoke Irish and knew but little English. She was
not as bright and quick-witted as most of the Irish peasantry: a patient soul
that we loved, kind-hearted but heavy, placid, non-observant, a slow
thinker and speaker. She had never been to a large town. In London she
was mentally numbed by the noise, bustle and unaccustomed sights. At
Tilbury, from which we sailed, as the Orient Company's liner was slowly
casting off the ropes and getting free, my young sister and I were watching
the distance widening between the wharf and the ship that was to take us to our new home. Bab, who was close to me, seemed mentally to wake up, and remarked, “Masthur Jack, I think she's moving.”

The voyage from the Thames to Queensland occupied six weeks. To-day, after some forty-seven years, mail steamers between England and Australia do not travel any faster than they did then. That the speed of the vessels has not been accelerated in that time is extraordinary. Certainly the steamers have increased considerably in size, passengers have more comforts, wireless keeps them in touch with the outside world and oil fuel has obviated the unpleasantness of coaling; but otherwise the experience of passengers on mail steamers via the Suez Canal does not differ much today from what it was half a century ago.

The ports called at are mostly unchanged, although Naples is decidedly cleaner now than it was when we called there.

To-day, as then, the scum of three continents meet at Port Said, even if there is a better observance of law and order and it is safer to go ashore.

The Suez Canal has been deepened and widened.

Colombo is decidedly less Eastern and less attractive. It has become more Europeanised; the natives are sophisticated, and the different races are less distinctive in their dresses and head-gear. In those days the harbour had more old-fashioned craft—catamarans, dhows and junks, curious, lumbering, leaky vessels that as they sailed seemed to be rotting away and liable any second to come to pieces through decrepitude. The streets were more colourful. Rickshaws were common. There were no motor-cars. Unlike the motor roads of to-day, the roads were bright red and showed up brilliantly between the deep green of the luxuriant tropical growth.

A friend brought us to see a notable man who was detained a prisoner in Ceylon, Arabi Pasha, the leader of the military insurrection in Egypt in 1882. One time he was Egyptian Secretary for War, but he did not long retain the office. The country got into financial difficulties; debts pressed heavily; the military were not paid and became discontented. Open rebellion began, and the army chose Arabi as its leader. The rebels wished to free the country from Europeans and European influences. There were some 37,000 Europeans in Egypt. They were mobbed, attacked and insulted. Arabi erected forts at Alexandria. When asked to desist, he refused, and his forts were bombarded by British warships. He released the convicts imprisoned at Alexandria, set fire to the city, abandoned it and proclaimed a “jehad,” or holy war against Christians, many of whom were massacred. France had refused to join Britain in restoring order. Some 30,000 troops from the British Isles and India fought and defeated Arabi's forces at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir. That suppressed the insurrection.
Arabi was brought to trial, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to death. Later the sentence was commuted, and, with some of his followers, he was exiled to Ceylon.

He shook hands with us. We met him in the grounds of the house in which he lived.

We were told he was always ready to meet British visitors, and was deeply grateful to the British, who had saved his life. The Khedive and other influential Egyptians made no secret that if they had had their way he would have been executed.

In Ceylon he was well treated, but was a pathetic figure. A man of humble origin, he had risen to eminence and seemed to have had a brilliant career ahead of him. He fell, and was broken and dispirited. When we saw him he had been many years in exile. Those of his Egyptian colleagues who were exiled with him were living in the neighbourhood. Had they wished to escape they would have had little difficulty in getting away. They had more sense. They lived quietly amidst the delightful surroundings of Ceylon for a couple of decades, when they were allowed to retire to Egypt.

II

My brother was a member of the literary staff of the Courier, the principal daily newspaper of Brisbane. Owing to his influence, I immediately got a position, also on the literary staff.

The editor was Kinnaird Rose, who had come a short time previously from England; a Scotchman by birth, well known in London as a journalist, and a barrister who never practised. Remarkable in many respects, his career was adventurous. A correspondent of the Edinburgh Scotsman with the Russians in the Russo-Turkish War, he was attached to the staff of General Skobeloff, whose Life he subsequently wrote. He was at the siege of Plevna, the capture of the Gravala redoubt and other engagements, and was wounded more than once. Among the stories that he told was of a narrow escape he had from assassination in Albania; also how he was imprisoned in Rome for possessing forged notes that he had received in change from a seller of antiques.

In Brisbane he was quite an important personage. He was tall, his appearance was striking, and he was inordinately fond and proud of his long, large golden beard that he stroked often and affectionately.

One night during a late sitting of the Queensland Parliament, whilst he was asleep in a room of the House, some wag with a pair of scissors cut off most of it.
The indignation of the editor was expressed in his paper. The affair created considerable sensation. The Opposition members accused Government members and the Government blamed the Opposition. The perpetrator or perpetrators were never discovered, but the editor, shorn of his glory, went about like a bird that had lost its tail.

* * * * *

When I arrived in Australia there was much that I failed at first to appreciate. I had been reared amidst people with old-fashioned views. I was not taught to regard the possession of money as important. Australians were full of bustle, rush and energy. The wide, straight streets of Melbourne did not appeal to me then. I preferred the crooked, narrow thoroughfares of Sydney, which were like those of the ancient towns of England and Ireland. Wooden dwelling-houses, erected on piles sometimes six or eight feet above sand, looked to me hideous. Nothing was antiquated; the native grass appeared to be scanty; the gum trees seemed not to have enough leaves, and their trunks were ragged with bark half fallen off. It took me some time to recognise the delicate beauty of the Australian bush, its graceful foliage and wonderful wild flowers.

It was in Queensland that I got the first glimpse of what country life is like in Australia. I was only a few months on the staff of the Brisbane Courier when I resigned, my idea being to gain experience of other places in Australia. I accepted an invitation to spend some weeks in the country. It was late spring, and the aspect of the bush bearing the clean, fresh green look of young shoots and leaves was refreshing after the city's dust and bustle. I altered my views of Australia as I drove behind horses along quiet grass-grown bush tracks, through gum-tree forests and dense scrub, alive with animal life. The traffic we met was novel to me: groups of children riding to school; bullock teams resting under the shade whilst the drivers took their midday meal; hawkers with their ponderous wagons slowly making their way to dispose of wares at rural homes; well-mounted drovers with mobs of bellowing cattle; the solitary swagman trudging along whilst parrots and jackasses merrily chattered and laughed in the trees around. I did not travel more than a couple of hundred miles from Brisbane, but all I saw made me pleased that I had come to Australia. I got an insight into what the bush was like. It was my first introduction in their wild state to kangaroos and wallabies, native bears and 'possums, iguanas and snakes, cockatoos and flying foxes. It was the beginning of my acquaintance with the birds and beasts and all the fascinating and curious sights and sounds of the wonderful Australian bush.
From Brisbane I came to Melbourne, where I was engaged on the Press, but I was not long there before I became restless. I was eager to see more and more of Australia, to learn all I could about it and get experience. I was offered and I accepted the literary control of a bi-weekly paper published at Kerang, about one hundred and eighty miles north-west by rail from Melbourne. The town is close to the Lodden river, whilst the Murray is but a dozen miles away.

Before I left Melbourne I consulted a map, which showed that near the town there was marked “Mount Kerang.” I pictured Kerang as built at the foot of a mountain. When I reached the town I found the country remarkably flat and uninteresting. I inquired for the mountain. It was explained to me that one part of the town was several feet higher than the surrounding country. That was Mount Kerang.

Kerang was then comparatively new. The streets were not paved, and when rain fell they became seas of deep liquid mud. A favourite exaggeration was of a man who was seen moving along in the centre of the street in mud above his ankles, and when a woman at a shop door looked surprised at his predicament, he called out to her, “I am all right, there's a cart and horse under me.”

* * * * *

Just then extensive works for the irrigation of the plains were in process of construction. The system adopted was large open water channels with smaller channels running into farms. There was no lack of water in the rivers and lakes in the vicinity, and the flatness of the country was suitable to flooding, but the administration was faulty. The various schemes were controlled by locally elected bodies called “trusts.” It was part of my duty to attend trust meetings. I was much struck by the incapacity and want of business knowledge of most of the members. Much of the money for construction work was wasted. It was borrowed from the Government, and members of trusts never thought of the question of repayment. The sole idea of certain members was to get money spent in the district. There were well-managed trusts, but they were the exception.

One large trust that had control of a huge amount of Government money held its meetings at a bush hotel. The hotel keeper was chairman, and the trust's office was part of the hotel. When cheques were paid to contractors and employees the recipients felt it was wise to keep friends with the chairman by spending money freely over the bar. Trust meetings were held
at night. They were often continued until a late hour, and usually degenerated into mere drunken orgies. It was no wonder the trusts became financially involved, and ultimately the Government had to take them over and administer the schemes directly.

* * * * *

One vivid memory that I have was of a grasshopper plague of exceptional virulence. It was the worst I ever experienced. It was before science and experience were so successful in lessening the disastrous consequences of such a visitation. Rumour of the approach of grasshoppers had been current, and one day, when driving some miles from the town, I met the wave of insects, millions and millions of them, travelling slowly but steadily. They were young and could hop only a few inches, but as they grew older and stronger they took to the wing and their progress was quicker. A curious whirring noise is heard during their flights. Scientists say it is due partly to their wings, but largely to a stridulation caused by rubbing a criss-cross sculpture of the hind-leg.

When the wave reached a wall or other obstruction, the insects were piled up in a struggling mass that became putrid and vile smelling. Railway cattle pits became full of them. The insects on railway lines were so thick that when they were crushed by passing trains the wheels and rails became greasy and trains were frequently stopped. The most desperate efforts failed to save even small gardens from the ravages of the pest. The face of the country was left perfectly bare.

The work of the natural enemies of grasshoppers was of little consequence. Emus, wild turkeys and ibises feed on them greedily. Flights of grasshoppers are followed by hawks, magpies, crows, wood-swallows and other birds. Happily, grasshoppers are rarely troublesome two years in succession.

A few days after the insects had denuded the country of vegetation rain fell. Then I first realised the amazing recuperative powers of the land. Over and over again after that I have seen it subsequent to a prolonged drought utterly without a vestige of vegetation; a heavy fall of rain comes, and in a week or so it presents a beautiful picture, its former barrenness hidden by a covering of green verdure.

IV

I was not anxious to remain long at Kerang. I wished to get away and learn more about Australia. I readily accepted the offer of a better position
at Casterton, where there was a bi-weekly paper of which I was given literary control. The town is picturesquely situated on the Glenelg river in the south-western part of Victoria. There were many pastoral properties in the locality that were held by families descended from pioneer settlers. It was in 1834 that the Henty brothers formed a settlement at Portland Bay. This settlement was responsible for the occupation of the inland pastoral country and is a notable event in the early history of Victoria.

My recollections of Casterton are most pleasant. I saw country life in Australia at its best and also enjoyed excellent sport. The people were charming and most hospitable.

* * * * *

During my stay in Casterton the member for the district, Mr. Shiels, became Premier of Victoria. As is customary in such cases, his policy speech was delivered in the chief centre of his constituency. A special train brought to Casterton several members of the Ministry and other prominent political supporters, as well as a crowd of pressmen. For the place it was a great—almost historic—event. Mr. Shiels was a fine orator, and certainly made a magnificent speech crowded with brilliant points. One of his Ministers, Mr. (later Sir Alexander) Peacock, was then an untried man only thirty-one years of age. He was Minister for Education and Postmaster-General in the new Ministry. In referring to this appointment, Mr. Shiels said he did not believe that men of talent should have responsibility withheld from them until they “eat their meat with dentists' teeth.”

Suddenly the huge audience was startled by a most remarkable sound. It was not unlike the concatenations of an exceptionally noisy kookaburra. It was the laugh of Peacock. I cannot describe it. Sir George Reid attempted to do it. “Peacock's laugh,” he said, “is probably the most wonderful in the world. He cannot subdue it or regulate it or stop it. It begins with reverberations as sharp and independent as the discharge of a battery of field guns; it continues with rises and falls of overwhelming and contagious jocularity. Just as you think something fearful must happen, it stops as suddenly as it began.”

I knew nothing of Mr. Peacock when I heard that laugh. I wondered if he would prove the truth or otherwise of Goldsmith's line, “The loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind.”

Subsequent to those days, he occupied with distinction many public offices and more than once filled the Premiership of Victoria with credit. Despite the loud laugh, he proved that there was nothing vacant about his mind.
V

I had heard and read so much about the far-famed gold-mining centres of Bendigo and Ballarat that I paid them a special visit. They were quiet and prosaic towns from which all the excitement and glamour of the digging days had passed. I thought Ballarat particularly delightful, and was interested in the scene of the Eureka Stockade fight, or, as someone has called it, “Australia's little insurrection,” when in 1854 the diggers revolted against the severity with which a monthly license fee was exacted from miners, whether they were successful in finding gold or not.

I was shown round by an intelligent man who had been one of the rebels, and at the time of the trouble he was in his early twenties. He was not in the stockade when it was stormed, but was in his camp about a mile away, and was awakened by the sound of firing. He explained that the garrison were taken by surprise. Two or three sentries were awake, but the rest of the men were sound asleep. A strong force of mounted troops, infantry and police were quietly brought to the stockade during the night. They had not been observed. Mounted men surrounded the stockade, and suddenly in the early morning the infantry rushed over the barriers. There were only 200 diggers, and they were poorly armed as compared with the soldiers, each of whom had a rifle and bayonet. Not more than 50 of the miners had rifles. The rest had pikes made by blacksmiths. The troops numbered 300.

“How many were killed?” I asked.

“A military captain and half a dozen soldiers. About fifteen were wounded. Thirty diggers were found dead, but several of the wounded died in hiding. It was a cruel and bloody business.”

“Probably there were faults on both sides. There always are in such cases.”

“Perhaps so,” said the old man, whose views had been softened by time, “but I cannot forgive the Governor, Sir Charles Hotham. He was chiefly to blame. It may not be right to be too hard on him. He was a naval officer and accustomed to the severe discipline of those days. Besides, the colony's finances were in a bad state. His instructions were to put them straight. The first license fee was thirty shillings a month. When there was an outcry he reduced it to £1. Still, £12 a year was too much for diggers, most of whom were getting no gold. Had he imposed a royalty on each ounce of gold that was sold or exported, the tax would have only affected successful diggers and would not have operated so harshly.

“The penalty for not having a license was high. It ranged up to £5 for a first offence. For subsequent offences the fines were much higher, and the punishment might be extended to six months' imprisonment.
“There was trouble on other goldfields in the colony. Protests against the license fee developed into riots at Beechworth and Castlemaine.

“A saloon keeper named Bentley, who came from California, was responsible for further incensing public opinion at Ballarat against the governing authorities. He evidently brought with him the disregard for human life and indifference to law and order that characterised the early days of the Californian diggings. His saloon was closed one night when a man named Scobie at a late hour knocked at the door in order to have the place reopened so that he could get a drink. He kept knocking and would not go away. Bentley was annoyed and rushed out at Scobie, who was under the influence of drink. Bentley struck Scobie with a shovel, cleaving his skull open. It was a fatal blow. Bentley dragged the body some distance from the hotel and went back to bed. He was arrested. In the opinion of the diggers his guilt was clearly proved, but he was acquitted. They said that the acquittal was secured through the influence of a magistrate who was supposed to be a friend of Bentley's and a part-owner of the hotel. What inflamed public feeling still more was that Scobie was extremely popular and that it was said by diggers who had come from California that Bentley had done to death several men there.

“That gross miscarriage of justice,” added my informant, “intensely aroused the anger of the public against the authorities. At a meeting that was held it was decided to lynch Bentley. The infuriated crowd went to get him. He escaped on a fast horse, but they wrecked and set fire to his hotel. That was the beginning of the subsequent defiance of the law. The spirit of lawlessness became rampant.

“There were some 20,000 men at Ballarat. They had no voice in the Government and they felt the grievances sorely. Three of them who were tried for participation in the destruction of Bentley's hotel were sentenced to several months' imprisonment. Two of those who were thus punished were known to have been miles away when it was burned, and the third, though present, took no part in the riot. A deputation was sent to Melbourne to secure their release. The Governor refused the request. Additional troops arrived in Ballarat. As they marched through the town with bayonets fixed, the miners, without the authority of their leaders, made an attack on them. Stones were thrown, their ranks were broken, and a bugler boy was struck on the head by a piece of rock and killed. The death of this boy and the wounds some of the soldiers got caused them to feel very bitter. This bitterness was reciprocated by the miners, but they felt most bitter towards the police, some of whom were ex-convicts who had risen to be warders in Tasmania.

“At a mass meeting licenses were publicly burned. It was resolved to
renounce allegiance to the Government, to form a defence organisation, to fight for a republic and to adopt a light blue flag adorned with the stars of the Southern Cross.

“Nearly 1,000 men swore to stand by each other for their rights and liberties.”

Peter Lalor was elected leader. He was an Irishman, the son of a one-time member for Queen's County in the House of Commons, who was known as “Honest Pat Lalor,” the friend and supporter of Daniel O'Connell and a younger brother of Finton Lalor, a prominent rebel of the 1848 Young Ireland movement. Peter Lalor, who evidently had hatred of injustice in his blood, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin; he was a civil engineer by profession and but twenty-seven years of age.

My companion, continuing his story, said: “After that meeting we felt that war had been declared. Drilling was actively carried on. Weapons were collected. About an acre of land on the summit of Eureka Hill was enclosed. This formed the stockade which was our headquarters. It was three days later that the troops made their attack. The vast majority of the miners who took the oath were asleep in their camps, which were spread all over the country, some of them miles away. When they heard the firing they came rushing up and found the stockade in the possession of the soldiers. Unarmed as the new arrivals were, they could do nothing.

“Lalor was conspicuous when the stockade was stormed. He was cheering on his men when a musket ball shattered his right shoulder.

“There was fierce hand-to-hand fighting. The diggers had long-handled pikes sharpened to a keen edge, but they were no match for bayonets and revolvers.

“Lalor was carried away and concealed in an old mine working. From there he was taken to a friend's camp, where his arm was amputated by a friendly doctor. Then he was brought to Geelong, where he remained whilst police and soldiers searched for him. He was never captured, though a reward was offered for him.

“The diggers were beaten in the field,” said my friend, “but they won in another sense, for Miners' Rights with a currency of one year were reduced to £1. They did not really want to establish a republic. That was wanted only by the foreign element, which was strong on the field. The Britishers who participated or sympathised with the outbreak merely did so as the result of their indignation at what they felt to be grave wrongs done by those in authority.”

Shortly after the capture of the stockade the ring-leaders who were secured were tried by juries and acquitted.

Lalor was but at the beginning of his public career. His empty sleeve was
a constant reminder to those who saw him of the part he had taken at the Eureka Stockade. The year after the outbreak he was elected to the Victorian Parliament. He served in several ministries. Ultimately in 1880 he was elected Speaker. Curiously enough, his predecessor in the office was Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, an ex-Irish rebel. As Speaker, Lalor showed himself possessed of sound judgment and firmness combined with a spirit of fairness to all parties. When he resigned, through failing health, the Parliament of Victoria, in recognition of his public services, voted him £4,000. He died in 1889.

* * * * *

Many years after my visit to the site of the Eureka Stockade I received a formal official call in Kalgoorlie from a smart Australian soldier who had been appointed military area officer of the district. He was bright-eyed, cheerful, mentally and physically alert, had the fighting spirit highly developed, was keen on his profession and had had military experience in the French army, where he served in the Foreign Legion. We became friends. I knew his name was Lalor, but it was some time before I heard that he was the grandson of the leader of the miners. Then we talked together often about his father and the Ballarat outbreak.

When the Great War came Lalor proved that despite his diminutive size he was full of pluck. Contrary to orders, he insisted on wearing a sword at the Gallipoli landing. Soon after reaching the shore on the first day he was shot dead whilst gallantly leading his men.

The fighting spirit of the family was evidenced by another grandson of the Eureka leader, Dr. Peter Lalor, who, from the Kew Hospital, Melbourne, after the war-time conscription referendum in Australia, wrote:

“It was with mingled amusement and indignation that I noticed in a morning newspaper a statement from the Trades Hall associating my grandfather with the ‘No’ side in the recent Referendum, inferentially, at any rate. On behalf of my family and my brother, who was killed in Gallipoli in April, 1915, I wish to repudiate the infamy of this suggestion. My grandfather, the late Mr. Peter Lalor, proved by his life that he would never have countenanced the cowardice of the betrayal of our soldiers, or have consented to the brand of shameful desertion placed on the fair fame of the Australia he loved and fought for.

“There is no doubt that many people voted ‘No,’ conscientiously believing conscription to be tyranny, not visualising the greater tyranny against which they were refusing to use an effective weapon; but there also is no doubt that the worst elements of cowardice, pacifism and disloyalty also voted with the ‘Nees,’ and it is an insult to even suggest that my grandfather would have voted with such as these.”
Chapter II Further Experiences


I

MY stay at Casterton was useful to me and pleasant. I wanted to learn further about Australia. I resigned and went to Melbourne, where there had been a remarkable land boom. Fortunes were made in a few months, but the fortunes were in paper. Blocks of land rose rapidly in price. People lost their heads, and thousands were seized with a mad frenzy for speculation. The boom had burst just before my arrival in Melbourne. It was followed by the historic financial crisis of 1893. The crisis was felt all over Australia. It was by no means a sudden crash. The bank failures were spread over a period of sixteen weeks. Melbourne suffered most. I was only a few weeks there when I went to Sydney. It was a common sight in Melbourne and Sydney to see the banks mobbed by struggling, excited crowds desirous of withdrawing their deposits. Men and women were in a state of intense fear of losing what money they had. Those with but a little money were more panic-stricken than persons who had fortunes to lose.

Great confidence was felt in the Government Savings Banks. In Sydney, as the money withdrawn from one of the private banks was deposited in the Government institution, it was promptly despatched by a back way and returned to the bank from which it was taken. This particular bank was one of those that remained open during the crisis. Banks having a paid-up capital and reserves of £5,000,000 and deposits of £53,000,000 closed their doors. Wages and rents fell precipitately, there were innumerable bankruptcies, and there was much unemployment. Many families were reduced from affluence to poverty. Huge mansions built in the boom days became untenanted or were let as lodging-houses with several families in each building. The crisis gave a rude shock to a young and hopeful community. My money was fortunately in the Union Bank, one of the banks that weathered the storm. Otherwise my financial position might have been very awkward. As it was, the trouble did not affect me personally.
In Sydney I attended a lecture on federation delivered by the then Grand Old Man of Australia, Sir Henry Parkes. I had heard much about him. I read that he was the son of humble parents in Coventry, Warwickshire, that he was put to work when he was eight, that he managed to educate himself, that he became a supporter of the Chartist movement, and that in 1839, when he was twenty-four years old, he had the courage and enterprise to migrate with his wife to New South Wales, where he got work as an agricultural labourer. Later, he followed numerous occupations, and ultimately became an ivory turner. Fifteen years after his arrival he was elected to Parliament. Finally, he was Premier of five different New South Wales ministries. All this caused me to wish to see him and hear him speak.

The lecture was advertised to be given in a hall in one of the suburbs. I had difficulty in finding the hall. When I reached it I found that it was comparatively small and ill-lighted. The attendance was sparse.

Sir Henry was not in as much public favour as he had been. He was tireless in furtherance of the federal union of the six Australian colonies and was ever ready to advocate it by voice and pen. It was the daydream of his later years. He was seventy-eight years of age.

When he began to speak he created a distinctly bad impression. It was disappointing to hear him misplace his aspirates in a marked way. As he proceeded the listener got accustomed to this mannerism and forgot it. He had a good choice of words. It was not, however, the accent or the language that were thought of as he went on, but the excellence of his matter. He dealt with the need for Australian unity, federations past and present, the differences in outlook between the various Australian colonies and how these differences might be reconciled by an all-round spirit of compromise. As he elaborated his ideas, his breadth of view and broad statesmanship as well as his great fund of knowledge were discernible. This, combined with his striking appearance, his masses of white hair and beard and his leonine head, could not fail to command the respect and admiration of any audience. I felt he was wise, far-visioned and indeed a truly great man.

Some three years later he died. It was a pity he did not live a few years longer to see his dream of Australian Federation realised. He has been rightly called “The Father of the Australian Commonwealth.”

Another public meeting that I attended was held in the largest hall in Sydney and had reference to the unemployment difficulty. Many distinguished citizens of Sydney were on the platform, the various
institutions and sections of the people were represented, and the vast building was packed to overflowing. Influential men delivered rather ponderous addresses. The meeting was non-party in character. Before its close the chairman intimated that the Trades and Labour Council had by invitation sent a representative whom he called on to speak. At that time the Labour Party counted for little in politics. The representative who came forward in response to the chairman's call looked a mere boy. He was dressed in ill-fitting clothes, and the audience at first did not know whether to laugh or feel indignant at the youngster's impertinence in obtruding himself into the company of speakers on the platform. He had not completed more than a few sentences before they changed their minds. His voice was clear, his language perfect, the gestures those of a practised elocutionist and the matter of the speech capital. He spoke for only ten minutes, but in that ten minutes he had aroused the audience to the wildest pitch of excitement. The tenor of his remarks was that the meeting had been discussing proposals that would be merely temporary in their results, that the cause was left severely alone, that prevention was better than cure, and that it was for Parliament to take steps to prevent unemployment by effecting certain radical reforms that he outlined. Once the chairman tried to stop the young orator, but he had the meeting overwhelmingly with him, and in response to the demands of those present went on and finished his speech. When he sat down the audience rose and again and again thundered their approval. The young man, then but twenty-two years of age, was W. H. Holman, who more than twenty years later was known throughout Australia and the Empire as Premier of New South Wales.

II

When I was at Sydney the Royal Tar was in the harbour awaiting to take a party consisting of numerous families from Australia to found in the South American republic of Paraguay a socialistic colony to be called “New Australia.” It was an Utopian experiment. The leader of the movement, Mr. William Lane, was an idealist, and as editor of the Queensland Worker he had preached the doctrines of socialism. He evidently grew tired of theory and decided to put his principles to the test of practice. The people who joined realised all their assets and put their money into a common fund. The contribution of each was fixed at £60, though some gave more. The highest amount given was £1,500, and it was estimated at the time that there was an average of £100 a man. Most of the men who left were bushmen. Many of them had taken part in the disastrous shearers' strike in Queensland in 1890-1, which had left them sore and
bitter.
It was pointed out that it was absurd to leave the free conditions obtaining in Australia for a country crushed by the burden of a big debt and heavy taxation; where the danger of civil war or conflict with neighbouring countries was ever present. But Lane had received a concession of some hundreds of thousands of acres from the Paraguayan Government, and he and those with him were deaf to all warnings.

The scheme, like so many similar projects, did not make sufficient allowance for the weaknesses of human nature. Quarrels and misunderstandings are the inevitable outcome of such enterprises.

I met and became friendly with a man who was sailing with Lane's party. He, too, was an idealist. I could not help liking him. I talked to him about such natural laws as the survival of the fittest and the struggle for existence. I asked him if his leader could change human nature. My friend would not listen. He and I agreed to differ. He was enthusiastic about the venture's future prospects.

"Every detail has been carefully examined and there is no chance of failure."

He went on to say: "Three experienced men were sent to Paraguay. They carefully selected land which is good for agriculture and grazing."

The society, of which Lane was the head, was based on common ownership of property, also common control of the means of production, exchange and distribution, as well as equality of the sexes and the maintenance of children by the community under the guardianship of the parents. It was a reversion to the old Australian tribal system. Private property is unknown amongst the Australian aborigines. Individuals possess nothing: everything that each member of the tribe uses belongs not to him but to the tribe.

I tried to dissuade my friend from going to Paraguay, but nothing could turn him from his purpose. He assured me there was no need for concern.

The Royal Tar was a sailing ship of some 600 tons. It was purchased for about £2,000. Lane had received a total of £30,000 as contributions towards the scheme, which could not therefore fail through lack of funds. That was what my friend told me.

"We will go away," said he, "where liberty, fraternity and equality will prevail."

Like Lane, he thought that socialism and patriotism were incompatible and that to the poor toiler one country was no more than another.

About the middle of 1893, after various delays, the Royal Tar sailed with over 200 passengers and a crew of 32, all of whom were members of the association. Several shipments of emigrants followed.
Lane sailed with the first contingent. Trouble arose even on shipboard. There was opposition to an edict of his that no women were to remain on deck after nine o'clock at night. This was regarded as a gross infringement on personal freedom and contrary to the idea of liberty which they expected to enjoy.

As a student, a great reader, a deep thinker and industrious writer, Lane was much of a recluse. His head was in the clouds and he was somewhat autocratic. There were mutterings, amongst men and women whose allegiance to him was weakening, that he was the type of socialist leader whose notion was, “Let us all be equal and I'll be your king.”

The country that had been granted to them proved delightful. It was everything that it was represented to be and equalled the settlers' brightest expectations. It was fertile, well-watered and well-wooded, and no fault could be found with any of the conditions. Still, New Australia proved a miserable failure because of jealousies, suspicions and bickerings. There were disputes over who should ride round and herd the cattle and who should do the hard, disagreeable and dirty work of the settlement. One of the disillusioned idealists said that whilst it was Nature's paradise it had been made by man into “a hell upon earth.” Lane had to call in the Paraguayan police to restore order.

Groups of settlers seceded from the main body and formed distinct colonies. A spirit of selfishness prevailed, and what a colonist described as “an atmosphere of gross materialism.” Most of the settlers managed to get back to Australia, sadder and poorer, but wiser than when they left.

Finally, amongst the few remaining settlers in Paraguay, the position became utterly hopeless. The Government withdrew the original grant and divided some blocks of the land among the survivors, a few of whom then began to restore their shattered fortune by means of their individual efforts, working for wages when occasion offered.

Lane was in many respects remarkable. He was born in England, went to America when a boy, became a compositor, was promoted to the literary staff of a paper on which he was employed, showed that he was richly endowed with all the qualities of a writer, wandered as a journalist over the United States and Canada, and came to Australia, where he became interested in the labour movement.

After the New Australia failure he was a broken man. His ideals had been shattered. He wrote leading articles, abandoned the greater part of his socialistic ideas, and during the war was fervently imperialistic. He was editor of the New Zealand Herald until his death in 1917 at the age of fifty-six.

To the last his capacity for work and his courage were amazing. Many
who had paid money into his Paraguay scheme demanded it back. He gallantly tried to let them have it, and was honestly returning what he could when the end came.

I never learned what became of my enthusiastic Sydney friend who went with Lane's followers to Paraguay.

III

The bank failures created a state of depression which I felt would check Australia's progress for years. I determined to go to New Zealand to see what things were like there.

There was not much of interest on board the *Waihora* during the five or six days' voyage between Sydney and Auckland. There was the ever-changing sky, the moving waste of waters and the sea birds that escorted us most of the way; but the weather was rough, many on board were too ill to move about, and, in any case, the journey was not long enough for passengers to become friendly. There was an irrepressible German who sang stirring patriotic songs in his own language. His example unfortunately inspired a big, strong-looking major in the English Army, on a year's furlough from Hong-Kong, to distinguish himself by singing with a banjo accompaniment catchy soldier songs, and a couple of Rudyard Kipling's imperialistic ballads.

Before leaving Sydney I had picked up in a bookshop a copy of Richardson's "Clarissa Harlowe." It strangely contrasted with my surroundings, but notwithstanding that—perhaps because of it—I became absorbed in the quaint old-fashioned production. I lived for the time in the period when men wore knee-breeches, shoes with sparkling buckles, three-cornered hats, swords and pigtails, fought duels and took snuff.

One morning we passed North Cape, a high, stern, wind-swept and wave-washed promontory, the most northern point of New Zealand. To this place the ancient Maori chiefs were brought when dying, in order that they might take their leave of this world from there. Then down the coast, passing the entrance to the Bay of Islands, we steamed all day, and rocky and barren the land looked, broken as it was into innumerable islands, bays and headlands.

These waters teem with fish. Whale fishing with nets was carried on near the coast. At certain periods "shoals" pass very close to the shore, sometimes almost grazing the rocks. To catch them, nets are placed with one end attached to the shore, and the other fastened to an anchor, the whole being kept by the aid of sinkers and floaters in the position of a huge tennis net. There are also narrow passages between islands and the
mainland blocked by nets.

New Zealand is truly a wonderland of the South—a land of volcanoes, geysers and earthquakes, of snow-capped mountains, of ferns and mosses, kauri pines and kauri gums and greenstone, and the home of a noble Pacific race that has been victorious in many stubbornly contested battles with well-armed, well-trained and well-disciplined British soldiers. It may be that Macaulay was not far wrong, and that it will be thickly populated and prosperous when some traveller from there, “in the midst of a vast solitude, takes his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's.”

During the months I spent in New Zealand at least one shower fell every day. I was told the weather was normal. My recollections of New Zealand are, however, of a beautiful country. I saw more skylarks singing in the sky at one time than ever I noted in the British Isles. The luxuriant foliage, the abundance of the flax plant, and the lilies everywhere growing wild appealed to me. I heard much of the Maoris, saw in the museum their grotesque carvings and a huge war canoe. I was told about the moa, the extinct giant bird of New Zealand, and how since the introduction of sheep, kea-parrots had developed the habit of eating their way with their long beaks through the wool and into the poor animals' entrails for the fat about the kidneys. I also had impressed on me that New Zealand has no marsupials or large native quadrupeds, but more especially that it was like Ireland in having no snakes.

Craters of extinct volcanoes are common. There are more than sixty points of eruption within a ten-mile radius of Auckland. It cannot be many centuries since these outbreaks took place, and similar occurrences may again occur. Vesuvius and Etna awoke to activity after slumbering for ages. As against the probability of this occurring at Auckland, I have heard it contended that there is a safety valve to the disturbing elements in the shape of an active volcano district some distance to the south of Auckland, where geysers abound and where there was an outbreak in 1886 which destroyed the famous pink and white terraces and killed more than one hundred persons.

A visitor finds some difficulty in pronouncing the place-names. There are many commonplace titles such as Birkenhead, Epsom and Thames, but there are also the characteristic Maori names. For instance, imagine a new arrival inquiring his way to Kaukapaka, Ngabauranga or Kibikibi!

I spent days amongst the excellent collection of books presented to the city of Auckland by that splendid imperial statesman, Sir George Grey. Besides containing copies of the standard works of the literature of all ages and countries, it had in addition some very valuable rarities. There was an
original treaty concluded by Richard Cromwell; a copy of the “Early Years of Prince Consort,” presented by Queen Victoria to Sir George Grey; a first edition, dated 1590, of Spenser's “Faerie Queene”; several early editions of Shakespeare's plays; and an illuminated manuscript copy in Greek of the Gospels, and other literary treasures.

Grey's career reads like a romance. As a young Army officer he explored many parts of Western Australia; he was Governor of Cape Colony and later of New Zealand, and after that he was Premier of New Zealand. At the time of my visit he had been for many years living on an island near Auckland that he had purchased, and where he occupied himself planting trees, gardening and collecting books. The last four years of his life were spent in England, where he died.

Happily, New Zealand is not cursed like most of the Australian states with the evil policy of centralisation, a policy that has resulted in a huge proportion of the people living in the capitals. It is particularly undesirable that in new countries the majority should become city dwellers instead of residing in rural districts and opening up the land's undeveloped resources. If Parliament meets in the most populous centre, the consequence is that, apart from the capital's strong voting power, its influence on legislation is considerable. The environment of the members cannot fail to be of importance, and the tendency of legislation must be more favourable in such a case to the capital than to the back country. Auckland, though the most populous city in New Zealand, is not the capital. The Parliament Houses and Government offices were established in 1864 in Wellington, which occupies a central position on the strait which separates the North and South Islands. In 1933 the percentage of the population in the capital as compared with the rest of the country was 9.50, whilst in New South Wales it was 47.46, in Western Australia it was 47.56, in South Australia 53.76, and in Victoria 54.58. In Australia centralisation exists to a greater extent than anywhere else in the world.

Unfortunately there was in New Zealand a narrow-minded opposition to immigration.

“I hardly think there is room for them here.”

This is a remark that was made to me by a well-meaning and well-educated New Zealander on my informing him, a few days after my arrival at Auckland from Australia, that the steamer by which I had travelled was crowded with both saloon and steerage passengers, including a goodly number of manual labourers and clerical workers desirous of obtaining employment. Advanced as New Zealand legislators and the country's political views were in some respects, they were short-sighted in other directions. They call their country “The Britain of the Southern Pacific.”
occupies a position that is analogous to and possesses perhaps even more advantages than the British Isles. It is but slightly smaller, has a better climate and probably as good coal, and is most likely superior in other mineral resources. For all this, New Zealand, when compared with the older nation, seemed to me small and insignificant indeed. And why? Because one country had then but 630,000 inhabitants while the other had nearly 40,000,000. And yet the newer country with its unoccupied tracts of rich agricultural lands lying idle or almost idle, with its mines that needed working, its forests to be cleared and swamps to be drained, had, *mirabile dictu*, hardly any room for more people!

This applies equally to Australia. In each case it is said that care must be taken that the country can absorb immigrants and that the existing standard of living must be maintained. During the forty-two years subsequent to the visit to New Zealand to which I have referred, the population of each country has more than doubled, but to-day (1935) the density of New Zealand's population, as indicated by the number of persons a square mile, is 14.8, and of Australia 2.2. The density of Japan and its dependencies is 362.8, and of Great Britain 492.9. Furthermore, Japan, with a population of 100,000,000, is increasing at the rate of 1,500,000 a year. Are not these figures highly significant?

**IV**

When I went to New Zealand I was commissioned to write articles on the country for a number of Australian papers. I was but a few months there when the *Port Augusta Despatch*, a prosperous bi-weekly South Australian paper, sent me a cablegram asking me if I would take over the editorship. I replied accepting, and returned to Australia by the first available steamer.

From Sydney to Adelaide I travelled in a small coastal steamer called the *Barrabool*. We experienced extremely stormy weather. At times serious anxiety was felt for the ship's safety. She rolled in a most extraordinary fashion. There were but two other passengers. One was a lady, who was seasick all the voyage. The other was an old ship captain, who said he never thought it possible for a vessel to roll over so far and not turn turtle. At times the deck seemed almost at a right angle to sea level, and then there would be a second or so of dreadful suspense, but she always righted herself. The waves washed her from end to end. The captain, who was able and fearless, decided to pass between islands where the wind and seas were not so heavy. It required skilful seamanship, but we got through safely. He was a young man and seemed to glory in trying to maintain his equilibrium on deck. With his hands in his pockets he refused to hold on to anything,
no matter how heavy or sudden was the roll. The old captain passenger warned him that he was foolish as he could easily go overboard, but the Barrabool captain only laughed. A few voyages after that, however, he was missed one wild night and never heard of again.

From Adelaide I went by train to Port Augusta.

The proprietor of the Despatch, Mr. David Drysdale, was kind-hearted and made things pleasant. He was married to a lady some years younger than himself. She was the daughter of a farmer who lived in the district, but the father-in-law did not agree with the son-in-law. Perhaps it was because they were both bad-tempered.

I was the unconscious instrument of widening the breach. Soon after I arrived in Port Augusta I republished from an American paper an amusing skit on local government institutions in agricultural districts. I did not know that the father-in-law happened to be chairman of a local board, and by an unhappy accident the skit described a chairman whose appearance and defects in capacity as well as his mannerisms bore a remarkable resemblance to him. The father-in-law blamed his son-in-law for making him appear ridiculous, and immediately came to see him with fury in his eyes and blasphemy on his lips.

I explained how it happened, and rightly said that the proprietor never saw the article till it appeared.

Explanations were of no avail. Nothing would convince the infuriated father-in-law that it was not a cunningly devised attempt on the part of his daughter's husband to make him the laughing-stock of the district.

Whilst in Port Augusta I met some extremely interesting people. Mr. Charles Cameron Kingston was Premier. He came to Port Augusta, and as I had somewhat changed the policy of the Despatch so that it supported his Government, he publicly thanked me in the course of a speech at a crowded meeting for what he was good enough to call the “great services” I had rendered his Ministry. That was the beginning of an acquaintance that lasted until Mr. Kingston's death several years later. His brother, Mr. “Pat” Kingston, was practising his profession as a lawyer in Port Augusta. “Pat” was extremely able; he did not agree with the views of the Premier and was in the habit of talking of “that d——n fool Charley.” “Pat” was reckless. In Adelaide he accidentally shot a cabman—fortunately not fatally—as part of a joke. Ultimately poor “Pat” shot himself. That was not a joke, but a tragedy. Both “Charley” and “Pat” Kingston had much of a wild strain that they got from an Irish ancestor.

* * * * *
One Saturday night whilst in the office about midnight I had an uncanny experience. I was immersed in the reading of a book dealing with creepy ghostly happenings.

There was not a person in the building. The only light in the place was the one I was reading by. All was perfectly still and silent.

Suddenly in the composing room I heard a strange movement; every one of the thousands of pieces of type moved. It was in the days before linotypes. The noise was weird and unusual.

Then it struck me that it might be an earthquake.

And so it was!

The movement was slight and no damage was done.

* * * * *

My experiences in Port Augusta were amusing. The harbour is at the head of Spencer's Gulf, the waters of which were a source of great joy to me. Most of my week-ends were spent boating and fishing down the Gulf, where we had all sorts of delightful adventures.

Each evening we were in the habit of bathing from a part of the harbour where steps led to deep water. Sharks were frequently seen and caught in Port Augusta, but it was said they had never attacked a human being in the vicinity. However, we did not feel too certain that we were safe, and it was customary for a number of us to bathe together and to splash and shout a good deal and not go far from the steps. Occasionally we were more venturesome. One dark night four or five of us, despite warnings, swam to a buoy some fifty or a hundred yards from the steps. It was silly bravado, such as young men now and then indulge in.

It was difficult to see. Night swimming is not pleasant, especially in waters that are shark-infested. None of us could have felt too comfortable.

Suddenly came the cry, “Sharks! Sharks!”

We could dimly see the dark backs of two monsters.

Every second I expected my flesh to be torn and bones crushed by sharp powerful teeth whilst I was being drawn into the black depths below.

Close to me was a man who scoffed at sharks and had dared us to swim to the buoy. One of the brutes rose near his right hand and then disappeared. In a little time it came up on the other side of him. Dark as it was, I could see in his face a dreadful expression of fear and agony. It was horrible. Probably in my face there was an equally horrible expression.

We were striking out for the steps as fast as we could.

Finally we reached them and climbed out to safety nearly dead with fright.
A calm investigation showed us that what terrified us were not sharks, but a couple of playful and harmless porpoises!

* * * * * * *

The show place of the district was the ostrich farm—one of the two ostrich farms then in Australia. I had seen another ostrich farm at Kerang, near Reedy Lake in Victoria, and it had a couple of hundred birds. The one at Port Augusta was larger, containing 600 birds and extending over 9,000 acres.

The ostriches seemed to thrive wonderfully at both these farms. Numbers of eggs were hatched by means of incubators, the eggs being collected from nests in the paddocks where the birds ran. The eggs took from thirty-eight to forty-two days to hatch.

If the chick did not make its appearance when due it was assisted out of its prison by the manager or some of his assistants cracking the shell at the space left for air by a sharp tap. In a state of nature this is done by parent birds. When a female ostrich that is hatching considers after examination that the process is necessary, she rolls the egg on which she desires to operate out of the nest and places it so that the air space is exactly uppermost. Then she kneels and presses a horny breast-plate with which she is provided upon the egg. Thus she breaks the shell and the chick comes out uninjured. This most intelligent act on the part of the ostrich is known but to few, whereas who has not heard or read that the bird when chased foolishly puts its head into the sand under the idea that it cannot be seen? In our childhood we were all told that. There are many who believe still that there is some truth in it, but it is not the case. When an ostrich is pursued and becomes thoroughly tired it will lie down and stretch out its head and neck on the sand. This it was that Mr. Rathbone, the manager of the Port Augusta farm, believed gave rise to the former, almost general, idea regarding the bird.

The amazing and proverbial digestion of an ostrich is not exaggerated. The first meal the young birds take after coming out of the shell is largely composed of crushed bones and pebbles, and to the end of their days they retain a voracious appetite for old nails and such like. Ostriches are prolific layers. By taking away the eggs from a nest as fast as they are laid and leaving three or four dummies in their place, a bird, instead of giving only fifteen or sixteen, may produce up to forty or sixty. One bird in a year has been known to lay as many as one hundred and eighty. During the breeding season ostriches become very savage. It is dangerous to enter their paddocks unless armed with a long forked stick, so that when a bird
charges it runs its neck into the fork and is thus kept at a distance. They kick with terrific force and have been known to kill human beings.

V

Through my friendship with a sub-inspector of police I had some rather exciting experiences at Port Augusta. There was in the neighbourhood a dangerous character named Leach, who had been originally in the British Navy and had also at one time been outlawed as a sort of bushranger in the Flinders Ranges. He was employed as a gardener in a remote part of the district at the foot of the Ranges. His employer went one day to the garden, and as he did not find Leach at work he went to his camp and asked him why he was idling. Some difference occurred between them. Leach, who had a repeating rifle and was a dead shot, said that if the other did not clear out he would put a bullet through his hat, and if he didn't go then, he would put a second one through his head. No notice was taken of the threat, so Leach promptly put a bullet through the hat.

His employer left the camp in a hurry.

The police were sent for, and a couple of constables arrived many hours later. Meanwhile the camp had been barricaded by Leach, and when they attempted to enter he sent a bullet through one of their helmets, declaring that if they persisted he would shoot them both dead. Since they knew he would carry out his threat, they, too, thought discretion the better part of valour.

They reported to Sub-Inspector Field that Leach could not be taken alive without loss of life. He decided to go to the place with half a dozen men with rifles and invited me to accompany him.

After a drive of some ten miles we arrived on the scene. Leach was in a tent surrounded by a high, thick, circular collection of brushwood—a sort of brush fence. The entrance in the fence was barricaded. A good quick shot such as Leach could easily have shot a dozen policemen dead before they could force their way through the brushwood. There were on the spot eight or nine policemen who were careful to keep out of sight of the man in the tent.

From behind the shelter of an iron tank the sub-inspector called on Leach to surrender to the law.

“You'll never take me alive,” cried Leach in reply.

He followed this remark with a long string of oaths and threats against the police.

The sub-inspector withdrew. The situation was difficult to handle.

After consideration he arranged for four of the police with loaded rifles
to crawl to where they had a clear view of the camp whilst his party remained concealed.

Returning to the tank, the sub-inspector called out and said that he had the tent covered by police rifles and that he would order them to fire several volleys through the tent if Leach did not come out and give himself up.

Leach laughed loudly, the laugh of a maniac. “I'll get some of you yet,” he cried.

The sub-inspector endeavoured to reason with him, but, having failed, he told the man that his blood would be on his own head.

The officer then gave the signal, the four police fired, sending four bullets whistling through the canvas of the tent.

Leach laughed loudly as firing ceased.

The sub-inspector warned him that another volley would be fired.

A scoffing laugh came from the tent. A second volley was fired.

The laughter of Leach was louder than before.

A third volley was sent through the tent.

“You're rotten bad shots,” yelled Leach. “Fire away,” he added, “you can't hit me.”

It was assumed that he had dug a pit inside his tent and so escaped.

The sub-inspector and the police retired, and a conference was held.

Two or three were in favour of rushing the tent. Wiser heads pointed out that it would be foolish to risk valuable lives. The suggestion was made that firesticks should be thrown at the brushwood, but there was no use trying it as the weather was damp and the wood would not burn.

It was finally decided that a lengthy ship's rope should be got from Port Augusta, that one end of it should be tied round a tree during the night and that part of it should be left slack on the ground round the brushwood. A team of horses would then pull at the loose end so that when it tightened it would draw the brushwood and tent into a heap and force the occupant to come out.

A couple of nights later the rope was placed round the brushwood.

At daybreak there were more than a dozen police assembled with their rifles. Everything was in readiness. The signal was given for the horses, which were behind a rise, to haul at the rope. They did so, and simply walked away with a slack rope.

Leach from his tent gave a wild shriek of delight. He had gone out during the night and cut the rope.

The sub-inspector was much troubled by the problem he had to solve. His difficulties were increased by telegrams from Adelaide. The Premier, Mr. Kingston, impetuously wired to know if one man was defying all the
police of the north. It was decided that the rope scheme should be repeated with a wire rope, which would be difficult to cut and which would be watched at night.

After a delay of some days all the arrangements were completed.

A wire rope was placed around the brushwood.

By this time the chief of the police in the state and an inspector as well as Sub-Inspector Field were on the ground. Over twenty police were present. They had an old cart made bullet-proof by sand-bags, and from behind the shelter of this they could approach close to the brushwood in comparative safety.

In the grey of the early dawn all was in readiness.

The word was given, the horses began to move. Leach fired a shot.

A black fellow in charge of the horses cried out, “Me no want to be shot.” He could be seen running over a rise as fast as his legs would carry him.

The horses, startled by the rifle shot, rushed on, and everything happened as expected. The brushwood was drawn on the top of the tent.

Leach could do nothing. He had to come out into the open. He was white-faced, keen-eyed, in his bare feet, a small, alert-looking man, carrying his rifle with the air of one accustomed and ready to use it at a second's notice. He was covered by rifles and revolvers. The officer in charge, pointing a revolver at him, said:

“Drop your rifle or you are a dead man.”

“Give me a minute and I will,” was the reply.

Leach stooped as if to put the rifle on the ground. He suddenly raised his toe to the trigger and, pulling it, fired, blowing off half his head.

We rushed up. He was dead, the hot blood flowing copiously from his wound. It was a dramatic, tragic scene.

The police received some adverse criticism for the delay occasioned. An outcry would have been raised had there been further loss of life over the affair, and in view of the difficulty of the problem involved I think they deserved praise rather than blame.

*         *         *         *         *

About this time there was much talk about the Western Australian gold discoveries which were just then causing considerable excitement. Coolgardie was between one thousand and one thousand one hundred miles to the direct westward of Port Augusta, but communication was by a roundabout sea, railway and road journey. One party with camels left Port Augusta and succeeded in reaching Coolgardie after what was virtually an
exploring trip. I decided to try my luck on the then new goldfields.

The papers had reports of new and rich gold discoveries, but they also gave sensational accounts of the want of drinking water, of deaths from thirst and privation, and asserted that for every one man who was successful in making a rich find there were hundreds of disappointed prospectors. The death roll from typhoid was enormous, and men were warned against going.

My friends urged me to remain.

“For God's sake don't go there,” they said. “Where men are dying like flies, your looks are such you can't last long.”

I told them I would chance it. I resigned my post.

I was given a public municipal farewell at Port Augusta, and I left for Adelaide. From there I sailed for Albany, Western Australia.
Chapter III The Golden West

Early settlers' struggles—The six families—Discovery of Coolgardie—The lure of gold—Upholding law—Kalgoorlie—Paddy Hannan's story—The Golden Mile—Fabulous wealth.

To the rest of Australia, Western Australia was long known as the Cinderella of the Australian colonies. For sixty years she had no apparent attractions to offer to immigrants. She was poor; she had been under the control of the Colonial Office years after the five other Australian colonies had enjoyed responsible government. Yet Western Australia as a colony was founded earlier than South Australia, Victoria or Queensland. The largest in area of the Australian states and comprising one-third of the continent, Western Australia was first colonised in the early part of the last century. It was in June, 1829, that Captain (afterwards Sir James) Stirling arrived in the transport Parmelia with the first party of settlers—sixty-nine all told, including men, women and children. Other vessels with settlers arrived soon after, and the Swan River Settlement was founded. Three towns, Perth, Fremantle and Guildford, were established. Thus, six years before the founding of Melbourne, the western capital and its principal port were laid out. By March, 1830, fifty ships with 2,000 immigrants, with property amounting to £1,000,000, had arrived before more than a few dwellings had been built or the land surveyed.

Many of the first settlers, from their previous habits and work in life, proved unfit for the rough work of colonisation. Several were landed gentry who brought with them their servants and their carriages, their furniture, pianos, four-poster beds and family pictures. The little community had a hard struggle for existence. Some returned to the Old Country or left for other Australian colonies, and the place languished. Those that remained struggled on, finding a healthful climate and a soil favouring fruit and vegetables whilst their stock grazed in the more open and distant quarters, but still their difficulties were great.

In 1848, when the population was but some 5,000, settlers were compelled to seek help from the British Treasury and offered to accept convicts. These came in 1850, but transportation ceased in 1868 in consequence of loud protests from the other colonies. The population was then about 20,000.

For more than twenty years the colony was in a state of stagnation. The
people were scattered; they held to antiquated methods. They had little communication with the outside world and lived a narrow unprogressive existence. With few exceptions they were content to exist at ease rather than prosper at the expense of effort. Pearling was carried on in the north; sandalwood and timber were exported, and a beginning was made with the pastoral industry. To most of the inhabitants, however, it was a case of “The world forgetting, by the world forgot.”

In 1890, when responsible government was at last granted to West Australia, the population was still only 46,000.

In the small isolated community that then existed there were marked class distinctions. The inhabitants had brought with them their old-world ideas. There were the officials headed by the Governor and some well-to-do settlers with aristocratic associations. These people formed a sort of oligarchy. They were exclusive, were slow to admit strangers within their charmed circle, and were known as “The Six Families.” The truth is that there were more than six families. There were the Burts—the first of them was Sir Archibald Burt, who was Chief Justice in the sixties. There were the Lefroys—O'Grady Lefroy, C.M.G., was Colonial Treasurer for thirty-six years in the Crown Colony days. There were the Clifftons—the first of them, Marshall Walter Clifton, F.R.S., came to the Colony with his sons to found the ill-fated Australind Colony in 1841. There were the Wittenooms—the Rev. J. B. Wittenoom was first chaplain. There were the Roes—John S. Roe arrived on the Parmilia, was first Surveyor-General and a noted explorer. Then there were the Leakes, Parkers, Sholls, Stones, Steeres, Hamersleys, Clarksons, Burgesses, Barlees, Drummonds and others. Many of the old settlers had their children educated at English Public Schools and the cultural standards of England were well maintained amongst them. They were worthy people who upheld the best traditions of the old British families from whom many of them had come, but they led a quiet, sleepy sort of existence.
About two hundred and forty miles almost directly east of Perth there was a gold-mining centre, Southern Cross. Various gold finds, none of them of much importance, had been made in the locality, but the population was small. Development work was going on, in a half-hearted way, and a number of men were employed on Fraser's mine, which was considered the most promising and most valuable of the local properties. A difference arose between the employers and employees. There was a strike. No work was done. Men lay in their camps or collected in small groups.
and talked. Time hung heavily on their hands. Employers were not anxious
to restart working. The wage-earners did not like to acknowledge defeat
and go back to work. There was a general feeling of despondency and
depression. That was the state of affairs in September, 1892.

One evening in 1892 a dusty, travel-stained horseman arrived from the
east. The new arrival was known to be a prospector who had used Southern
Cross as a base from which he and a mate of his made expeditions into the
unknown interior. The two were reported to be hardy and experienced,
accustomed to rough living and to the hardships and dangers of the bush.
Some weeks previously they had come to Southern Cross, purchased a
couple of months' provisions, and then one morning early turned their faces
towards the rising sun as they followed their tracks back. Prospectors were
common about Southern Cross. Now and again they reported gold finds,
but these had proved nothing sensational, and mostly they resulted in
disappointment. As Arthur Bayley rode by, one of the men who was
lounging about expressed wonder that he was alone, and remarked, “Where
is his mate, Bill Ford?”

The solitary horseman passed on to the warden's office, reported the
discovery of a new rich goldfield one hundred and twenty miles east of
Southern Cross, and in proof of his accuracy produced between 500 and
600 ounces of almost pure gold. He had left his mate to guard the find, as
there was a reef of dazzling richness from which tons of gold remained to
be extracted.

The news spread. It created wild excitement. Instead of listlessness there
was feverish activity. Next morning Bayley left on the return journey. He
was accompanied by the warden, Mr. J. M. Finnerty. Practically every man
in Southern Cross also departed for the new find. Some of them had
horses; others had only hand-carts carrying their belongings; the vast
majority walked.

There was no road, only a bush track, rough, dry and dusty. A sand plain
had to be crossed. Mostly the country was flat and monotonous; there was
much scrub and in places timber. Scanty supplies of water were procurable
at widely separated outcrops of rocks where there were catchments for the
rain and “soaks” and gnamma holes. Happily, it was August—the weather
was cool. When Coolgardie was ultimately reached most of the new
arrivals were well rewarded. There was no lack of either alluvial gold or
rich reefs. It was not only Southern Cross that awoke from its lethargy, but
also Perth and Western Australia generally.

II
The depression that existed throughout Australia consequent on the bursting of the land boom and the failure of the banks, accentuated the sensation that was created by the Coolgardie gold discovery. In a few weeks over 300 men had arrived in Coolgardie, and many thousands of ounces of gold had been discovered. One report announced that from 11 tons of ore from Bayley's Reward 13,000 ounces had been secured without a battery.

The glitter of these rich discoveries proved an irresistible attraction. From every part of Australia men were soon hurrying to the new land of gold. The railway to Southern Cross was still a thing of the future, but over an unmade road to the eastward a motley procession was moving—coaches, teams, horses, camels, pedestrians (some of them conveying their whole outfit in a wheelbarrow) were straggling into the interior along the three hundred and seventy miles of track between Perth and Coolgardie.

"Every boat that touched Western Australia," writes an authority, "discharged hundreds of adventurous souls—men of youth, courage, strength and enterprise, the very pick of Australian manhood, together with a good sprinkling from all parts of the world. All that had been denied to Western Australia in the past—attention, population and capital—the world now stumbled over itself in its eagerness to give." The find at Coolgardie proved but the forerunner of other more important finds. In no part of the world perhaps did nature show a more harsh and inhospitable aspect than in the trackless, waterless expanses of the arid interior. Fever decimated the ranks of the prospectors, and many died of exhaustion and thirst. Notwithstanding hardships and dangers, the country around Coolgardie was explored for hundreds of miles and it was found that it was not a mere "goldfield" that was discovered, but what could be characterised as "a golden Continent."

Motor-cars and aeroplanes had not then come into existence. A charge of £5 for the carriage to Coolgardie from Perth of each swag of 100 lbs. weight was made. The owner of the swag had to walk. Later there were coaches.

In December, 1892, the water supply was failing fast, and an official notice was issued asking the men at Coolgardie to leave in sections, so that the water at various places on the track could be used to the best advantage. Fortunately, the water supply was replenished by occasional thunderstorms. About the end of January water that had been carted fifty miles by camel was sold for two shillings per gallon. In March, 1893, three-quarters of an inch of rain fell. Numerous teams and prospecting parties had been waiting at Southern Cross for rain. They immediately started for Coolgardie. By May, 1893, there were over 1,000 men on the
field. Valuable finds were reported in various outside localities. There were frequent rushes as reports of good finds were received.

* * * * * *

When the news of the Coolgardie gold discovery was announced the exact latitude and longitude of the find was unknown. In Government circles concern was felt that it might be within the freehold property of the Hampton Plains Co., in which case most of the benefits would go to the shareholders. The gold would thus become the property, not of the finders but of the landowners. When surveyors were sent to define the boundaries of the Hampton Plains estate, relief was felt when it was reported that the find was made just outside the Company's boundaries. It was, however, a near thing, for Coolgardie is but a couple of miles from the edge of the boundary.

Mr. Bob Gleddon, a surveyor, was the first mining registrar at Coolgardie. He arrived there about November, 1892, and he had frequently to adjudicate as a justice of the peace in diggers' disputes. I remember his telling me how he disposed of a case of disputed ownership of an alluvial claim. The evidence was heard on the ground in the presence of a large concourse of diggers. There was no policeman within more than a hundred miles.

Gleddon gave his decision.

The man who had lost the case jumped into a hole on the claim and began working vigorously. Evidently he was determined to ignore the verdict.

“If you don't get out of that hole,” said Gleddon gravely, “you will be guilty of contempt of court, and I'll send you to Fremantle gaol.”

The man went on using his pick.

“You have three minutes to get out of that hole,” added Gleddon, “and if you don't then I'll sentence you to ten years' hard labour.”

Sullenly the man continued to ply his pick.

“Only one more minute,” said Gleddon sternly, holding his watch.

Then the man stopped working and sprang out of the hole. The assembled diggers cheered wildly.

“Of course,” said Gleddon to me afterwards, “I had not the legal power to give him ten years, but he did not know that, and no lighter sentence would have got him out of that hole.”

* * * * * *
Another early day goldfields experience was when two enterprising men came with a cart-load of grog, which they proceeded to dispose of for nuggets. They were viewed by the diggers as public benefactors, but that was not the view of the law. They had no licenses. They were prosecuted, and the liquor which was seized was put in Gleddon's tent for safe custody.

“At once,” said Gleddon, “my tent became the centre of deep public interest.”

Later a deputation of diggers asked him if the liquor was for sale.

“It must be kept,” said Gleddon, “pending instructions from Perth. I don't suppose it will be sent back down the track to Perth. The directions will probably be to destroy it.”

The diggers' faces fell.

Gleddon's camp more than ever became a subject of public attraction. He had to be often away from it, and men were always hanging round. Finally, their interest ceased in his camp and its vicinity was deserted. One hot and thirsty day, when he returned to his camp tired and worn out, he thought he would sample the liquor; he found that it was all gone. He realised then how interest waxed and waned in his camp.

“Sure, sir,” said an Irishman, speaking to him afterwards, “the boys felt that as it was to be destroyed, they would save you the trouble of destroying it, and by drinking it themselves they destroyed it.”

III

Exactly nine months after Bayley reported the find at Coolgardie, Paddy Hannan arrived at Coolgardie with news of a rich discovery at what is now Kalgoorlie, twenty-four miles east of Coolgardie, and applied for and was granted a reward claim. His find of alluvial was specially important, for it led to the discovery of the lodes of the Golden Mile, which is held to be the richest square mile in gold that has ever been worked.

Hannan was well known to me. He was under rather than over the average height, of medium build, with bright, beady eyes, a long beard and a ruddy complexion that betokened a healthy and vigorous outdoor life. Like many of the prospectors who opened up the goldfields, he was an Irishman; he was born in the parish of Quin, County Clare, about 1842, and came to Australia when he was twenty-one years of age. In disposition he was quite unlike the jovial, riotous type fairly common in mining communities. Though not a total abstainer, yet he was remarkably temperate. Nothing could induce him to go beyond the limits of what temperance prescribes. On that point he was adamant. It did not contribute to his popularity amongst the gay reckless spirits of the early goldfields
days, but he did not mind. He was not garrulous or a good conversationalist, though in some respects pleasant and genial. He was kindly, quiet and reserved. His education was that of the ordinary Irish peasant boy educated under the national school system, but his handwriting was excellent, and his letters are singular for their clearness of diction.

Despite Hannan's nationality, he was without imagination or sense of humour. All that happened to him he thought was commonplace and prosaic. The romantic side of gold-seeking, the wandering open-air life he led, did not appeal to him as to others. He was not drawn to the bush by—

“The vision splendid of the sunlit plain extended, 
And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.”

No such ideas filled his mind. The story he told me of his great discovery was simple and direct. It was:

“I arrived in the colony in March, 1889, and was at Parkers Range about forty miles from Southern Cross, when Bayley reported the discovery of a rich reef at Coolgardie. I joined in the rush.

“Early in June, 1893, news arrived at Coolgardie of a good discovery at a place called Mount Yuille, somewhere to the east or north-east. Parties left Coolgardie in search of the find. A few days after the report had been received, my mate, Thomas Flanagan, and I left Coolgardie. We left on June 7. We would have left earlier with the others, but we could not obtain horses, and so were delayed two or three days. We were lucky enough to pick up some animals in the bush ten or twelve miles from Coolgardie. The other parties going to Mount Yuille were mostly travelling with teams. Only one or two of the prospecting groups had horses of their own. We were a separate party, as we wished to be free to travel when we liked. We could also by this arrangement if we chose prospect any country during the journey.

“A very large number was in the main party going to Mount Yuille. Only Bayley's claim was working at Coolgardie, and the alluvial had become exhausted just about the time we left, hence the strong desire amongst the men to reach the new find.

“On June 10, three days after leaving Coolgardie, we reached what is now Kalgoorlie. The other parties had gone on in the direction of the reported discovery, but it was only to find later that the report had been false.

“Well, as I have said, when we came on June 10 to Mount Charlotte, my mate and I decided to stop and prospect the country round about. To us it looked country where there might be alluvial. We found colours of gold and then got good gold at the north end of Mount Charlotte to down south of Maritana Hill.

“There was another man by the way, Dan Shea was his name, to whom we gave an equal share in our venture.

“We soon realised that we were located on a valuable field. Alluvial gold was in abundance. We got scores of ounces. It was agreed that I should go to Coolgardie and apply for a reward claim. I left Flanagan and Shea to watch our interests, and on June 17 started for Coolgardie. I got there on a Saturday night.
“The news of our find soon got abroad. There was a good deal of excitement. Hundreds of men set out for the scene. The flats and gullies all about our reward claim became alive with diggers dryblowing and finding gold.

“The water difficulty, which had been unusually great, was solved. Rain began to fall as I was on my way to Coolgardie to report the find, and continued for some time. The fall was fairly heavy. It was exceedingly welcome to us all and relieved the shortage from which we suffered. The downpour left plenty of water in rock holes and lakes. The supply lasted until November.

“Where the ground was too wet for dryblowing, the men dried the earth by fires and so could work their claims.”

Above is the story of Hannan's discovery as told to me by Hannan. It was apparently altogether an after-thought that made him think it worth while mentioning that when he left to apply for the reward claim the three men had only two quarts of water left. “But for the rain,” he remarked, “I don't know what we would have done.” He added:

“Not long after the discovery at Kalgoorlie I left for a holiday. I had not seen the sea for five years, and prospecting is a hard life. It was only now and again we could get fresh meat. I was not in good health, and I felt a spell away from the fields to be necessary.”

* * * * *

Wherever gold discoveries have been made there are various versions of what happened. That applies to Hannan's find. By some it was said that it was not he who first discovered gold near Mount Charlotte. Hannan was then over fifty years of age, and these people say that, as both Flanagan and Shea were older men, he as the youngest of the three was asked by the other two to journey to Coolgardie and apply for a reward claim. As he made the first report the find became associated with him and was known as “Hannan's.” Shea always asserted that it was he, not Hannan or Flanagan, who picked up the first nugget. One old and highly respected resident of the goldfields who was intimately acquainted with all three men informed me that Flanagan was the first to find gold, and that he found it when looking for a horse. Flanagan, like Hannan, came from Clare, and soon after he died in Melbourne.

Other old residents say that the three men, when travelling with a large party to Mount Yuille, found gold near Mount Charlotte, but carefully concealed the fact of the discovery in order that they might be able to make the most of it, and stayed behind on the plea that they had lost a horse. The members of the main party continued their journey, but many days later they discovered that the search for Mount Yuille was a wild goose chase.
When they returned and reached Mount Charlotte they were amazed to see the place a hive of busy dryblowers, most of whom were getting gold.

Irrespective of who actually was the first to pick up gold, Hannan was unquestionably the principal man of the three. The main Kalgoorlie thoroughfare is called Hannan Street, the oldest and chief club is Hannan's Club, and his memory is honoured by a statue in front of the town hall. The statue is not raised on a high pedestal above the people, but it is over a drinking fount close to the side path showing him in his rough prospecting clothes with a water bag in his hand. It truly represents him as he was, a man of the people and a good type of the daring prospectors who opened up the Coolgardie goldfields. As Hannan said to me, he did not consider that the success of the party of three, of whom he was one, was due to any merit of theirs. It was mere luck.
The Mount Charlotte discovery was rich alluvial, but its real importance lies in the fact that it was responsible for the discovery of the Golden Mile. How it happened may be shortly told.

Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Brookman with some fourteen others, including Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Doolette, had formed a small syndicate in Adelaide for the purpose of sending men to Western Australia to prospect for gold-mines. The total sum subscribed amounted to only £150. A few free shares were given to the prospectors, W. G. Brookman and Sam Pearce. When these two men reached Perth they purchased a spring dray and two horses. They were compelled to walk the whole distance, some three hundred and fifty miles, beside the dray. They arrived at Coolgardie three weeks and a day after they left Adelaide. They decided to go to Hannan's Find. Early in July they pegged out the mines of what is now known as the Golden Mile, mines that in a few years had a total capital value approaching £30,000,000 and produced many times that value in gold.

After these mines were pegged out there were many who condemned them as “wild cats.” It was said that it was a shame to attempt to foist them on the public as worth working. But Sam Pearce was a born prospector. He had a prospector's instinct and seemed almost to scent gold. Of the two men who pegged out the mines of the Golden Mile, Sir George Brookman afterwards wrote: “To their singular luck these men brought the reliable guides of sound judgment and mature knowledge.” These qualities helped towards their success.

During the closing years of the last century the eyes of the civilised world were turned towards the Coolgardie goldfields. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, declared that, given the substantial truthfulness of the gold discovery reports, Western Australia for many years would be the most prosperous part of the British Empire. Gold would attract people and capital, and in his opinion both people and capital would remain and build up not only mining but also agriculture and other industries. What he then predicted became an accomplished fact.
Photograph Facing Page 60: Above: A view of the “Golden Mile,” said to be the richest square mile in gold contents in the world. Below: The Kalgoorlie Miner offices.
Chapter IV Prospecting Days

I journey to the goldfields—Coaching and dust—Remarkable shanty keeper—Kalgoorlie in 1895—Prospectors' stories—Sensational finds—Gold rushes—The Sacred Nugget mystery.

IT was a couple of years after the pegging of the mines of the Golden Mile that I sailed from Adelaide for Western Australia. During that time numbers of sensational finds had been made, and the rush to the west was increasing daily, and, indeed, continued to increase for many years later. In 1895 over £50,000,000 was subscribed, chiefly in London, on behalf of Western Australian Mining flotations, and for several years thereafter the colony became the happy hunting ground of prospectors, fossickers, investors and gamblers from all parts of the globe.

The steamer on which I made the voyage from Adelaide was crowded with men on their way to seek fortune. There were also on board men who had been to the Coolgardie goldfields and who had made money, and were returning after a holiday in the eastern colonies. These men spent their money freely, talked about the great wealth of Coolgardie, usually exaggerated their own successes, and gave the impression that £100 was no more to them than £1 to the ordinary man.

One of these shared my cabin. He had been the prospector of a new find. Like most successful West Australian mining men in those days, he drank champagne morning, noon and night, and pressed everyone in sight to share it. I was virtually a teetotaller, and he could not understand a courteous but firm refusal to partake of his hospitality. He was a rough diamond and excessively generous. Many years later I met him again. In his old age, like so many of his type, he was in very straitened circumstances.

* * * * *

I had a long and tiresome train journey from Albany to Woolgangie, which is east of Southern Cross and was the then head of the railway that was in course of construction to Coolgardie. There I got into a lumbering old coach drawn by four horses.

There had been no rain for a considerable time. The bush track was inches, and in some places feet, deep in fine dust. The seats outside the
coach were at a premium, and I had to content myself with one inside. The horses and coach raised clouds of dust that travelled with us. The only other occupant of the interior was a young man, who told me he was a bank clerk. As we proceeded the dust filled our nostrils, our mouths, our hair, and penetrated through our clothes. My travelling companion's face and hands and clothes assumed the chocolate colour of the roads through the layers of dust on them. I was viewing his alteration in appearance. We drove along, each watching the other. I remarked on how he was getting a uniform sepia tint and that the effect was peculiar.

He replied, “I was just interested in watching a similar change taking place in you.”

And we laughed!

The night was spent at Bulla Bulling, where there was a wood and iron wayside hotel or shanty. We arrived just before dusk. Numbers of teams were camped near, and the hotel was crowded with men on their way to the goldfields. Most of them were “swampers,” or men who were walking with teams that carried their swags. It was a drunken orgy, and the air resounded with talk, jokes, laughter and bad language. Water was scarce; there was no chance of getting a wash, to say nothing of a bath. The young clerk and myself sat on a log near the hotel. A meal would soon be ready, but we could not find the landlord or get any information as to whether we could get a place to sleep. Had we known as much about bush life as we learned later, we would have lighted a fire and slept in our coats and rugs under the stars.

A grey-headed, grey-moustached man without his coat and with his sleeves rolled up to the elbows joined us. He was a rough-looking customer, but his conversation was charming. I happened to mention the western district of Victoria. He spoke of the pastoral families there in a familiar way, was intimate with most of them, told us of race-horses he had owned, talked of racing and of mutual friends in Melbourne.

I told him we wanted beds, and asked him if there was a chance of finding the landlord of this dreadful place, and if so was there a chance of his being sober.

He smiled as he quietly replied, “I am the landlord.”

When I started to apologise, he answered, “Please don't; I understand; you are quite right, it is a dreadful place; I'll see to your having beds. What will you have to drink?”

We accepted. When later we attempted to reciprocate he replied, “I never accept drinks from anyone in this house, but whilst I am with you, you have what drinks you like at my expense as my guests. What can I get you?”
A strange sort of shanty keeper indeed! The fact was he had been a well-to-do resident of Victoria, a personal friend of the Governor, Lord Hopetoun, had been ruined in the bank smashes and had come to the goldfields in the hope of retrieving his fortunes.

The clerk and myself were given two stretchers to sleep on in a hessian room adjoining the bar, which was filled with men drinking, also arguing and cursing at the top of their voices. The noise was terrific, but so utterly worn out were my travelling companion and myself that despite the uproar we soon fell into a sound sleep.

Our awakening was unexpected and sudden.

A fierce fight had started in the bar.

One man received a blow that knocked him against the door of our room with such force that it was burst open and he fell into our apartment. He was pursued by others, and the fight was continued in our bedroom. When I opened my eyes I saw several men fighting and swearing. I thought I would remain lying down as the safest place, but my companion jumped out of bed, and in the semi-darkness and confusion the combatants trod on his toes, badly bruising them.

Finally, the landlord came in with a light, and the intruders were turned out to finish their fight outside the hotel.

It did not mean peace to us; my companion's toes were painful, and the noise in the bar continued as great as ever. It was a wild beginning to the wild times I was to experience.

The following day we reached Coolgardie. There, after a few days, I got another coach, in which I covered the twenty-four miles to Kalgoorlie.
I found Kalgoorlie but a collection of canvas tents and hessian humpies. There were also a few small wood and iron structures. Large trees were standing in Hannan Street, and nowhere had any attempt been made to form roads. Fine dust several inches deep lay on the ground and there were innumerable bush tracks in all directions. The slightest breeze raised dense clouds of dust, with which the air was filled for days and nights. Flies swarmed in millions. The surroundings were uninteresting, consisting merely of the interminable bush. The population was considerable. Life was attended by many discomforts. There were few women. It was not easy to secure accommodation. I was fortunate in getting a room at one of the hotels.

Before reaching Kalgoorlie I had been warned of the difficulty by a story of a new arrival who was looking round in the evening for a place where he could sleep. He met a man who said, “You can have my camp for the night
for ten shillings and I'll stay with a friend.” The traveller readily agreed, and was brought to a camp, of which there were hundreds about, told to make himself at home, and the ten shillings was collected.

An hour or two later the traveller was rudely awakened and asked, “What are you doing in my camp?”

The man in the bunk explained that he had paid ten shillings for the right to spend the night there.

It appeared that the individual to whom the ten shillings was paid was not the owner nor was he known to the owner. It was a mere trick to secure half a sovereign. However, in those days hospitality was universal, and the real owner of the camp invited the traveller to remain, an invitation that was cordially accepted. The incident was the beginning of a long and close friendship between the two.

* * * * * *

Everyone thought and talked of nothing but mining, “new rushes,” selling shows and the fluctuations of the share market. Each man was a prospective millionaire, and no one expected to be in the place more than a year or two. The feeling was that a few weeks or months would be sufficient to secure all the money that was wanted to live in affluence for the rest of one's life. Alas! how few of these bright hopes were realised.

From London and from other parts of the world came a great demand for mining properties. Coolgardie and West Australian goldfields were booming. Sharebrokers and others merely wanted mining leases somewhere that they could pass on to purchasers at enhanced prices. The country was pegged far and wide, and thousands and thousands of leases were applied for. A worthless area that was pegged one week would have eager purchasers at tens of thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands of pounds. Throughout it all there was the wild excitement of the gambling atmosphere. Poker was played for large stakes. Hotels were numerous and were continually crowded. Drinking was indulged in freely. All drinks were a shilling each—then a comparatively high price—but, as if that was not sufficiently expensive, champagne was commonly consumed.

It was in this human maelstrom that I found myself, but I was not in the habit of either drinking or gambling. I had comparatively little money and, with the high cost of living and other obligations, I could not afford to take up leases or buy shares, and so I was less a participant than a keenly interested spectator. It was perhaps just as well that I was not a participant. I had work to do that kept me busy all day. Soon after arrival I became part
proprietor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, a small-sized daily newspaper that had just then started. We also had a weekly paper, the *Western Argus*. I was editor of both journals. I rarely left the wooden shack we called the office.

Nearly everyone was optimistic about the future of Kalgoorlie and looked to its becoming in time a great city. We felt, for instance, that the *Kalgoorlie Miner* would grow (as it did) into a daily that could compare favourably with most of the metropolitan dailies of Australia. There were other dreams of greatness for Kalgoorlie and the goldfields that many of us had.

My memories of those days are cheery and exciting. There was a spirit of good humour everywhere. The community included splendid and most interesting characters—young, adventurous and enterprising men attracted by the lure of gold. They embraced all grades of society from peers of the realm to horny-handed manual workers. There was good fellowship and a jovial camaraderie. Continually there were reports of sensational new finds and of fortunes made.

There are the memories of buying and selling leases, the rise and fall of the share market, and the open calls where shares changed hands with feverish haste. The mental pictures that these recollections call up are crowded with many things—canvas water bags, dry-blowers, dolly pots, tin dishes, condensers, camels, bicycles and typhoid fever; also with mining engineers, company promoters, geologists, noisy public house bars and tinned foods always called “tinned dog.” When I think back the smell of fine powdered dust seems to fill my nostrils.

The small whirlwinds or willy-willies were new to me. They raised spiral columns of dust that whilst circling upwards moved along the ground in a zigzag, erratic course, carrying leaves, scraps of paper and even weightier things with them. I remember watching one of these festive willy-willies that as it travelled playfully blew the galvanised iron roof off a weakly built stable. The four sides fell outwards. Inside there was a horse that cocked up its head in startled surprise, kicked up its heels and galloped off snorting.

A friend of mine told me a willy-willy blew down his camp whilst he was quite naked having a sponge bath. It carried away not only the tent but spread his clothes far and wide. His only pair of pants were carried away and ultimately stuck on top of a high tree.

* * * * *

Whether fortune smiled on them or otherwise the men of the goldfields were ever generous, warm-hearted and thoughtful. They had in a liberal
degree what the poet refers to as “kindness in another's trouble and courage in their own.” I was not long in the West without realising that what applies to Canada applies to Australia:

Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts in despair are aching,
That's where the West begins;
   Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
And a man makes friends without half trying—
   That's where the West begins.

III

There were numerous prospectors in the community. They always interested me, and I had many friends amongst them. Most of them wandered extensively through the bush. Often they were short of water and food. Occasionally they had fights with the blacks. Now and again they made sensationally rich discoveries. Usually secretive as to their movements and as to the results of their efforts, when they made a good find they concealed the fact until they were ready to make it public. If their shows were worthless they were sometimes equally uncommunicative.

A few years after Paddy Hannan had found gold at Kalgoorlie, he was financed by a few of us to prospect. An agreement was made with him by which we would share what he would find. We were always in hopes of his finding another Kalgoorlie and enriching us beyond the dreams of avarice. He would disappear for weeks and then report. We heard of his prospecting in the Menzies country. It was rumoured that he had made another valuable find. No news reached us from him, but the rumour was circulated by men who had come from the locality where he was working.

Late one night Hannan came to my office, travel-stained and looking mysterious. I was alone. He shut both doors and asked in a whisper if anyone could hear us. I assured him that we could not be heard. He again looked all round to make certain that we were alone.

I was on the tip-toe of expectation.

I felt convinced that he was going to startle me by announcing some wonderful find he had made.

“What have you found?” I inquired eagerly in a whisper.

He crept close to me, and in a scarcely audible voice solemnly said, “I've got nothing at all, at all.”
What original characters most of the prospectors were! How curious were their place-names. True, many localities retained the aboriginal names such as Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Boorabin and Goongarrie. Other places were called after the prospectors who discovered them. There are, for example, Cue, Menzies, Laverton and Cashman's. Much more picturesque is the nomenclature of the majority of towns and prospectors' finds.

What strange names are “Broad Arrow” and “Black Flag”! Even more interesting are “Hit or Miss,” “I.O.U.,” “White Feather” and “Hard to Find.” Amongst others are “Golden Pole,” “Last Chance,” “The Hidden Secret” and “Queen of the Earth.”

The origin of these names is unknown, except in a few instances. It was obvious in the case of “Golden Valley,” the scene of an early gold rush. When I visited it in early spring, years after it had been found, the prevailing colour was gold from the wealth of blossoms on thousands of trees and shrubs. The masses of yellow flowers, lighted as they were by a brilliant sun, made it truly “a Golden Valley” apart from the riches that were hidden under the surface.

The prospector of “Roaring Gimlet” told me it was so named because he set alight a gimlet tree and the flames made a roaring sound.

Southern Cross was discovered by a prospector who one night in camp was shown by an aborigine a yellow stone, a nugget. When asked where he found it, the native pointed to the sky and let him know that it was in the direction of where the great southern constellation was to be seen. With the Southern Cross as a guide, the native brought him to where the nugget was found. To-day all the streets of Southern Cross are named after features of the heavens. Antares Street is the main thoroughfare. There is a Sirius Street; also a Procyon Street. Other streets are Polaris Street, Achenar Street, Altair Street and Orion Street. The list of streets is lengthy, but the names of heavenly bodies is almost inexhaustible.

A mine called “The Flying Pig,” which produced a good many thousands of pounds' worth of gold, had a haphazard beginning. Two prospectors were travelling in the bush when they came to an outcrop. It was not what is called “likely looking country.” The prospects appeared worthless. One of them said, “I'll have a try at this outcrop.”

“Why waste time, Tom?” remarked his mate. “Let's get on.”

“I'm not going on until I see what this is. It may have gold in it.”

“And pigs may fly,” was the response.

Undeterred by the remark, Tom struck the rock with his pick. The broken
pieces showed gold freely, and they saw they had made a valuable discovery.

“We'll call the show ‘The Flying Pig,’ ” remarked one of them.
And they did!

* * * * * * *

He was tall, nearly six feet, thin and without an ounce of spare flesh on his bones. His eyes were bright and sharp, his skin brown, his face full-bearded and his dress rough, just trousers, singlet, boots and a much-faded old soft hat. He was dusty and tired, and I first met him between Hannan's and White Feather in 1895. He and his mate were returning from a prospecting trip in the Kurnalpi country.

It was a broiling hot day and they were camped under the shade of a gum tree.

With a companion I was driving to White Feather—to “The Feather,” as it was called, though afterwards it was generally known as Kanowna. We pulled up for a talk. A bottle of cool beer that we produced established friendship and helped conversation. The man I have described was a vigorous talker. His mate, who was less communicative, called him Bill.

“Had any luck?” we queried.

“Not a stroke,” said Bill. “People say prospectin' is a fine life. It's not. I 'ave bin at it for twenty years an' more an' I'm dead broke. I've had a few rises. I got 50 ounces at Hall's Creek, I picked up some good nuggets at Nullagine and I did well at Golden Valley, but I lost all I made looking for more.”

“Bayley and Ford and others made fortunes,” I remarked.

“About one in every couple of hundred is successful,” Bill answered.

“Think of all the men who fail.”

“It is a healthy open-air life,” I replied. “There are wonderful chances in it. Any day a man may make a find that will make him wealthy. Besides, a prospector is his own master. He is free and can go where he likes.”

“I'll grant you all that,” answered Bill. “But think of the drudgery. Blokes who know nothing about prospecting say it's fun. They wouldn't say it if they lived for months on ‘tinned dog’ and got Barcoo rot for want of fresh vegetables.”

“They wouldn't say it if they had to do a perish,” remarked Bill's mate.

Then the talk drifted to what prospectors most dread—failure to find water. Thirsty men suffer agonies in the bush. Most of those who die from want of water endure torture before the end. They become delirious, leave well-beaten tracks and wander into the bush, travel for miles in a circle.
The last stage is for them to shed their clothing, and when found dead their bodies are commonly quite naked.

Bill told us of a “perish” he had endured about a year previously. He was doing a twenty-five mile walk from where he was camped. It was summer and the weather intensely hot. He covered ten miles to a camp where he expected to get water, but found the place had been abandoned and no water available. As he had relied on getting water there, he had taken no water with him. His mouth was parched, but he decided to complete the fifteen miles. The sun grew hotter and hotter as the day advanced. His need for water became greater.

“I found,” continued Bill, “my tongue had swollen till it touched the roof of my mouth. I could scarcely breathe. With a knife I was able to somewhat loosen my tongue. In doing so I took off some of the skin. I staggered on. Somehow I got off the track. I gave myself up for lost. In a demented state I was fortunate to come across the camp of a couple of prospectors. They knew what to do. They would only give me spoonfuls of water. I tried to fight them for more, but they overpowered me. I remained with them several days. They nursed me till I recovered, but until my dying day I'll remember the agony I suffered. It was months before I was my proper self again.”

More than once it happened that men found themselves short of water whilst natives were in their vicinity. The natives had to have water and so there must be water somewhere near. Goldfields aborigines were secretive about the location of water supplies. They feared that Europeans would use all the water, especially as they ordinarily had horses or camels.

Native supplies of water were mostly in deep, narrow holes in rocks. Gnamma holes, as they are called, are difficult to find. The opening is narrow, but below the surface the hole often widens out. Sometimes it is quite deep and holds a large quantity of fresh water that, even on the hottest day, is quite cool. These holes are filled either by underground springs or by rain-water flowing into them down a channel fed from a natural catchment.

“The last time we were out in the Never-Never,” said Bill's mate, “we had no water. We were feeling anxious. We happened to see a few blacks. They ran away and we went after them. A big black fellow Joe was chasing turned and threw a spear at him. Joe saw it coming and dodged it. He was a good runner and was abreast of the black in a few seconds, seized him by the long hair he wore and threw himself on the nigger, who fell under him. We tied him up and made him know that we wanted him to take us to water. He was sullen and would do nothing. We gave him salt beef. We had a bag of salt and we made the beef extra salt and he ate it greedily.
Then we gave him more salt beef, and it was as salty as we could make it.
   “We sat down and watched the result.
   “Presently, we saw his mouth was getting parched. He tried to moisten it, but failed. He began to suffer.
   “I felt sorry for him, but our lives were in danger.
   “He got worse and made it clear that he would take us to water.
   “Joe, who held on to the rope that bound his hands, found it hard to keep pace with him. He brought us a couple of miles to where there were rocks. Coming to a small gnamma hole he threw himself down and plunged his hands, tied up as they were, into the water, which he drank greedily.
   “We let him go. He disappeared. We never saw him again.”

It was about these things we talked as the four of us rested for a couple of hours in the shade. Many prospectors perished in the bush in those days. Years before Bayley's discovery at Coolgardie men had died there for want of water. A couple of miles from where he made his find there were posts in which was nailed a tin notice that was dated 1888. Close by were the bleached skeletons of two Europeans whose names were never known.

Bill's summing up was: “Prospectin' is a rotten life. Yo're ever following a gleam of light that eludes you just as you seem to have reached it. Still, I am restless and no good for anything else. I couldn't stay in the same place for long, and so I expect I'll be all my life chasin' the weight.”

IV

A poor and ill-equipped party of six prospectors in 1894 were prospecting in the vicinity of Widgemooltha and were unsuccessful. Feeling disappointed and tired they were returning. Some twelve miles south of Coolgardie one of them, John Mills, a young Irishman from Londonderry, when sitting down, rubbed his heel against an outcrop. He noticed the glint of gold. When the cap of the reef was broken, the rock was found to be richly impregnated with gold. As the men dug deeper the prospects improved. In a few weeks some £25,000 worth of gold was dollied out. The property was sold to Lord Fingall whilst it was still a mere surface show for £180,000 and a sixth interest. The Londonderry (as the mine was called) became famous and was floated into a company for £700,000. When sold, “the golden hole” from which the rich specimens came was covered with a strong plate and sealed. The mine was “jumped” on the plea that the regulations were not complied with, but the “jumpers’” claim was not upheld. Months later it was unsealed, and it was found when opened up that the ore that remained was worthless!

No less remarkable than the Londonderry was the Wealth of Nations
found some months later by a well-known prospector, J. G. Dunn, who had with him two Afghans and camels and was acting for a West Australian syndicate. The find was situated twenty-eight miles north-east of Coolgardie. Some 5,000 ounces were secured from it when it was sold for about £150,000. When opened up that mine, too, proved a duffer!

Numbers of other rich finds were reported. The news of a good find was always followed by diggers rushing to the locality. Wild pegging of claims occurred. Sometimes the reports received were false. There were also what were called “bogus rushes.” One of the best remembered and most sensational was caused by statements reputed to be made by a man named McCann of a great gold discovery by him “somewhere down south.” It was said that a kerosene tin filled with gold was brought from there. These statements caused great excitement.

Parties left Coolgardie on camels, in buggies, riding bicycles and on foot, but the find could not be located.

McCann also was missing, but he was ultimately discovered. He looked as if he were just recovering from a drinking bout.

He was brought before a large crowd of angry diggers and made a rambling statement asserting that he never said what was attributed to him.

Finally he volunteered to lead a party to where alluvial gold was found. Four experienced bushmen were sent with him. They were armed and pledged to bring McCann back alive or dead.

A couple of weeks later the party returned. They had travelled four hundred miles. There was no find made and no place to show.

McCann, on his way back, in his fear of the diggers frequently asked for the loan of a revolver to shoot himself.

Fierce rage was expressed when the diggers heard they had been fooled. A meeting was held and threats were made of lynching. For safety McCann had been placed in the police lock-up.

Nothing more serious occurred than that an effigy of McCann was hanged and burned.

Another bogus rush that was said to be a storekeepers’ rush was to Mount Ragged, a mountain a considerable distance east of Norseman. Parties left Norseman, Coolgardie and other centres, some with horses and camels, others on foot. They travelled hundreds of miles through arid country and endured terrible hardships. They suffered the pangs of hunger and thirst. They struggled on, and ultimately reached the scene of the supposed find. They saw at once it was a non-auriferous area. Men were waiting to sell them stores.

One of the diggers who participated in the rush told me afterwards that the diggers who had been fooled behaved splendidly. “They were,” he said,
“so orderly about it. In fact, when the news that they had been duped was fully realised they only cut off one man's ears.”

Not bogus, but tragic was a disastrous rush to Siberia. Two prospectors brought to Coolgardie 40 ounces. They said there was plenty more gold in the locality. The weather was hot and dry, but scores of men went off badly prepared for a journey through a waterless, foodless area. Dozens were lost in the bush. Ten are known to have perished. Others died whose bodies were never found. Hundreds of men suffered terribly from thirst. None of them would perhaps have got back alive but for promptness in sending out relief parties on camels and horses.

V

Of all the rushes, genuine and bogus, the most talked of was that occasioned by Father Long's reported “Golden Sickle” nugget, or, as it was sometimes called, the “Sacred Nugget.” He was a young Irish priest, twenty-six years of age, stationed in Kanowna. I knew him well, and for that reason followed with interest all the developments of the mysterious affair.

Kanowna had been an alluvial field, and the surface alluvial was worked out. It had developed into the stage of working several promising reefs on various leases when it was discovered that there was a rich deposit of deep alluvial from which claim holders obtained considerable quantities of gold. Thousands of men flocked to Kanowna, which soon became a busy and prosperous centre where men dug the ground with feverish energy and lavishly spent their easily acquired wealth in hotel bars.

At this time Father Long visited Coolgardie, and when speaking of the Kanowna field said that he had seen a nugget which had been found there and which was over 1,000 ounces in weight. The statement got into the papers and aroused intense excitement.

When further questioned Father Long adhered to the statement that he had seen the nugget, but added that he was pledged to secrecy not to divulge the names of the men who showed it to him nor would he say the exact spot where it was found.

After that, the interest in the Sacred Nugget grew.

The rush to Kanowna became greater than ever.

Father Long's life was a misery to him through men questioning him in the hope of getting some clue. They followed him about, watched everyone who went to or came from his house. Many of them said the secret he held was of such public importance that it was his duty to tell everything. Finally he announced that he would declare the exact locality where he was
told that the nugget was discovered, and that he would reveal the secret publicly from the balcony of a two-story Kanowna hotel at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of a certain day.

At the appointed time a crowd of many thousands was gathered in front with all kinds of conveyances in order to rush to the spot. Some were on horseback, others in buggies, several were riding camels, and many had bicycles, but the vast majority were on foot. It was evidently going to be a wild, mad race.

When Father Long appeared on the balcony he asked those present to promise that after he told them where the Sacred Nugget was found they would not ask him anything further about it. He desired them to show that they made the promise by holding up their right hands. Immediately thousands of hands went up.

Every person in the immense concourse was silent. All eyes were fixed on the young, pale-faced, handsome priest. On each of the sea of faces there was an eager, strained look. There was a tense feeling in the still air.

The priest raised his hand.

Two dogs began a fierce, noisy fight. There were loud cries of canine pain as they were kicked apart and ran away howling.

In complete silence, in a clear distinct voice, he said:

“The weight of the nugget was between 95 lbs. and 100 lbs. It was found at a depth of five or six feet a quarter of a mile on this side of the nearest lake on the Kurnalpi road, not far from the road.”

Before he had quite finished speaking there was a rush. Bicycles, horses, camels and buggies were mixed up making for the spot indicated. There were several accidents, none of them of a serious nature. A bicycle rider was the first to reach the place. Pegging at once began. Hundreds of claims were pegged in the vicinity.

After working the claims for some days no gold was found. Before a couple of weeks they were all abandoned as worthless. That was the only information that Father Long ever gave about the nugget.

For years old diggers talked of the affair. Various opinions were held. One was that there never was a nugget and that Father Long was hoaxed by a faked nugget painted with leaf gold by those who wanted a rush to Kanowna in the interests of the hotels.

Another theory was that Father Long had talked extravagantly in Coolgardie and had made an exaggerated statement without realising the effect it was likely to have. When it aroused a furore he lacked the courage to admit that he had been guilty of what he thought was only a harmless taradiddle.

There were hundreds who contended that a mass of gold had been melted
and thrown when hot into water and thus had the semblance of a nugget. It was really (unknown to the priest) stolen gold, and that was why he had been pledged to secrecy.

Others were convinced that the nugget was found and shown to the priest, but that the finders wished to conceal their identity. Perhaps they were in debt to storekeepers and others and so wished to escape the payment of their just debts, but of that the priest would know nothing.

Father Long was of the cheery type of cleric, a man experienced in all sorts of country sports in Ireland, an excellent conversationalist and a bright companion.

One day, when the public excitement was at its height, I met him and could see that he was terribly worried. It was before he had made the announcement from the hotel balcony. I asked him to dine with me. He accepted. There were but the two of us at the dinner. We talked of Ireland, of its trout and salmon fishing, its game shooting, its old legends, wonderful horses and fine hunting. I did not refer to the nugget. When he was leaving he was excessively cordial in his expressions of gratitude for the hospitality extended to him.

Some months after he had announced the spot where he was told the nugget was found he again dined with me. The conversation between us was chiefly about Irish history and Irish politics. The nugget was never mentioned. As he was saying good-bye he turned to me and said: “Thanks very much, but especially for never questioning me about the nugget. It was kind and thoughtful. I hope some day I will be able to tell you more about it than I have told anyone else. I cannot do it now.”

That was the last time I saw him. The puzzle of the Sacred Nugget was never solved. He carried to the grave what further he knew about it. A year or so after the furore he had aroused had subsided he died in Perth from typhoid fever.
Photograph Facing Page 80: The Meeting of Diggers at Kanowna. A section of the huge crowd which assembled to hear Father Long tell them where the "Sacred Nugget" was found. The photograph shows them raising their right hands to promise that when he tells them they will ask nothing further about it.
Chapter V Gold Seekers' Adventures

Prospectors' moods—Respect for law and order—A bush mystery—Murder in a mosque—World-famous criminal—Discovery of Coolgardie's richest reef—Personal narratives.

I

PROSPECTORS were usually rough diamonds. Money made by them, after hardship and danger, was spent merrily. Men who had been poor all their lives and suddenly found themselves in possession of a few thousand pounds, lost their heads, became madly extravagant and threw money away in foolishness, chiefly drink. Wild and reckless, a favourite toast was:

“Here's to the man with ragged clothes
And hasn't time to mend 'em,
But d----the man with bright half-crowns
And hasn't the heart to spend 'em.”

Diggers who received large sums for a show have been known to light their pipes with pound notes. There have been occasions when they would go to a bush shanty, become drunk, and out of a spirit of devilment break everything in sight and then ask the shanty keeper what was the cost of the damage. He would estimate the value, and he would be handed over the money for what the rioters considered their fun.

* * * * * *

“Yes, the boys are a bit boisterous at times, but there's no real harm in them and they are as splendid a lot of men as ever lived.”

This was the remark that was made to me by a policeman I met on horseback in the bush. We lighted a fire, boiled a billy and had tea together under a gum tree. He went on: “They are good fellows, kindly hearted and as honest as daylight. I am in charge of an area as big as England, there are small parties working shows all over it, many of the men are constantly on the move.”

Then we talked of what I was as well acquainted with as he. We remarked that the men did not carry bowie knives or revolvers. Sometimes prospecting parties had a rifle or a shot-gun mostly to get wild turkeys, which were an agreeable change from the daily menu of “tinned dog.”
Offences such as theft were rare, but were promptly dealt with. A tin dish was beaten to produce a gong-like sound and there was a “roll up.” If the charge was proved, the usual punishment was for the offender to be expelled from the goldfields. He was well pleased to be let off so lightly, and was careful to obey the expulsion order, knowing that it would be dangerous for him if he didn't. In the absence of the warden disputes between diggers as to the ownership of claims were also decided by a “roll up.” There was a universal respect for law and order.

The crimes that were committed during the prospecting years were the more notable because of their rarity.

“I remember the murder of one prospector,” said the policeman. “It was a mysterious affair at Bardoc. A party of diggers in September, 1894, saw a man filling in a hole. Later, it occurred to them that this was rather strange. Men do not usually trouble to fill up holes they make in the bush when looking for gold. They returned next morning. The man was gone. On making an investigation there was clear evidence that a murder had been committed. The body of a man was found with the head bashed in. It had been buried in an endeavour to conceal the crime. The remains were not identified, and the murderer was never discovered.” For long the occurrence was discussed round camp-fires as an undiscovered bush mystery. Various theories were advanced. One was that two men had made a rich find and when returning with valuable specimens one man murdered the other in order to get all the gold.

The constable then spoke of a murder, but of a different kind. It occurred amongst the Afghan community, who were chiefly camel men and carriers. The prevailing opinion about the Afghans was that they were honest so long as they wore their shirts outside their trousers. When they wore their shirts inside their trousers they were viewed with suspicion and no longer trusted.

The victim of the murder was a rich Mussulman, Tagh Mahomet, who was shot whilst praying in the mosque at Coolgardie. A fellow-countryman, Goulam Mahomet, crept behind him with a loaded revolver in his hand and shot him in the back. Goulam calmly drew the remaining charges out of the revolver and went to the police station and surrendered. A difference had arisen between them, and Goulam thought Tagh would assassinate him and so he determined to get in first.

Goulam was in due course hanged, but to the last he declared that he had committed no crime as what he did was in self-defence.

On the scaffold he was dressed in spotless white clothes, was barefooted and wore a red fez, and his last words were: “There is no God but one God, and Mahomet is His prophet.” About twenty of his fellow-countrymen
covered his grave with flowers. The condemned man thought he would not have been hanged had he been a white man. He said he was hanged because the English never forgave the Afghans for the massacre of British troops in the Khyber Pass.

* * * * *

Mr. Thomas Talbot, who was well known on the goldfields, told me his personal experiences with one notorious murderer who arrived at Southern Cross before the finding of gold at Coolgardie. In a written account sent to me Mr. Talbot stated:

“There was an engineer on the Fraser mine, where I was a trucker, called Baron Swanson. His work was to maintain the batteries and machinery in working order and keep the pumps going underground, which at the time gave considerable trouble. He was very clever with machinery and the pumps, and was considered the best man the mine had so far at the work. He often had yarns with the trucking lads. Most of us liked him. There was one man on the mine, ‘Black Charley’ he was called, and he disliked Swanson. They were ever at enmity. ‘Black Charley’ always said he was a bad man, a man who was callous and would stop at no crime to achieve his purpose. It was merely instinct with ‘Black Charley,’ for he could give no reason to justify his condemnation.

“With the fair sex Swanson was a special favourite. He made no secret that he was engaged to be married, but, notwithstanding, the few women then at Southern Cross allowed themselves to be fascinated by him. He readily gave them diamonds, or what purported to be diamonds, and seemed to be lavishly generous to them.

“He was preparing a cottage in which he and his future wife would live. She was a Melbourne girl and she was coming to West Australia to marry him. I and another young man helped to mix cement. We carried the cement into the little cottage for him to put in a cement floor.

“While the renovation of the cottage was in progress, one day, to our surprise, a constable came to the mine and read a paper to the engineer and arrested him for murder. I will never forget how calmly he took the news. He assured the constable it was a great mistake, and told his friends that he would soon prove his innocence. When he left on the coach a large crowd assembled to see him off. He wished them all a merry good-bye and promised them he would be back amongst them before long.

“The trial in Melbourne proved that his real name was Deeming, that he had murdered a number of wives and that the method adopted for disposing of their bodies was to bury them under cement floors. He was hanged, but several women believed he was innocent and mourned his end!”
Strange enough, amongst prospectors doubt was commonly expressed that Bayley and Ford were the actual discoverers of the far-famed Coolgardie reef known as Bayley's Reward. It was a favourite topic amongst them. They argued about it over bars in bush shanties, in camps and wherever they congregated. Some prospectors gave the credit to three new arrivals in Australia named Harry Baker, Dick Fosser and Tommy Talbot. Baker was from London, Fosser was a Swede, and Talbot, who was then twenty-one years of age, had come from Devonshire. They were all young men, and, owing to the strike on the mines at Southern Cross, were idle when Bayley and Ford rode into Southern Cross for stores. The three men noticed the presence of the two prospectors, who had five pack horses. Bayley and Ford came from the east, they purchased requirements for some months, packed their bags and returned seemingly on their own tracks. Baker, Fosser and Talbot were tired of doing nothing. The spirit of adventure was aroused in them. It was winter, and the weather was cool and pleasant. At my request Talbot wrote for me the following account of
their adventures:

“We bought four horses (country types), three pack-saddles and bags, one riding saddle and bridle. We packed about 550 lbs. of rations, and we had our swags in addition. We then got a black fellow who was supposed to know the back country.

“When we started off we felt we were blessed with the good wishes of our workmates. The trip would be a hard one, but we were in a cheerful, hopeful mood. Three of the horses were laden with our requirements. That meant there was only one saddle horse between the three of us. We took turnabout to ride. Bayley and Ford had followed the track of Hunt, an old-time explorer. The only difficulty we had in keeping to it was when we came to rock catchments. Then it became indistinct.

“The first day we came to rocks about twenty miles from the Cross. It was where Bayley had camped, and we also camped there. During the evening our black fellow was restless. I knew something of the ways of aborigines, having had experience of them with cattle work. I proposed that we should take turns at watching him during the night. I feared he might give us the slip or do us in. He knew we were watching him. I could see that by the way he was watching us. We got him to make his camp near us. The only firearm we possessed was a new .44 Winchester rifle. It was kept between us as we lay down. The long night wore on. The native often sat up, warming himself and all the time keeping his eyes on us. We maintained our vigilance till morning broke.

“Just at daylight the native got up, put the billy on the fire, listened for the sound of the horses' bells and pointed to where they were feeding. It seemed to us that our suspicions were unfounded. Our vigilance was relaxed. He was allowed plenty of latitude. Later, we missed him. We called, looked around and went some distance from the camp in search of him. Then the truth dawned on us. He was gone. He had run away and left us to it. His skill as a tracker and his knowledge of the bush were invaluable to us, and his absence we regarded as a serious loss.

“Still, there was no reason why we should not have breakfast; we were hungry and ate heartily whilst we discussed the matter. Black fellow or no black fellow, we were determined to carry on.

“The first few days passed. It was monotonous and tiring plodding on. There was little to cause excitement. It was perplexing at times to follow the track over ironstone hills and granite rocks.”

A heavily laden party with insufficient horses makes slow progress.
There was not much change in the appearance of the country. Men get weary, they become disheartened and tire of each other's society. There is little to arouse their interest. It is a great break in the monotony to meet unexpectedly another party of prospectors. This is what happened to Talbot and his companions. He records it thus:

“At what is now known as Gnarlbine Rock we met four prospectors with a native. One of them was Jack Reidy, and the others were Hogan, Cherry and Johnson. We camped with them for the night, told them our intentions and gave them the news from the town in general. Reidy showed us where Bayley's tracks turned north-east off Hunt's track that we had been following. He said they had camped near where Bayley and Ford were, they had several talks with them, and Reidy's party put in a few days' prospecting, got several bits of gold, but nothing worth reporting. We tried to persuade them to return with us, but they said they had enough of it and had no rations. They intended to return to the Cross, work for a while and then have another try at prospecting later on.

“The following morning we bid good-bye to Reidy's party and started on the trail. That night we camped at a rock some nine miles from what is now Coolgardie. Our ponies got away from us, and that made us late in starting in the morning. The following evening we camped at a gnamma hole in which there was water. There were several fresh horse-tracks about, so we knew we were not far from where Bayley was camped.

“Next morning off we went again. I was on foot. I was a good tracker and led the way. After going about half a mile over ironstone country, I was surprised to hear the words 'Good-morning.' I looked up and saw in front of me, Bayley. We all had a talk.

“I told him we were prospecting, and he said, ‘There's a bit of good country worth prospecting right here.’ Pointing to what was afterwards known as Fly Flat, which was a few hundred yards away, he remarked, ‘That flat is worth a trial.’

“Because of what he told us we returned to the gnamma hole and put up our camp there. We decided to give the country a trial. After dinner we went to have a look around. We put in a bit of work on Fly Flat, and between us we got over an ounce of gold that afternoon. I picked up a small nugget, and I now carry that nugget on my watch-chain. Several days were spent by us fossicking, getting a little gold here and there, as gold could be got almost anywhere.

“Bayley and Ford were camped at the north-west end of a huge white quartz blow, known as the Big Blow. Ford was working a small leader which was about worked out, being only a surface show but good. Bayley was mostly away from the camp. He prospected a distance of from twenty to twenty-five miles around, camping out a night or so whilst Ford stayed and worked the leader. Bayley found Red Hill and specked several ounces alluvial on that field. When he returned from his outside trips he would often have a yarn with us, but Ford was an old ‘hatter’ who would never have a conversation. Evidently he looked on us as if we had no right to be there, and gave us the impression that he feared we might rob his camp.

“One beautiful morning in September, 1892, we went out prospecting as usual. The sun was shining, the sky blue, there was a cold snap in the atmosphere that
created a fresh feeling. We went to where we had picked up a few specks and some specimens the evening before and thought we might find a leader or a payable reef about. Soon one of us picked up a specimen that was very rich. Then we specked about following the traces up the side of a hill. Before we got to the top we found abundance of gold, in fact gold appeared all about us. It was glittering in the sunlight for at least twenty yards in front of us. Needless to say we were thrilled. I think for quite a few minutes we went off our heads with excitement. Our thinking powers quickly returned. In less than half an hour we gathered £1,700 worth of gold and specimens. On the top of the ridge was the cap of the reef with gold in plenty studded in hard quartz. This El Dorado was to become afterwards the famous Bayley's Reward reef. Great was our delight, not knowing how we were to lose it. We had no thought of pegging it out.

“A heap of rich specimens was collected by us. They were too valuable to leave lying about and too great for us to carry to our camp. We thought it wise to plant most of them in a hole we had sunk the day before in a hollow when! trying for alluvial. About a sugar bag full of specimens was carried down and fresh dirt was thrown over them. This was the means of our losing the mine. In this heap there was not less than £700 worth of gold. Bayley told me so afterwards. The richest specimens we carried to our camp. Our coats were off and we tied the sleeves, filled them with golden quartz and so carried them.

“When leaving with our loads it was about 12.30 p.m. It was near dinner-time. We were all planning and talking and building castles in the air. Our fortunes were made, in our opinion, and we were full of joy and happiness. The bush was thick, and we thought we would make a short cut and go back a way none of us had travelled before. We were too excited to note the direction we were going. After walking for about half an hour and not reaching our destination we began to realise we were lost—bushed. We wandered most of the afternoon, but stuck to our loads and became fatigued and knocked up. Just before dark we climbed the highest hill we could see and tried to locate ourselves. The hill was later known as Toorak. The night was calm and still. Not even the lightest breeze was blowing. About midnight we heard a horse bell. Off we struck in the direction from which the sound came and we found our horses. They were near our camp, standing over the rock hole waiting for a drink. We watered them, then went to the camp, and turned in quite knocked out.

“It was natural that after our tiring adventure we should sleep rather late next morning. After breakfast we left for our reef find, taking with us an axe, tools, etc. By this time our excitement had cooled down and we had returned to sanity.

“On our arrival, to our dismay, we found Bayley and Ford busy pegging our find. We protested. They said all was fair in this game and that we were three young fools and should have pegged the ground.

“An argument ensued, and Ford took out a revolver and threatened to shoot. Bayley said to Ford, ‘Put away that gun, there's to be no shooting.’ Bayley added, ‘There will be a great boom soon; you fellows should peg on to our pegs on the south of the lease we have pegged, and if you don't make a mess of things you will get £5,000 or £6,000 for it.’ Bayley also said, ‘We have only pegged a short distance south of the rich shoot.’ This was right.

“The specimens loaded with gold that we buried were kept by
Bayley and Ford. They picked out the richest and dollied the poorer ones. Bayley brought all this gold to Southern Cross. It caused a sensation, and so Bayley and Ford secured Bayley's Reward mine.

“Bayley told me it had been their intention to shift camp the morning they discovered the gold find we had made but failed to peg out. Had we discovered the find one day later Bayley and Ford's names would never have been associated with it. The specimens we brought to our camp contained 340 ounces of gold. Bayley was agreeable to let us stand in with him, but Ford stood firm and would not agree.

“We three were young men, strange to the country, and were bluffed out of the mine and the gold by two older and more experienced men. We pegged the lease afterwards known as Bayley's South. We knew so little of the ways of the world that we were even done out of that. There was a man in whom we had confidence. We thought his knowledge and influence would be of use to us in the disposal of the lease. At his instigation we agreed to accept £800 for our lease. He got £200 for what he did and we thought it all right, but subsequently we found out that he had stood in with the purchasers.”

* * * * *

The theory advanced by some of the early Coolgardie prospectors was that Bayley and Ford had pegged a prospecting area which took in part of the rich chute referred to by Talbot as discovered by his party. When they saw the chute the morning after it was found and it was not in their ground
they moved a couple of pegs sufficiently to embrace the whole of the chute. In shifting the pegs they were legally within their rights, as the other men had failed to peg the ground and so protect themselves. It was also asserted that Talbot's two mates wanted to peg the chute, but Talbot said Bayley and Ford were going to leave the locality and they would then have all the ground they wished. Hence the three men's loss.

III

Bayley and Ford always indignantly denied that it was not they who discovered Bayley's Reward. As Ford said, “From the time we pegged it out until we sold, our title was never questioned.” They were experienced prospectors who had been looking for gold in various parts of Western Australia and had made a good discovery in the Murchison, but were not satisfied and travelled south. In July they reached a place called by the natives Coolgardie. Ford thus writes about what happened:

“In the morning we went out for the horses in order to give them a drink. I was leading my horse over what is now called Fly Flat when I picked up a piece of gold weighing about half an ounce. We were more excited over that little bit of gold than any we found afterwards. That day we picked up about 80 ounces on the flat, the largest of them being about five ounces.”

Ford goes on to say:

“There must have been a wandering prospector out there in 1888, as we saw where he had pegged out a claim which had the date 1888 on it and he had tied his camel down at the water. This claim, however, had no gold. Whoever he was he must have cleared out or else was killed by the blacks. I tried to find out who he was, but could not.”

Ford further states that the weather was very rainy and they had to sleep in wet blankets for more than a month. “It was lucky for us,” he adds, “that it was wet, as the blacks made for outback, where food was more plentiful.”

Bayley and Ford were not the only prospectors east of Southern Cross. The rainy weather had induced another party to follow in their tracks. Bayley and Ford, having discovered a good alluvial field, were determined to keep it to themselves until it was convenient for them to announce it. Ford writes:

“One afternoon up came a party of men with a black boy. They camped a little way from us. Bayley and I walked down to them. I knew two of them: Jack Reidy and German Charley. In the morning they brought their horses, and we asked them to stop as we could get colours of gold and it would only take a few more days to
prospect the country and then we could all go together. They would not, and we threw our hats up when we saw the last of them. They were very green, for a blind man could tell that we had found gold, otherwise we would not have stayed there. We had between 200 and 300 ounces of gold at the time.”

About ten days after that Bayley and Ford had to go to Southern Cross for provisions. When they arrived there the miners were on strike. They bought a light load of provisions and did not tell anyone about their finding alluvial gold in Fly Flat. When they were leaving they said they were going out to see what a prospector named Jack Reidy was doing. It was raining when they started back. They met Jack Reidy as he was returning to Southern Cross. They told him they were going to see what “he” had found. He said he had had no luck, and they then informed him that they would travel northward to the Murchison. They got on their horses and started for their camp, Fly Flat. Reidy was evidently suspicious. He felt they had made a good find. So convinced was he of this that he afterwards related how he followed them for a few miles and on reconsideration, thinking he was mistaken in the impression he formed, he turned back.

It was when Bayley and Ford returned to Fly Flat that the really important gold discovery was made. The Fly Flat find was merely rich alluvial, but the presence of a gold-bearing reef indicated the possibility of a valuable goldfield. Ford thus writes of what happened:

“After we got back to Fly Flat, Bayley went over what was afterwards our prospecting area. In a leader he found rich gold. We shifted our camp to there and got about 200 ounces. The gold was in decayed quartz. I started prospecting a big blow and found gold at both the north and south ends. I went to what was later Bayley’s Reward and picked up gold and saw gold in the reef, but did not touch it as we had enough gold in the camp. I commenced to make bags to pack the gold we had, for we had to report the find. Bayley was away horse-hunting. He had his work cut out attending the horses as there was very little water.

“Three young men were camped at the water. They were for ever poking about our claim. One morning they asked me to show them the pegs. I pointed them out to them. We walked past where the gold was in the reef, but it had not been touched. I came back to the tent and packed the gold in bags.

“Bayley came back about six o’clock. He asked if I was at the reef, and I told him I was only down to show the chaps the pegs.

“He said, ‘They have been at the reef and have taken the stone.’

“He went to them next morning, and they gave him some stone, but I do not think all they took.”

* * * * * *

I have given the story of each of the two parties. Perhaps it was well for
Talbot that it was not he and his mates who received the reward that went to Bayley and Ford. Later he became interested in pastoral properties, wisely invested the money he made out of them and became a wealthy man. It was more than forty-two years after the Coolgardie discovery that I last talked to him. He was then sixty-three years of age; low-sized and a typical bushman; tough, wiry and weather-worn. His black hair was tinged with grey; he had quick, ferret-like eyes; his hands were horny; his clothes were ready-made, ill-fitting and not too new; he was possessed of tireless energy and was ever on the move, travelling about attending to his multifarious interests; a saving man, but not mean. For years he lived in the Eucla country on his station, Mundrabilla, with his family. That was before the Trans-Australian Railway was built. For four years his wife never saw a white woman. But that was long ago, and later the family lived in a beautiful villa near Perth, commanding a picturesque view of the Swan river.

I jokingly remarked to him that he was reputed to be worth a quarter of a million. “If you are,” said I, “you deserve it, you have well earned it.”

“I'm not worth that much,” he replied. “I don't know what I'm worth, and that's a fact. When I left England I was but sixteen years old. My father gave me £8. I have that £8 yet.”

Talbot had attached to his watch-chain a gold nugget. It was the first he had picked up at Coolgardie.

* * * * *

The story told by Talbot and the story told by Ford as to the discovery of the Reward reef at Coolgardie differ wildly. It is still a matter of contention amongst old prospectors as to which story was true. An old prospector friend of mine, Jim Cassidy, told me that Bayley freely admitted that Talbot's party first discovered the reef, but did not peg it out.
Chapter VI “The Roaring Nineties”


I

THE closing years of the last century are generally spoken of in Western Australia as “The Roaring Nineties.” Money was spent lavishly. Drinking, gambling and racing were the order of the day. In the main street of Kalgoorlie there were scores of public houses in which liquor bars were crowded day and night.

Most of the population were young unmarried men. They lived in camps and had their meals at one of the hotels. We were a happy-go-lucky crowd. A number of us clubbed together and had an hotel room in which we had our meals. One evening as dinner was finishing a member of the party carelessly flipped a nut out of his fingers and it struck a friend in the ear. He flipped it back, but it did not hit the man it was aimed at, but another, who promptly threw it back. Then, like a lot of schoolboys, those present began as a joke to throw fruit at each other. The missiles used were not only fruit, but anything handy.

There was a French captain, a man who had fought in the Franco-Prussian War, who came occasionally to the hotel. He was a stranger to most of us, a severe-looking-individual, very particular about his dress and with waxed moustache with ends that stood straight out a couple of inches on each side of his face.

When the mêlée was at its height a friend of mine at the end of the room threw a boiled onion at me. I saw it coming and ducked my head. At that moment the French captain looked into the room. The onion struck him on the top of the nose. It was soft and it flattened out! Nothing was to be seen of his face except the waxed ends of the moustache.

Subsequently, the man who threw the onion went to the captain, explained that he had not thrown the onion intentionally at him, but at me as a joke, and what happened was an accident and he apologised.

“Sar,” cried the infuriated Frenchman, glaring at him, “dis is an insult that can only be wiped out in blood!”
My friend again expressed regret and apologised. He explained that what happened was not intentional.

The Frenchman refused to accept the apology and declared he wanted satisfaction.

The onion thrower said Australians did not fight duels. It was against the law and he could do no more than humbly apologise.

The French officer implied that it was easy for cowards to find excuses.

This aroused the ire of the Australian; he expressed himself ready to give the Frenchman satisfaction in any way he liked if the Frenchman was ridiculous enough to take that absurd view.

It took some trouble on the part of friends to prevent a duel.

I heard of one duel arising out of a quarrel between foreigners. A challenge was sent and accepted. The seconds, who were Australians, loaded both pistols with red-currant jelly. They also heavily loaded the principals with strong drink. Each of the combatants showed red after shots were exchanged. They were, in fact, both bleeding. The seconds agreed that as they were wounded, honour was satisfied and all ended happily.

* * * * *

There were many curious characters about. An early day prospector was noted for his strange sayings. In a speech at a banquet he said, “I wint out into the desert with a pick an' a shovel in each hand and me wather bag in the other.”

A very enterprising but uneducated goldfielder was a member of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council. His sayings brought to mind those of Mrs. Malaprop in Sheridan's “Rivals.” The council was reported to have been mulcited in a law case. He gravely asked if it were true that the council had been “mutilated in the last law case.”

Medical men reported that the local milk was never analysed, and advocated sterilisation. In a speech he insisted that in the interests of public health milk should be sent to “the Government anarchist and paralysed.”

In a public speech he complained that times were bad and he felt sure the “economical gales” were coming.

The councillor in question was brutally candid. The services of a popular official whose work had not been satisfactory were dispensed with. It was done by a polite hint that he should resign. At a subsequent farewell function the mayor and councillors said a lot of pleasant things about him and expressed regret at his departure. The candid councillor got up and spoke thus: “I never heard such a lot of rot talked in my life. If our guest is such a fine fellow and the mayor and councillors are so sorry that he's
going, then why did they sack 'im?"

He firmly believed that “all men are fools.” He built a public hall from his own plans without the aid of an architect, and he was in the habit of saying how most people predicted it would fall down. One night the gallery was so overcrowded that several of the audience left it, declaring that it would fall down. “Where do you think they went?” said he. “The fools stood under it.”

Goldfielders were keen followers of the turf, and some of them had strange ideas of turf morals. The owner of one of the best Australian horses, a man who raced only for the love of the sport and was of the highest repute, received a telegram from a back blocks mine manager a few days before a race, saying, “If your horse is trying put a tenner on for me.” Naturally the owner was indignant. He replied, “My horse is scratched; like your cheek.” As an answer, the following reached the owner: “Thanks, put a tenner for me on Your Cheek.”

*         *         *         *         *

Communications were slow and difficult. A man who kept a wayside bush hotel some sixty miles from Coolgardie had a singular experience. His wife was very ill and he asked a passing traveller to get medical aid, regardless of expense, from Coolgardie. Two doctors duly arrived, and after a consultation decided that there was no hope of recovery. The husband was disconsolate. The doctors declared they could do no good by staying. There was no telegraph available. The nearest undertaker was in Coolgardie, and the hotel-keeper told the doctors, with tears in his eyes, to have the best coffin that money could buy sent to the hotel.

Scarcely had the doctors departed than the woman began to rally. Each few hours showed an improvement.

The doctors' diagnosis was altogether wrong. She got better and better, to the delight mingled with wonderment of the husband.

She left her room and began to go about as usual.

One morning early a teamster turned up with a coffin in his wagon and the name and age of the hotel-keeper's wife engraved on a plate on the lid. It was hurriedly laid in a bough shed for fear that the sight of it would give the now rapidly recovering patient a severe shock. Days passed. The wife got well. The horrible thing that was hidden away began to get on the husband's nerves. She wondered what was preying on his mind.

One day she went into the bough shed, pulled off some things that hid the coffin, read the inscription on the lid, and immediately went and said to her husband, “It is just the thing I want.”
The coffin was well made. She had a partition put in it and she used the smaller division to hold water to wash clothes. In the dry part of the coffin the clothes, when washed, were placed before they were hung out on the line. For more than twenty years the coffin was to be seen in the hotel yard, where it continued to be used as a washtub.

* * * * *

Goldfielders were very casual. An Irish doctor who came to the goldfields with the main object of making money out of gold-mining, and incidentally to practise his profession, told me that an old man came to him for treatment. In an endeavour to diagnose his case he decided to take his temperature, and put a thermometer in his mouth. The doctor left the room for a few seconds, when something distracted his attention, and his surgery being next door to a newly formed club he wandered in and engaged in a game of billiards. After he had finished the game he suddenly remembered the patient. He rushed back, to find him still balancing the thermometer in his mouth at the angle he had put it in. When the doctor took it out the patient remarked, “Oh, docthor, that's a great cure! I feel a lot better. All the pain's now gone!”

* * * * *

At a mining camp out back, where some fifty men were working for alluvial gold in a gully, a popular prospector suddenly got ill and died. Every man in the vicinity gathered round the grave. Someone suggested that the Burial Service should be read. There was no Bible or prayer book in the camp. It was felt something should be done, but no one knew exactly what to do until one old digger stretched out each hand, and taking hands the mourners solemnly and reverently, with their hats off, sang, “For he was a jolly good fellow.”

* * * * *

He was in many ways a worthy townsman, without education, but prosperous. As a justice of the peace a ne'er-do-well from England was brought before him charged with being drunk and disorderly and resisting arrest.

“What 'ave you to say,” said the magistrate, “for your disgraceful conduct?”

“I am guilty, sir,” replied the culprit, “and in extenuation I can only plead
that in wrongdoing I err in the company of my betters. De Quincey tells us he is an opium fiend; the Bard of Avon does not deny the charge of being a poacher; Byron shows us he is a profligate; Goldsmith is known as a gambler; Benvenuto Cellini acknowledges he is a thief and murderer—"

“That's enough,” said the magistrate. “You are making the case worse for yourself. A month's imprisonment with hard labour.” Then, turning to the constable, he added, “This man has been keepin' bad company. I didn't know there were such bad characters about 'ere. Bring them afore me. 'Tis time they were dealt with.”

*         *         *         *         *

A very different type of man from that ignorant justice of the peace was John Michael Finnerty, the first warden of the goldfields. He was an outstanding personality, in fact the most outstanding in a community that included men of exceptional cleverness, several of whom later became world famous. He had the confidence of prospectors, and there was general faith in his fairness and wisdom. Once met he never could be forgotten. He was tall, of commanding appearance, and had an interesting career. An Irishman, born in Limerick, sent to school at Rugby, he came to Western Australia when twenty-one years of age, engaged in pearling on the north-west coast, and traded with the Malay islands. After many adventures he became a pastoralist on the Gascoyne river. For a time he was most successful, but a drought came, his stock perished, and he was ruined completely. Then he became an inspector of police in the northern part of the colony, and when gold was discovered near Hall's Creek he was appointed warden of the Kimberley goldfields. As a raconteur he could not be surpassed. In his stories of the Far North he outrivalled De Rougemont. In fact, Finnerty always said that De Rougemont must have heard of some of his experiences and used them for his book.

Finnerty had a great sense of humour. One day he came into the club looking amused. He told me he had directed a policeman to announce that the court was adjourned sine die. The policeman was Irish. It was a dark, wet day, and thinking that was the cause of the postponement, he cried out, “The curt is adjourned till a shiny day.”

On one occasion Warden Finnerty had to give a decision as to the ownership of a large nugget found close to the boundary, if not actually on the boundary, between two alluvial claims. The holder of each claim said it was his. Finnerty turned to one of the claimants and asked him to produce his miner's right. He confessed he had none. Then he asked the other litigant a similar question, and he also had no miner's right. “In that case,”
said the warden, “the nugget must go to the Crown.” And it did.

* * * * * * *

The first Mayor of Coolgardie was James Shaw, a Belfast man, a veteran of the Maori war and a one-time Mayor of Adelaide. In his capacity of chief magistrate a case came before him where a man used insulting language towards another, who promptly knocked him down. A fine of £1 for assault was imposed, but when the man who was knocked down asked for costs, Mr. Shaw promptly replied, “Certainly not, a man who cannot fight should not use insulting language.”

One man, charged with being drunk and disorderly, was asked what he had to say to the charge. He calmly replied, “I plead guilty to the charge of drunkenness, but cannot truthfully say anything about being disorderly until I hear the evidence.”

A warden friend of mine told me of a blackfellow, Jacky, who was brought before him and asked before he was sworn, “What will happen to you if you tell a lie?”

“If I tell lie I go to hell,” was the prompt answer.

When cross-examined he was asked, “You say you know the meaning of an oath and if you lie you go to hell. What will happen if you tell the truth?”

“Then,” said Jacky, “we'll lose the bloody case.”

* * * * * * *

Quietly and unobtrusively there arrived at Coolgardie in 1896 a young man, twenty-one years of age, but extremely desirous of being considered much older. He had mining experience in the United States and came under engagement to Messrs. Bewick Moreing and Co., mining engineers. Silent, reserved and a tireless worker, he could write excellent reports, and showed a most penetrative judgment as to the value of prospecting shows. For years he lived on the goldfields. He had few friends and was almost unnoticed except by his employers, who realised his worth, and by mining men with whom he was brought into contact. He was an American, somewhat uncouth, a teetotaller, neither popular nor unpopular, and when after three years his firm transferred him to China his departure was unnoticed. Later, in 1905 and 1907, he returned to inspect mines for his firm, but few were aware of his presence in Australia. He would have attracted great attention were it known that he was to become one of the world's famous men—Herbert Hoover, later President of the United States.
In another book I have written much about his goldfields experiences. My recollections of him and his brilliant wife need not be repeated, but though little heard of in those days yet of all the goldfields community he was the one most heard of subsequently.

* * * * *

To me and others whose memories go back to those pioneering goldmining times it has been a matter for regret that amongst the many brilliant intellects, the prospectors and adventurous seekers after riches, there were so few writers, and none of them of the highest order. It was a colourful life, crowded with incidents—humorous, pathetic, sensational; a singular medley of people, strangers to each other and amidst strange surroundings. No wonder that they did strange things and often showed human nature strangely naked. John Galsworthy, in a letter to a friend written in September, 1894, says:

“Have you read the accounts of the gold finds in Western Australia? If it wasn't for my governor I should like to join two or three fellows and have a shy at them. It does seem to me so beastly dull to go on grinding at a profession or business just to make money, when one might make as much in two or three years; and even if one didn't, I think the life would be good for one, harden one up a bit. I must say I should like to make some tin; it is an awful bore always being hard up more or less.”

What a pity Galsworthy did not come! He might have made “some tin,” but most likely the “tin” would have come out of the ink-pot. He might not have written “The Forsyte Saga,” but he probably would have written a saga not less interesting and one that might have brought him even more fame.

* * * * *

A. G. Hales, the novelist, spent some years at Coolgardie, where he was generally known as “Smiler,” edited a paper, was a boxer of local renown and an unsuccessful candidate for Parliament. Had he remained longer in Western Australia and used the material around him, he would probably have become an Australian Bret Harte. Instead, as a war correspondent and traveller, he led a life of constant changes and picturesque adventures.

In the Boer War, as a representative of the London *Daily News*, he secured a high reputation for sending early information of importance and for his brilliant descriptions. One day he and another correspondent, Lambie, left camp and rode off into the veldt to seek the whereabouts of some Australians in the vicinity. They did not find the Australians; they
found Boers. Whilst galloping away Lambie was shot dead. Hales and his horse were both wounded and he was made a prisoner. In his captivity he was kindly treated by General Christian de Wet, of whom he became an admirer. Long years afterwards, during the Great War, when Hales was in the Alps, not far from him a son of de Wet's was fighting with the Italians.

* * * * *

J. H. Curle, a mining engineer who was amongst the early day goldfielders, afterwards acquired considerable fame as a writer, but his books only refer briefly to Western Australia. “The Gold Mines of the World” is one of them, but he is better known as the author of such well-thumbed library volumes as “The Shadow Show,” “This World of Ours,” and “To-day and To-morrow.” One of the most travelled men in the world, Curle has traversed the five continents, north and south, east and west.

Remarkable and celebrated though he is, yet no mention can be found of him in reference books. He hates publicity of any kind.

“A wintry landscape with a fairish woman in her furs is civilisation's masterpiece.” This quotation from one of Curle's books was given by a reporter in a Perth paper, the *Daily News*, in recording an attempt he made to interview Curle in 1928. The interviewer added that although Perth had no wintry landscape, the “winter of discontent” spread to pressmen waiting on a railway station for Curle.

“Mr. Curle?” inquired a pressman.

“Well, what of it?” was the somewhat brusque reply.

The newspaper man stated that he would be very glad if Mr. Curle could spare him a few minutes during the day for an interview.

“I have nothing to say; nothing I want to say. If you want to say I'm here and that I'm going to South Africa, well I can't stop you, I suppose.”

“But,” interposed the reporter, “as a traveller and as a frequent visitor to Australia, your views are appreciated by the general public.”

“You'll find 'em all in my books then!” was the author's only reply.

II

In the new hastily built towns of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie a source of dread to business people was the constant fear of fire. The structures were of most inflammable material—hessian, canvas, wood and galvanised iron. The dryness of the atmosphere increased the danger. No insurance company would cover the risks involved. There were several serious fires. Numerous buildings and their contents were destroyed, but often well-
meant efforts to save property were responsible for most of the harm done. The cry of “Fire!” aroused the wildest excitement. There was no organisation to cope with the danger, and men rushed about, each acting individually. Crockery would be thrown into the streets and thus smashed to pieces by some wild-eyed person anxious to save it from the flames. In a mad frenzy the mob would tear down and destroy the contents of a building that was in no danger.

In a hotel fire in a two-story wooden building a parrot in its cage was among the “saved.” A man rushed out on the balcony holding at arm's length the cage containing the bird, which was cursing frightfully in protest. Leaning over, he hurriedly dropped it on to Hannan Street and rushed back for more. When landing, the cage telescoped and almost flattened. The parrot, from the ruins of the cage, swore so volubly and thoroughly at the surrounding crowd of hardened diggers that even they were all hushed in awe.

* * * * *

My kindly hearted friend, the Rev. E. M. Collick, of the Anglican Church, showed himself a true Christian and was universally beloved. At the end of November, 1894, he reached Coolgardie and found that the reports of the prevalence of fever were correct. During the summer he buried an average of five or six men daily. The coffins were made of packing cases, and underneath the thin coating of black paint could be discerned directions such as, “This side up with care,” “Stow away from boilers,” and “Keep in a cool place.”

As a rule the funeral party comprised the undertaker and the clergyman. In consequence Mr. Collick was obliged to assist the undertaker to place the body into the coffin and lower it into the grave. Numerous sad and pathetic messages for relatives were entrusted to him. Many tragedies were revealed to him in the tents which comprised the Government hospital by men who had hoped to retrieve the past by making a fresh start on the goldfields. Sons of bishops, titled men, clergymen, doctors, and ex-army and navy officers found a last resting-place in the local cemetery—often under assumed names.

The fare from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie by coach was £5. Unable to raise the money, Mr. Collick walked to the latter centre. After holding services and visiting hospitals he tramped on to Kanowna. At that camp he stayed with Mr. Harkness, the manager of the Western Australian Bank. The bank buildings consisted of a canvas humpy. On the advice of the police, the manager carried a revolver everywhere he went.
At the alluvial diggings Mr. Collick informed the men that he was going to conduct a service. “We will have women and goats here next,” they said, “and then good-bye to the gold.” Returning to Kalgoorlie, he was offered a block of land in Hannan Street for £20. The land was purchased by the secretary of the church and sold a few weeks later for £100. The proceeds were devoted to the purchase of Boulder shares at £1 each. These were sold for £5 a share.

From Kalgoorlie Collick commenced the long tramp back to Coolgardie. About 1 o'clock in the morning following his departure he met a teamster, and asked him for a lift. “I am the worst swearer on the road,” was the candid reply. It was decided, however, that Mr. Collick should drive the team, while the owner had a sleep. Everything went smoothly until a pub was reached. The team stubbornly refused to go any further. In desperation Mr. Collick awakened the teamster. “The language was frightful,” observed Mr. Collick, “but off we went.”

Mr. Collick told me that in Kalgoorlie split logs constituted the seats in the local church. Members of the congregation often complained of splinters.

Bishop Riley, who was then paying his first visit to Kalgoorlie, announced his intention of taking the service on a certain night. A bellringer—a runaway sailor—who was a Cockney, was engaged to inform the town of the event. After ringing the bell he shouted, “You —, roll up and hear the — Bishop, who will convert you from your — ways.”

One form that Collick’s philanthropy took was sympathy towards a most forlorn community. Dirty and scantily clad in cast-off shirts given them by kind-hearted prospectors, the natives were a picture of despair. He made friends with the poor wretches. When hungry they never came to him in vain. He clothed them, saw they had blankets, tended to the sick amongst them, and every Christmas arranged that they should have a great feast. No wonder they almost worshipped him.

*         *         *         *         *

There were shrewd speculators in those days who made huge fortunes. They were not horny-handed sons of toil or men of the boisterous type, though most of them were gay adventurers. Able and farseeing, they often acquired, for a few thousand pounds, mines that later they were able to sell at high figures. Immense sums were also made “bulling” or “bearing” goldmining shares. It was rare for men who made money by these means to retain it for any length of time. They lived extravagantly, but it was lost chiefly in further speculation.
One friend of mine, Howard Taylor, was amongst those who were successful in acquiring money. He was a Londoner educated in England and Germany, had had experience in a stockbroker's office, spent some time in South Africa, and in 1890 reached Western Australia and engaged in prospecting for gold. A year later he walked to Southern Cross, where he worked for a couple of months on one of the mines as a surface trucker. After that he became the pioneer stockbroker of the goldfields, made a considerable sum out of goldmining, was elected to the Legislative Council, and was one of ten Western Australian Parliamentary representatives who attended meetings of the Federal Convention that framed the Commonwealth Constitution. Politics were not to his liking.

After a couple of years he went to London, where, by Stock Exchange transactions, he multiplied his wealth. He purchased a yacht from an Italian prince, figured in society, and was elected a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. His London career, however, was short. Some unhappy speculations were responsible for heavy financial losses. He returned to Australia with what little money he had left, and spent the rest of his days living quietly in Melbourne, chiefly playing bridge, at which he was an expert.

More remarkable experiences were those of Harold George Parsons. After leaving Oxford, where he had a distinguished career, and acquired a great love of the Classics, especially of Greek, he was called to the Bar in London. Instead of practising law he took to journalism, became connected with many British journals, and was a regular contributor to the Saturday Review. Generally, he was viewed in literary circles as a writer of much promise. He arrived at Western Australia the year after the discovery of gold at Coolgardie, and walked to the goldfields as “a swamper”—that is, he paid to have his belongings carried on a dray whilst he trudged along beside it. Speaking to me afterwards he said:

“I travelled with men who were roughly dressed. My clothes were well cut, made by the best of tailors, and I felt out of place and uncomfortable in them, so I tried to make them look shabby and old. I tore them and rubbed them in the red dust of the track. The clouds of dust from the horses, in which I walked, helped me. They were soon in a state that allowed me to establish good fellowship with my fellow-travellers.”

Parsons went to Hannan's Find, pegged out leases in the neighbourhood of the Golden Mile, returned to London, and came back a wealthy man, though most of his money was in shares.
He was a director on the boards of several mining companies and had visions of becoming the Cecil Rhodes of Western Australia; was elected Mayor of Kalgoorlie; he also entered Parliament as a Member of the Legislative Council, and the money he had made he put back into mining.

A slump occurred; he was not fortunate in his ventures, and before long he was poor and heavily in debt. He retired from Parliament and all his public positions, a broken man, and returned to London, where he resumed journalistic work.

When he was first in Western Australia he met a widow, good-looking and attractive and the mother of grown-up charming daughters, who were even better looking and more attractive. Parsons became friendly with the family. He was then under twenty-five years of age, but it was not to the young ladies that his attention was directed. The friendship between him and their mother steadily increased despite the vast difference in their ages. In London, when he had become wealthy and he was much sought after, he sent for her and they were married there. The marriage was a success. On their return to Kalgoorlie Mrs. Parsons, as mayoress and in other public capacities, helped him considerably. She was an excellent woman, and his devotion to her was marked. She was tactful and self-possessed, and to Parsons the dominant influence in his life. I knew them both well, and the impression I formed was confirmed by a letter I got from him a couple of years after he had finally left Western Australia. He told me how he had resumed his old life in London, how during his absence he had lost touch with literary life, how his enthusiasm for journalistic work was not what it had been, and how he found working difficult after his hectic goldfields experiences. He referred to his many troubles, was generally depressed, and went on to say, “And now I have to tell you of the worst trouble of all, and that is that my poor wife has been ailing for some time and the doctors say the end is not far off. I refuse to believe it. It is too dreadful.” The Boer War was then on, and Parsons concluded his letter by saying, “If what the doctors predict proves to be true and the worst happens, life will have no more for me, and the kindliest future fate can have in store for me is that my life should be ended by a Boer bullet.”

It was only a few months later that a cablegram in the Australian papers, reporting an engagement in South Africa, mentioned that the casualties included: “Harold George Parsons, Lieutenant C.I.V., dangerously wounded by bullet in chest.” His wife had died, and I was told by those who were with him in the war that he was a puzzle to them, for he ignored danger and constantly raised himself against the skyline in the face of enemy sharpshooters.

Thanks to surgical skill and the care of nurses he recovered from his
wound, and was offered and accepted an important Imperial Government appointment in tropical Africa. Whilst there he did his duty thoroughly and most efficiently and never spared himself. After a couple of years excellent administrative work he died. *The Times*, in an obituary notice, said that, “By his death the Empire has lost one of the most brilliant of its young men.” When he died he was but thirty-three.

* * * * *

Another friend was Bob Gleddon, a curious mixture, a surveyor by profession, who was successful in wise speculation, chiefly in town blocks in mining centres and in Perth. In a few years he had all the wealth he wanted, and he left the goldfields. After that his wanderings were far and wide. Once whilst I was visiting London I met him accidentally in Piccadilly. He had just returned from Algeria, having made an extensive tour of the interior. Dressed in a rather shabby suit, with a dust-covered Australian hat and smoking a short pipe, he was a strange figure amidst the throng that filled that fashionable thoroughfare. I always liked him, and I think he liked me, and we had much to say to each other.

“You never met my wife. Come to dinner to-night and meet her. I often talk with her of you, and she would be charmed. We are simple people and live simply so don't change; come as you are.”

When I went “as I was” to the mansions he gave as his address, I was met by a flunkey with yellow stockings and calves that looked as if they were padded. My name was shouted out as I was ushered into a large drawing-room full of well-known London people, the ladies arrayed in their best and the men immaculate in white waistcoats and swallow tails. Gleddon himself had undergone a wonderful metamorphosis and was the most resplendent of the whole resplendent crowd. I gazed at him reproachfully. He explained: “My wife has a dinner party and, as you had so far to go to your hotel to change, I did not tell you, and so I asked you to come as you were, for it was the only chance of getting you. Come,” he added, “you must have at least two of these potent cocktails and then you'll be at your ease and you'll forgive me.” Mrs. Gleddon was charming, and the cocktails were not necessary to restore self-possession where the hosts were so tactful and thoughtful. That and other similar evenings in London gave an insight into a social side of Gleddon's character that his goldfields friends never suspected.

Many years later—it was in 1927—he returned to Western Australia. He was over seventy years of age; he was very ill, and he was depressed in spirits. In the meantime his wife, to whom he was deeply attached, had
died; they had no children and he was a lonely man. A great admirer of Cecil Rhodes and his scholarship system, he had often discussed with me our Western Australian University, of the Senate of which I was a member. We talked of its early struggles, its finances and its future. He told me in strictest confidence that he intended to leave all his money to the University for scholarships. Later, visiting him at a hospital, I found him worrying about a business deal. I told him not to worry during his illness over business affairs but to leave them to his agent.

“I would not worry about my own affairs,” said he, “but they are not now my own affairs. I want to make the best deal I can for the University.”

The next day the collapse came and he was no longer able to do business or even recognise his friends.

When he told me the contents of his will, he estimated his estate as then worth £68,000, and said almost apologetically, “I wish I had a greater amount to leave to the University, but I have done what I could.”

I assured him he need have no regrets. A property such as his was a substantial bequest to any University, and it was bound, owing to its location in the heart of the city of Perth, to increase in value. Even if it were far less valuable it was the whole result of his life's labours. And, after all, no man can give the public more than that.

One of my friends was Bishop Gibney, the head of the Catholic Church in Western Australia. There was a high percentage of Irish amongst prospectors and pioneers, and the Bishop was a frequent visitor to the goldfields, where he built several churches and brought the nursing sisters of the Order of St. John of God and established a hospital for them to carry on their work. Later he got the Christian brothers to open a college for boys at Kalgoorlie. Teaching sisters under his auspices controlled schools for girls and small boys. A kind-hearted Christian gentleman, he was tolerant towards those who differed from him and keenly desirous of serving humanity.

From him I learned first-hand the story of Ned Kelly. He was present when the bushranger was captured and had talked with him and his relations and with people who were supposed to have helped him and his gang to evade the police. To have met a man who saw the last fight of the gang and who had heard much about them was a novel experience. The story he told me was sensational. We often talked of it, but the Bishop was modest about his share in the event. A friend, however, showed me a press cutting of an account from the Melbourne Age, written by a newspaper correspondent who also saw Ned Kelly captured, and published a day or two afterwards.

The last and the most notorious of the Australian bushrangers inherited
lawlessness. Ned Kelly's father was transported to Tasmania from Ireland in the forties of the last century for shooting a landlord. Another account says it was for killing a man in a faction fight. When the sentence was served he removed to Wallan, about forty miles from Melbourne. Whilst there he formed a gang of horse thieves, but their operations interfered with a more powerful gang, by whom the elder Kelly and his associates were ordered to leave the locality. The order was obeyed and the ex-convict took up his abode in the King Valley.

Cattle-duffing and horse-stealing in those days were common in the remote and wild parts of Australia. Fences were almost unknown, stock wandered over a great area, the natural increase was considerable, many animals escaped branding, and holders of immense areas often did not know their own boundaries. All this was conducive to the stealing of livestock.

The new arrival found a scope for his energies in the rough country where he lived. He died in 1865, leaving a family of three sons and four daughters. Ned, who was eleven years old when his father died, became an accomplice of a bushranger who was betrayed and captured. Ned escaped punishment. His brother Jim was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in 1871, and when released he went to New South Wales and became a bushranger, was captured and got ten years' imprisonment. Ned and a third brother, Dan, served terms of imprisonment for horse-stealing.

There was a continual feud between the Kelly family and the police, with whom they had various brushes. Ned Kelly became the leader of a number of outlaws. They shot three policemen, and the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales offered rewards totalling £8,000 for their capture dead or alive. For more than two years the Kellys remained at large, now and again making sensational raids on towns and robbing banks. They had numerous sympathisers who could not be tempted by Government rewards to reveal the gang's whereabouts. The country was mountainous, rugged, clothed with scrub and trees, inaccessible, and the police and black trackers experienced failures and disappointments.

Bishop Gibney, then a young priest, was collecting subscriptions for orphanages in the vicinity of Glenrowan in Victoria. He learned that the gang was at bay and that a battle was in progress, so he hurried to render any spiritual assistance that might be needed.

The last desperate stand of the Kellys evidently made a vivid impression on his mind. He described to me how they had “stuck up” the hamlet of Glenrowan, how they had imprisoned some forty of the inhabitants in one of the two hotels, how they had pulled up the railway lines at a bend so that the driver of a train from Melbourne would not see the danger until too
late, how a special train with police from Melbourne had been stopped and warned and escaped disaster, and how eventually the police got to Glenrowan and besieged a hotel of which the gang were in possession.

About sixty shots were exchanged. The superintendent in charge of the police was wounded badly by a shot in the wrist. Screams from women and children imprisoned in the hotel caused the police to cease fire for fear of injuring innocent people. Later many, but not all the prisoners left the hotel, and it was found that two of them had been wounded by the firing—one, a girl of fourteen, in the head, and the other, a boy of nine, in the hip.

Intermittent firing was kept up during the night between the outlaws and the police. It was afterwards learned that one of the outlaws, Byrne, was shot in the groin as he was drinking a nubbler of whisky in the bar. Soon after he died in great pain.

The morning broke beautiful and clear. The police, who by this time numbered more than twenty, were disposed under cover around the hotel. Suddenly and unexpectedly they were attacked in the rear. A tall figure was seen close behind them. They thought at first it was a blackfellow. Over the arm there was a grey coat, and he walked coolly and slowly until he was amongst the police, and then he opened fire. Nine policemen fired at him point blank. The force of the bullets made him stagger, but he laughed derisively and tapped his breast. He was well protected by a suit of armour. The police knew him to be the redoubtable Ned Kelly. He fought only with a revolver. For half an hour the contest went on. Finally, a police sergeant, when within about ten yards of him, fired two shots into his legs, where there was no armour. This brought him down. The sergeant rushed at him and seized the hand that held his revolver. The outlaw fired it once, but ineffectually, and he was over-powered. He fought fiercely until stripped of his armour, when he became quite submissive and accepted the situation.

When the police first arrived at the hotel Ned Kelly was outside and had fired and wounded the police superintendent. In the return fire Ned Kelly was wounded. He could not, without risking his life, join the members of his gang in the hotel, so he jumped on his horse, and in the excitement got away in the darkness. He did not mean to desert his companions. He was riding his grey mare and could have escaped had he wished. In the morning he returned to fight his way back to them. It was in that endeavour that he was captured.

The siege of the hotel continued. Further police arrived. There were still prisoners inside, and their presence embarrassed the attackers. About midday some thirty men and youths suddenly rushed out holding their hands up. Most of them were terror-stricken. They feared the bushrangers
in the hotel and the police outside. A youth was seriously wounded in the shoulder by a police bullet. Some of those who had been inmates of the hotel were supposed to be sympathisers with the outlaws, and a couple of young men who had come out were arrested and handcuffed. After one o'clock the fire of the police was not returned, and the assumption was that the outlaws would keep quiet until night-time, when they would try to escape under cover of the darkness. In the mean-time the police had telegraphed to Melbourne for a field-gun. There were then but two of the gang in the hotel, Dan Kelly (brother of Ned) and Steve Hart.

There were many friends and relatives of the besieged outlaws on the scene. When Ned Kelly was captured, two of his sisters were allowed to remain with him; Father Gibney also talked with him. One of the sisters, Mrs. Skillan, was a conspicuous figure dressed in a dark riding habit and wearing a jaunty hat adorned with a white feather. The priest made several attempts to go to the hotel to urge surrender, but he was prevented by the police, who thought he would be shot and they would be held responsible. The police were agreeable to allow the sisters to approach the hotel and ask the men to come out and be arrested, and the priest endeavoured to get them to do so, but neither would consent. They were bitter and did not favour surrender, even though they must have realised that to continue fighting meant certain death. They were all desperate.

The besiegers decided to set fire to the hotel. A constable succeeded in placing against weatherboards a huge bundle of dry straw and set light to it. Kate Kelly and Mrs. Skillan became wildly excited as they saw the flames spreading through the building and shooting from the roof. Mrs. Skillan, crying, “I will see Dan,” rushed forward, but to enter the building then would have endangered her life. She was therefore prevented from going near it.

An old man, Martin Sherry, was still in the house. He was badly wounded, but he was there when the last prisoners had escaped. What then happened was thus described by the representative of the Melbourne Age who was present:

“Father Gibney said he would save Sherry. The brave clergyman was loudly cheered by the spectators as he rushed boldly to the front door. He was soon lost to view amongst the smoke, and directly afterwards a mass of flames burst from the walls and roof of the building. A shout of terror from the crowd announced the dread of the crowd for the safety of the courageous priest. Some of the police had got in through a back door, and soon after the crowd were relieved to see them and Father Gibney emerge from the burning house carrying with them Sherry, who was in a dying state, and the dead body of Byrne. They said Dan Kelly and Steve Hart were lying upon the floor apparently dead. Their bodies could not be removed. When the
building was demolished two charred skeletons were raked out from the smouldering débris."

Ned Kelly was hanged in the Melbourne gaol. He crowded a great deal of horse-stealing, cattle-duffing, bushranging and other crimes and sensationalism into his twenty-six years of life.

Bishop Gibney always made light of his own doings at the siege of the Glenrowan Hotel. "What I did was nothing," he used to say, but he was not averse from discussing the Kelly gang and their doings. He was certain both Dan Kelly and Steve Hart were dead before he was forced by the fire to leave the hotel. Ned Kelly's armour weighed nearly 100 lbs., and others of the gang had similar armour. The suits were made by a blacksmith out of plough-shares. Ned Kelly's armour showed that it had been hit seventeen times by police bullets.

"They were a wild, reckless, lawless lot," said the Bishop, "and the wonder is they had so many sympathisers, even amongst those who ought to have known better."

"Is there any truth in the statements commonly made that they were persecuted by the police and so were driven into becoming outlaws?"

"The police had to do their duty. The Kellys and their friends thought they were too severe in their exercise of it, but that is the viewpoint of most wrongdoers. The judgment of no man can be trusted in his own cause. There were stories of great cruelties perpetrated by the Kellys towards the police, and there may have been retaliation. I must say," said the Bishop, "the police I met were fine fellows, and when Ned Kelly was captured I know they treated him with great kindness."

"Possibly," I remarked, "Ned Kelly a thousand years hence or less will be the most romantic figure in Australian history. His bravery may help to redeem his crimes in the minds of novelists. Poets are certain to weave strange fancies round his memory. Robin Hood robbed the rich and gave to the poor. Moss-troopers, who included so many heroes of story-tellers, ravaged the grass-grown borders of England and Scotland and stole whatever cattle and horses they could find. Young Australians in the year 3000 A.D. may have the story of Ned Kelly told to them without disapproval and with suppressions and embellishments in their school books."

"Well," said the Bishop with a smile, "you may be right. Anything may happen in 3000 A.D., but it will never happen with my consent in the schools under my control."
Chapter VII Governmental Difficulties


I

IN the early days at Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie the mining community felt they had grievances. Coming as they did into the colony's interior, many hundreds of miles from the nearest settlement, they naturally wanted many public services, and wanted them quickly. They were young and impatient. It took time to provide water supplies, cut roads, establish hospitals, institute postal and telegraph facilities, open warden's courts and so on. The Ministry made mistakes. That was inevitable, but in the circumstances they did remarkably well.

Inexperienced as many of the goldfields critics were, most of them did not make allowances for the difficulties. Young as I then was, I urged patience and asked that the Government should be given a fair chance, but as time went on our grievances increased, and eventually I, too, became anti-Government.

One of our grievances was that we were inadequately represented in the State Parliament in proportion to our population. There was no man in the Ministry who had experience or knowledge of the goldmining industry that was then raising the State from poverty, obscurity and stagnation to a condition of wealth, prominence and progress. It was asserted, accurately or otherwise, that one member of Parliament, when appointed Minister for Mines, was asked if he had mining experience, and replied, “Though I have never been down a mine yet, I've been several times down a well.”

For years the whole of the eastern goldfields, with a population of 40,000 persons, was represented by a single member in the Legislative Assembly and none in the Legislative Council, whilst in the pastoral districts there were electorates, the total number of electors on the rolls for which did not number fifty. A Redistribution of Seats Bill was carried later, but the pocket borough evil continued. Even after the general election in 1897, in a House of fifty members, the member for Coolgardie actually represented more voters than the whole of the voters in half a dozen other electorates.

The customs duties, in the opinion of many, fell with undue severity on the goldfields, where the people were all consumers. They produced
nothing but gold, and gold could not be protected. To make matters worse, the whole of our supplies came long distances by train, and the railway rates which were differential constituted a second customs house. It is not surprising that for that time the cost of living was enormous. The grievances were regarded as all the greater because the chief expense of the Government railway to Kalgoorlie came out of the pockets of the goldfields people. One of the conditions of the construction contract was that the line was not to be handed over by the contractors until in some cases from six to nine months after completion. The result was that prior to the Government taking control the contractors squeezed all they could in freight and passenger charges out of the goldfields people. Later when the Government, by also charging exorbitant rates, were abusing the transport monopoly they possessed, it was aggravating to feel that the goldfields railways, built as they were mostly with goldfields money, should be employed merely as a further taxation medium, whilst many reforms and public works which the mining community earnestly desired were denied them. There was indeed a complete lack of sympathy between the goldfields proper and those responsible for the government.

On the one hand, those who were born in Western Australia and had lived in it all their lives regarded the country as theirs. They wanted to know who had a better right to it? Why should they hand over its government or even a share of its government to the new arrivals? They spoke of the new arrivals as “t’other-siders” and nomads “without a stake in the country,” men who were said to be “here to-day and gone to-morrow.”

On the other hand, the energetic and enterprising mining community described the Western Australians as “Gropers” who had not the courage to find gold and had left to people who came from outside the task of opening up the interior.

A particularly sore question was the refusal of the Government to build a railway to Esperance Bay, the goldfields' natural port. Instead of doing so, the trade of the goldfields had to pass through the capital, and thus the journey between the goldfields and the eastern part of the continent was lengthened by more than one hundred and sixty-seven miles by train and over six hundred and ninety-one miles by sea.

Another grievance was that whilst settlers in the agricultural districts received the freehold of one hundred and sixty acres, residents of the goldfields had to pay for quarter-acre sand patches on which to build their homes.

What made these grievances appear the greater was that they were suffered by those who regarded themselves as the fairy godmother who had
raised the Cinderella of the Australian colonies out of the ashes and showered on her golden gifts.

* * * * * * *

It was at this time the Government made a blunder that nearly precipitated serious trouble. Early in 1898 there were thousands of men working alluvial claims that they pegged and held by virtue of their miners' rights. Most of the surface alluvial had been worked out, but a deep alluvial lead had been found at Kanowna. It was extremely rich, and hundreds of alluvial claims yielded big returns. Deep leads that promised well were opened up at Bulong and elsewhere. The freely spent money of the diggers created a condition of roaring prosperity. Prospecting for other leads was in progress. To encourage this spirit of enterprise the Government even offered a reward of £500 to any person discovering gold in alluvial at a depth of thirty feet below the surface, the money to be paid after 1,000 ounces had been taken from the find.

Trouble arose between the holders of a lease and the diggers. The Ivanhoe Venture Gold Mining Co. held a lease near Boulder City. The terms under which all mining leases were then held provided that alluvial claims could be pegged out and worked on any lease as long as such claims were not less than fifty feet from a reef or lode. Under the Act the leaseholder was required, when asked, to define the line of his reef. This system of dual titles was unquestionably wrong, but it was the law and up to then it had worked without friction. No objection had been raised to it by anyone. In those days, strange as it sounds now, one hundred feet along the line of reef was considered sufficient for surface workings, and many managers rather appreciated the presence of diggers on their leases, as they assisted them materially in prospecting. For instance, whenever a digger in sinking came to a reef, the manager could insist on his leaving his claim, and the leaseholder would get the advantage of the labour of the prospector.

Certain diggers believed there was a deep alluvial lead on the Ivanhoe Venture lease, and as a matter of fact the lead was later proved to exist. When the manager was asked by men who proposed to peg out an alluvial claim on it to define his reef, he pointed to the four corners of his lease, and said, “All within that is lode matter.” Such a thing as a lode that was a parallelogram was never heard of. The indignant diggers went and pegged out a claim on the lease, and others followed their example. Numbers of shafts were then sunk.

Subsequently, when a law case was decided favourable to the diggers,
the Government suddenly and without warning issued a regulation
directing that in future alluvial workings on leases should not be carried on
at a greater depth than ten feet. The regulation, which, incidentally, was
*ultra vires*, aroused considerable indignation. Goldfields public opinion
condemned it unanimously. It was contrary to the admitted rights of
prospectors. If a man had a mining claim, whether it be alluvial or
leasehold, the depth to which he was allowed to sink should not be limited.
According to the regulation, if a man unearthed a pocket of nuggets a few
inches below ten feet he was not entitled to them.

Diggers talked wildly of resisting the law, but wiser counsels prevailed.
An Alluvial Rights Association was formed to test the legality of the
Government's action. The name of one of the Ministry was on the Ivanhoe
Venture Company's directorate, and the chairman was a supporter of the
Government in the Legislative Assembly. I am certain that these facts in no
way influenced the Government's action, but it can well be imagined how
the circumstance inflamed the public mind.

The Premier, Sir John Forrest, was absent from the State, but the Acting
Premier, Mr. Wittenoom, who was also Minister for Mines, refused to
annul the regulation. The Cabinet displayed rather foolish obstinacy. They
failed to realise the gravity of the crisis.

On the Premier's return to Perth he announced his intention of visiting
Kalgoorlie.

The goldfields people determined to form a deputation of 10,000 of their
number to wait on him and ask him to annul the regulation. There was a
feeling of conviction that he would see that justice was done. As an
explorer they held him in high respect. He had twice crossed the continent,
and he was known to be a brave man, a good bushman and well acquainted
with the back country and back country ways. They felt that their case
would be in safe hands. They wished to impress on him how serious was
their trouble, and the men concerned meant to wait on him in person and
hear what he had to say. Preparations were in progress to ensure that at
least that number would be present. Public feeling was running high.

The real purpose of the Premier in visiting the goldfields was to declare
open a railway from Kalgoorlie to Menzies, some ninety miles northwards.
At much inconvenience I decided to go to Menzies and put before him the
exact position. I wanted him to know the truth. I believed him to have been
misled. And in fact he had. It was my desire to help him in the public
interests. I felt friendly to him personally. A year or so previously he had
invited me to become a justice of the peace, a position I had accepted and
regarded as a compliment, as I had only been a very short time in the State.

At Menzies I saw him, told him the extent of the trouble, and urged him
to reconsider the determination of his Cabinet colleagues not to annul the regulation. In those days public men had not the same regard for democracy as they have to-day. He was an autocrat. I was then young, between twenty-five and thirty, and he was over fifty. He spoke to me in a kind and fatherly way, thanked me for giving him my viewpoint, and explained that everyone else who had spoken to him had given him the opposite opinion to that I had expressed.

I was on the railway station at Kalgoorlie when he arrived from Menzies next day. There were a few leading residents on the platform. He turned to me.

“Is this the deputation of 10,000 that I heard talked about?” he said with a smile.

He did not know that there was a huge crowd outside and that they numbered not 10,000 but probably 15,000, but they had been kept out of the station to prevent accidents through overcrowding.

His surprise was great when he came to the door leading from the railway station and saw in front of him a sea of heads. There was a lane in the crowd to the Railway Hotel opposite the station, and he and his party walked through the lane to the hotel, and there received a deputation and discussed with them the ten-foot regulation. The deputation lasted a couple of hours, and he told them he would consider what they laid before him.

He had been asked to say a few words to the crowd, which had been waiting for hours for him to address them. He declined. Some of them had walked thirty miles to attend. It was a question that vitally affected their livelihood. Their bread and butter depended on it. They had practically all come from the eastern colonies, where they were unaccustomed to such treatment. Public men there did not hold themselves aloof. They could not understand a Premier acting in that way.

All that was necessary was for him to go on the hotel balcony, say that he had only just returned to the colony, that he had heard their representatives, that when he went back he would go into the matter fully and that he would then give his decision.

The crowd would have cheered him and would have been quite satisfied. As it was they felt hurt and mystified by his silence.

He walked out of the hotel into the crowd to proceed to the railway station. The mob began pressing round him, each one asking him why he did not speak to them. It was a considerable time before he reached his train.

There was no hostile demonstration. No blow was struck nor was any attempt made to strike anyone. He was simply surrounded by the crowd, and he had some little difficulty in making his way through it.
Afterwards Sir John Forrest complained that he had been dug in the ribs with an umbrella. The fact was that his own secretary had an umbrella under his arm—he was the only one of the crowd who carried such a thing—and in the pushing it must accidentally have struck Sir John in the ribs. Certainly none of the diggers would be likely to carry an umbrella or sunshade.

Ultimately he got to the railway station in a somewhat distressed state.

The newspapers wildly exaggerated the events of the day. No person was hurt and no property was damaged, but, to read the published reports, one would think that there had been a dreadful riot and that Sir John had narrowly escaped being torn to pieces. He was the subject of many telegrams of sympathy and congratulation in accordance with the views of the sender. A published telegram that created great amusement stated, “My God! I am proud of you.” One versifier hit the truth off well as follows:

“There have been riots, I know, in the land of the spud,
Which are not unattended with the spilling of blood,
As the blackthorn encounters the Constable's crown
And the stalwart policemen like ninepins go down.
When the amiable Hindoo is ripe for the fray
There are nice little shindies in sultry Bombay,
Things get lively at times in Hyde Park and the Strand
When the suffering Communist gets ‘out of hand.’
But except in Westralia—'tis safe to assert
There was never a riot where no one was hurt.

What a blood-curdling story they pitched us last week
Of a tumult colossal, Homeric unique!
Of a crowd of wild diggers, some ten thousand strong,
Who bustled and chevied a Premier along;
Of ears that were deafened by salvoes of groans,
Of lives that were threatened by bludgeons and stones!
You'd have thought from the published reports of the fray
Red Hell had broke loose in Kalgoorlie that day,
And that scores had been trampled to death in the dirt
In that terrible riot—where no one was hurt.”

At the invitation of the editor of the Australasian edition of the Review of Reviews I wrote an article setting forth all the facts of the ten-foot regulation. This made the position plain to the outside public from the viewpoint of the goldfields. The same issue contained an article by the Minister who issued the regulation in justification of his action, but within a few days of Sir John Forrest's return to Perth the ten-foot regulation was
annulled. By that action the Government admitted that it never should have been issued.

II

During the progress of these troubles I had an anxious time. The diggers were convinced that in working alluvial claims on the Ivanhoe Venture lease they were both morally and legally right. As a matter of fact they were, but after they had done considerable work on their claims an injunction had been issued by the warden directing them to leave the lease.

The attitude of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, of which I was editor, was to obey the injunction but appeal to a higher court. My advice at that time was, “Obey the law and the court's interpretation of the law whether it be right or wrong.”

The diggers appealed to a higher court, but refused to abandon the lease. In fact, they prepared to resist being driven off. A large force of police had arrived on the goldfields. The warden one evening told me that he had received instructions from the Government to march the police to the lease that night and take possession of it. I knew the diggers would fight and there would be bloodshed. The Mayor of Kalgoorlie, Mr. Fimister, and myself determined to go with the police and speak to the diggers, and at all costs avert trouble. We waited until after midnight, and, as the police were getting ready to start, a wire came from Perth countermanding the instructions.

Later several of the diggers were arrested for contempt of court and imprisoned, but were released when the Supreme Court reversed the warden's decision and upheld the view taken by the men.

* * * * *

Mr. Wittenoom was at this time almost a total stranger to me. Subsequently he became Agent-General and had a very long and most useful public career. He became Sir Edward Wittenoom, and I was for a great many years associated with him. We were both members of the Legislative Council, of which I succeeded him as President. When speaking to me about the issue of the ten-foot regulation he often told me that he had acted on the recommendation of certain prominent goldfields residents, some of whom, when the outcry was raised against it, instead of standing by him, joined in condemning him.

With Sir John Forrest I had also much to do, especially as he and I were amongst the five members elected to represent Western Australia in the
first House of Representatives. Unfortunately I was more often an opponent than a supporter of his, though I recognise that he did great work for Western Australia. He had no stronger champion than I in his building of the great goldfields water scheme for pumping fresh water in pipes over three hundred miles to supply the needs of the mining community. I also backed him in his advocacy of the Trans-Australian Railway. But I did not agree with his hostility to the Esperance Railway, and though that his policy tended to promote the evil of centralisation, an evil that to my mind is particularly objectionable in a state extending over one-third of the Commonwealth. To-day almost one-half of the inhabitants of the vast empty area comprising Western Australia are crowded together in Perth. I did not agree with his remaining a member of protectionist federal governments and supporting exorbitant protectionist duties. Still, he had the attributes of a statesman and possessed a most attractive personality—breezy, loud-voiced and cheery. In his public speeches he was direct and possessed a good deal of shrewdness and common sense. He obtained his life's ambition when raised to the peerage as Lord Forrest, an honour he well deserved, but he did not live long to enjoy it. He died on a voyage to England, where he intended to take his seat in the House of Lords.

Lady Forrest was much help to him throughout his political career. She believed in using all the social influence she could exert to aid her husband, and constantly entertained and promoted functions for that purpose.

When one newly elected member, returned to oppose the Government of which Sir John was the leader, arrived in Perth, he received an invitation to an evening reception at the Forrests' home, “The Bungalow.” He had never been to such gatherings before, and he appeared in an evening dress with a pink shirt. Lady Forrest with great tact complimented him on the taste he had shown in his dress, hinted that the fashion he had set would become general amongst the young bloods of Perth, paid great attention to him all the evening, and pinned a bouquet on his coat. He was young and susceptible of flattery. After that Sir John could always rely on him, and he became one of his most ardent followers and champions.
A movement of far-reaching importance with which I was directly associated was the inclusion of Western Australia in the Commonwealth at the beginning of the century. When it was accomplished, and even at the time of writing, to some it may seem from the parochial or Western Australian viewpoint better to have remained outside of the Commonwealth. Viewing the question, however, from the larger Empire and Australian aspect, it was decidedly advantageous that the national affairs of the continent should be under one Government whilst the domestic concerns of each state should be controlled by local governments.

At the federal conventions held to frame a Commonwealth constitution Sir John Forrest and nine other Western Australian delegates were elected by the State Parliament to represent the colony. They attended, but when
they returned and the Enabling Bill, authorising the submission of the Constitution of the proposed Commonwealth to a referendum of the electors for their acceptance or rejection, came before Parliament, it did not meet with a favourable reception. A large section of the Perth people, under the leadership of Mr. George Leake, were supporters of Federation, and the goldfields community were virtually unanimous in approving of it. Most of the newcomers to the colony came from Eastern Australia and in sentiment were strongly Australian. Their imagination was excited by the ideal of the Australian federal leader, “A continent for a nation and a nation for a continent.”

Mr. Leake came to the goldfields and talked over with me the question of how to bring Western Australia into the Federation. The first objective was to secure for the electors the right to choose whether the colony should join or not. We felt certain that if we could secure a referendum there would be a heavy affirmative decision.

A petition to Parliament was prepared praying that the Enabling Bill should be passed for submitting to a referendum the acceptance or rejection of the proposed constitution. We called it the Bill-to-the-People Petition. It was signed by tens of thousands of electors, duly presented to Parliament, treated there with contempt, and despite its prayer the Enabling Bill was rejected. Parliament was prorogued and opponents of Federation rejoiced as the union of the eastern states was approaching completion. It looked as if there was no hope of Western Australia joining as an original state. Federalists in Western Australia felt that if she did not join as a federal state there was a danger that she would never join. Mr. George Leake, Sir Walter James, Mr. James Gardiner and others who took that view were in despair.

* * * * *

It was then that I advocated in the Press the separation of the eastern goldfields from the colony of Western Australia for the purpose of forming a new state and joining the Commonwealth. A movement was started that had for its motto “Separation for Federation.”

Such a movement could be used as an invaluable lever to force the Government to take a referendum. If it did not result in that, then separation from Western Australia was bound to be successful and the goldfields would not fare badly as a self-governing state of the Commonwealth with a railway to the port of Esperance and considerable land awaiting development to the south of the goldfields. In either eventuality, that is whether Western Australia was forced into Federation
or the eastern goldfields created a new state, the mining community would be satisfied. Their desire, however, for separation from Western Australia was not so intense as their desire not to be separated from the rest of Australia. They were essentially Australians who hoped to see Australia as “one people with one destiny.”

A convention was held at Coolgardie on December 13, 1899. Sixty-one delegates were present, representatives of all the goldfields public bodies—Municipal Councils, Road Boards, Chambers of Mines, Labour Unions, and so on. With only one dissentient it was decided to prepare a petition to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, asking for separation from Western Australia and setting forth that we were refused an opportunity of voting for or against the acceptance of the Commonwealth Constitution, and outlining various grievances to which we were subjected, including the refusal to give the mining community railway access to their natural port.

Various names were suggested for the new state, and one that was favoured was “Auralia.” Public enthusiasm was excited. In at least one instance a newly born baby girl was christened “Auralia” by her fond parents.

An organisation entitled the Eastern Goldfields Reform League was formed. Branches were established in a score of busy goldfields centres and also in London. At the request of the editor of the Australian edition of the Review of Reviews I wrote an article in explanation of the movement. It was entitled “Altering the Map of Australia,” and contained a map of the proposed new colony. It was republished in various papers and brought offers of help from prominent Federalists all over Australia. The movement also received notice in the London Press.

Communication was unofficially established with the Colonial Office.

The petition to the Queen was signed by 28,000 adults and duly forwarded through the Governor in a specially constructed and designed casket mounted with local gold. It was presented to His Excellency by the senior goldfields parliamentary representative, Mr. A. P. Matheson, M.L.C.

A largely signed petition to the Queen from the Albany district praying for inclusion in the proposed new colony was forwarded separately.

The Boer War was in progress, and the refusal to the Uitlanders of adequate representatives in the Transvaal Legislature was advanced as one of the causes. The analogy was striking between the treatment of the Uitlanders in various directions by the Kruger Government and the Western Australian Goldfields “Tothersiders” by the Forrest Government. Residents of both Johannesburg and Kalgoorlie claimed that their representation in Parliament was grossly inadequate as compared with the taxation burden they had to bear.
The Uitlanders were represented by the Reform League, and so the “Tothersiders” named their organisation the Eastern Goldfields Reform League. In the House of Commons, in reply to Mr. John Morley, a statement was made by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain of which he was constantly reminded by advocates of “Separation for Federation.” Mr. Chamberlain's statement was: “If a self-governing British colony should impose upon British subjects such conditions as are imposed upon British subjects in the Transvaal, I say we should interfere or cut the connection.”

The Eastern Goldfields Reform League was in close communication with several members of the British House of Commons as well as with Mr. Barton, Mr. Deakin and other Australian federal leaders. An Adelaide Committee consisting of Messrs. C. C. Kingston, Josiah Syman and P. McManus Glynn, three distinguished lawyers, drafted for us the petition to the Queen.

The British Government needed no urging to employ pressure to get the Western Australian Parliament to do the right thing. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was then Secretary of State for the Colonies. He was keenly desirous of the union of the Australian states as it simplified the problems of Imperial unity. It is easier for the Imperial authorities to deal with one Australian national Government than with six Australian Governments, each with widely divergent views, as was shown at conferences of Colonial Premiers. He readily saw that the “Separation for Federation” petition could be utilised as a means for forcing the Western Australian Government to submit the question of joining in the proposed Commonwealth to the votes of the electors.

Mr. Chamberlain, in the course of a telegraphed despatch to the administrator on April 27, 1900, left the Ministry no option but to submit the Enabling Bill to the electors. Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that the terms that Western Australia might come into the Federation as a federal state were better than those that could afterwards be secured. He added:

“Your responsible advisers will also, of course, take into consideration the fact of the agitation by the Federal Party, especially on the goldfields, if Western Australia does not enter as an original state. It appears to me of the utmost importance to the future of Western Australia to join at once.”

Diplomatic language could not put it plainer. Furthermore, private and unofficial information from London made it clear that the prayer for separation would be granted if Western Australia did not federate with the other colonies.

Both Sir John Forrest and Sir Winthrop Hackett were opposed to the referendum. They took alarm at the prospect of Western Australia losing
the Coolgardie goldfield. When they realised the danger, their opposition to the referendum and to Federation vanished. They became favourable not only to holding the referendum, but also to Western Australia joining the new Commonwealth.

The result was an immediate calling together of Parliament and the rapid passage of the Enabling Bill through both Houses. The question of whether or not Western Australia should federate was submitted to a referendum of the electors. The vote showed a huge majority in favour of federal union. The figures were: Yes, 44,800; No, 19,691.

Even in Perth and Fremantle there was a large affirmative vote, the numbers being: Yes, 11,695; No, 7,521.

In the country electorates there was a majority of between 3,000 and 4,000 against Federation. The goldfields vote was: Yes, 26,330; No, 1,813.

As one writer put it, “For Australia and for the Empire the Western Australian goldfields had won a Federated Australia.” Were it not for the “Separation for Federation” movement, Western Australia would not have joined the Commonwealth as an original state. Western Australia might indeed have been still outside the Federation.

* * * * * *

Several of the men associated with the Eastern Goldfields Reform League became prominent as members of Parliament and Ministers in federal and state spheres. Dr. Ellis represented Coolgardie in the Legislative Assembly and afterwards practised for years in Harley Street as a specialist in consumption. Staniforth Smith was a member of the Commonwealth Senate and later administrator of Papua.

Alexander Perceval Matheson, who was President of the Reform League, became a senator and inherited a baronetcy. On the maternal side he was the great-grandson of Spencer Perceval, the Prime Minister, who in 1812 was shot on entering the lobby of the House of Commons by a madman. In Matheson's first election for the Western Australian Parliament some seventy-five years later, curious to say his opponent was a namesake said to be a descendant of Perceval's murderer. Matheson was victorious.

Hugh de Largie also was elected to the Senate, of which he was a member for over twenty years. Hugh Mahon was a member of the House of Representatives and served long terms as a Federal Minister. Charles Sommers became a Minister of the Crown in Western Australia, and J. Reside was the first Western Australian parliamentary labour leader.

IV
In the early years of the goldfields, parliamentary and even mayoral elections were events creating wild excitement. Four-in-hands, champagne, flaring election signs and colours of rival candidates were everywhere in evidence. In one election for the mayoralty of Coolgardie thousands of pounds were spent.

These elections were reminiscent of the elections towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century in the West of Ireland when open voting was in vogue. My father was fond of telling how, when he was a boy, the people remembered and often talked about an election in 1783 that lasted fifty-two days for two seats as Knights of the Shire to the Irish Parliament. At that time the polls were kept open until every available vote had been recorded. The election beat the record in the three kingdoms. It cost all the candidates immense sums. It is said to have ruined at least one of them, who soon afterwards had to sell his magnificent home to pay his election debts. During the weeks the polling lasted, drinking, entertaining and rioting were general, so the proceedings must have been lively.

Some of the men who easily and rapidly acquired wealth on the Western Australian goldfields through the sale of gold-mining leases or speculation in the share market became ambitious for political positions. When parliamentary vacancies occurred there were numerous candidates, wealthy men ready to spend money freely, and as they all favoured the same policy—encourage gold-mining—elections usually became mere personal contests.
Just before the close of the last century there was an election for the representation of the Eastern Goldfields Province in the Legislative Council. The Mayor of Coolgardie, Mr. Arthur Jenkins, a lawyer, was in the field. Some months after he had been announced as a candidate, I was surprised one morning by a large and representative deputation of leading Kalgoorlie residents waiting on me with a request that I should contest the vacancy. They thought that I would be a better member than Mr. Jenkins. I replied that I had no parliamentary experience. They pointed out that neither had he, and that though I was young, yet I was about as old as he was. I believe neither of us was then thirty years, which was a necessary age qualification to become a candidate for the Legislative Council, but no one troubled about such details in those days. Finally, I was persuaded to stand.

No party issues were involved. I found that scores of my friends who would have supported me had promised to vote for Mr. Jenkins before I
had any thought of becoming a candidate. There was also at that time much rivalry between Coolgardie, which was regarded as the mother town of the goldfields, and the newer and more rapidly growing town of Kalgoorlie. There were comparatively few Kalgoorlie electors on the Legislative Council roll, whereas Coolgardie's voting strength was considerable. After a spirited election contest I was defeated by a narrow majority.

The election cost me dearly. When the deputation had asked me to be a candidate I told them that I could not afford the heavy costs of an election. The members of the deputation assured me not to take that into account. I was their candidate and they said they would not allow me to pay a single penny. When the election was over and I began to receive the bills, no one made any offer to pay them, and I could not remind them of their promises. I paid and said nothing. It was a bad set-back, but I am not certain the experience was not worth having.

My next election contest was early in 1901 as a candidate for the first Federal Parliament. I received a petition that was extensively signed asking me to become a candidate for the Kalgoorlie electorate. The petition was signed by practically all the leading men of the constituency. My opponent was Mr. J. M. Hopkins, Mayor of Boulder City, an able speaker and a capable man. I was assisted by the public belief that I was mainly responsible for starting and carrying to a successful conclusion the “Separation for Federation” movement, which brought Western Australia into the Commonwealth. I was returned by a majority of over 2,000 votes.

Hopkins subsequently was elected a member of the State Parliament and became Minister for Lands.
It was some years after the reported discovery of gold at Coolgardie that civilisation in the true sense reached the goldfields. Its arrival was hastened by two events of much importance that changed considerably the character of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. One was the completion of the railway to these centres in 1896 and its extension later to other parts of the goldfields. The second event was the completion a few years later, in 1903, of the project which conveys a river of fresh water to the goldfields in a pipe two feet six inches in diameter a distance of over 350 miles. The maximum delivery capacity of the conduit is 5,000,000 gallons. Furthermore, as the goldfields are some 1,300 feet above the level of the Mundaring Reservoir, the source of the supply, the water has to be raised, and this is done by pumping stations along the pipe-line. It takes approximately four weeks for the water to travel from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie.

Goldfields towns soon began to assume a changed appearance. Streets were formed and lighted with electricity. Rows of trees were planted on each side for shade and ornamentation. Public gardens and swimming baths were established, also excellently appointed racecourses, a polo ground, tennis courts, bowling greens and golf links. Population increased. Five or six morning and evening goldfields newspapers and several weeklies were published. Comfortable private residences were erected and many social clubs formed. Civilisation had indeed arrived. But as the goldfields settled down to work and steady gold production, they lost much of their early glamour.
Chapter VIII Australia's Political Leaders

An historic picture—A ship with too many captains—The angry member and the wife with the umbrella—Sir Edmund Barton's ponderous style—Alfred Deakin—Sir George Reid's humour—Three parties in Parliament—Some members—David Syme—The work done.

I

THE Australian continent and Tasmania were at last united in a federal union. The Federal Parliament controlled national affairs—namely, defence, external relations, Customs, Excise, postal and telegraph matters. To the six State Parliaments were left the management of such local matters as education, state railways, lands administration, agriculture, police, health, etc.

In accordance with the constitution, the Commonwealth Parliament sat in Melbourne until a site was selected on which to build a federal capital.

I was then a young man. It was a never-to-be-forgotten time. It was the beginning of Australia as a nation.

The Parliament was opened in May 1901 by H.R.H. the Duke of Cornwall, subsequently King George V.

The opening ceremony took place at the Melbourne Exhibition, which was specially fitted up for the occasion. The huge building was packed with notables from all parts of the Commonwealth and distinguished visitors from abroad. On the dais were the Duke and Duchess, also the Governor-General and Lady Hopetoun and the various state Governors and Lieutenant-Governors.

A notable feature of the event was the excellent voice of the Duke. It resounded through the hall, clear and distinct.

The splendour of the gathering was somewhat marred as the Royal Court was still in mourning for Queen Victoria.

* * * * *

In St. James's Palace there is a remarkable picture “The Opening of the Commonwealth Parliament.” It was painted by Mr. Tom Roberts, who was commissioned to do it by the Commonwealth Government. He was required to include in it all the notabilities and federal members. The key to it gives the names of no less than two hundred and seventy-seven persons,
so it is not surprising that it is a huge canvas. It measures eighteen feet six inches by eleven feet nine inches.

I sat one morning, also the following afternoon, whilst Tom Roberts painted my head and shoulders in the picture. He had been given sittings by the Duke and Duchess, and various other prominent persons present at the opening ceremony. In two or three instances men were included who were not present. For example, Sir George Reid, Leader of the Opposition, was absent through illness, but he is in the picture.

Roberts had a delightful personality. He put the best he had into all his work, and he was a hard worker. During the sitting, perhaps it was to give relief to the subject, he frequently said, “Have a rest.” Then, he was most entertaining. He danced and whilst he danced he sang snatches of songs in foreign languages, learned by him in his student days on the Continent.

The picture troubled him a good deal. It was impossible for it to be historically correct and include all the details required and yet be artistic. In the circumstances he did wonderfully well. The background is particularly good. Beams of sunshine are coming down, the atmosphere of the interior is well represented, flags and banners are dimly seen and a framed portrait can be faintly discerned high on the walls showing Sir Henry Parkes, who worked so hard for federal union, looking down on the scene. Parkes had died some years previously, and his picture was not in the building, but it was Robert's idea to put it there. Certainly if the departed could revisit the earth, Sir Henry was present in spirit.

When Roberts had worked for about eighteen months on the picture I asked him about it. “I have begun to hate it,” he said. “It has become mere mechanical work; it is difficult to get people to sit for it, and I'm longing to finish it so that I may get on with more congenial work.”

The picture took two years to finish, and Roberts received for it only £1,100.

* * * * *

Each of the members of the first Commonwealth Parliament got as a present from His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall the Bible on which he was sworn in as a member. The Bible contained the Duke's signature. Furthermore, each member was given the right to use for life the title of Honourable within the Commonwealth.

* * * * *

It was a Parliament that contained many intellectual giants—leaders of
men. The first Federal Ministry consisted mostly of the Premiers of the states who had been invited by Mr. Barton to join his Cabinet. It was a highly prized honour to be a member of that Parliament, and in each state many of the leaders in public life, prominent lawyers and merchants, were elected to it.

It is true that amidst this collection of able and experienced men there were, as happens in all Parliaments, some political “accidents”—men without the knowledge, experience, or capacity to be fitting representatives. One member, Mr. Skene, who, like myself, had never served any parliamentary apprenticeship before election to the first Commonwealth Parliament, admitted that he felt surprised at finding himself one of such a brilliant company. He told me that he asked himself, “How on earth did I get here?” Later, when he knew some of the members better, his chief wonder was not how he had got there but how some of the other fellows had got there!

Still, it is safe to say that of the seventy-five representatives and thirty-six senators—that is, the one hundred and eleven men constituting the first Federal Parliament—there were forty or fifty of exceptional outstanding ability. Most of the others were vastly above the average. In proof of this it is only necessary to glance at the previous and subsequent careers of the members as ministers, judges, administrators, soldiers and captains of industry.

It was said of the first Ministry that it was like a ship with too many captains on board. They had all been leaders in their own states and could not get out of the habit of giving orders and having their own way.

The tone was high and an excellent spirit prevailed amongst the members. There was a determination not to permit of occurrences that would be a reflection on the National Parliament of Australia. The Speaker, Sir Frederick Holder, was an ideal occupant of the office. Possessed of a thorough knowledge of the standing orders, prompt and accurate in his decisions, strict but just, he was respected by all. I never remember his ruling to be questioned or that any member was suspended during the three-years life of the first Parliament. All members were anxious to secure for that Parliament a good reputation.

Members were remarkably temperate. A goodly number were teetotallers. There were, however, two or three exceptions, and on one occasion I was involved in an incident that might have had an unpleasant ending, but happily terminated in a rather amusing way. I was one of the deputy chairmen of committee. One evening when the House was in committee, the chairman, Mr. Chanter, who was presiding, sent a message saying he wished to speak to me. When I went to him he asked me to
relieve him in the chair, and he whispered that he had been told that Mr. X (one of the members), who was waiting to rise and catch his eye, was so far intoxicated that his friends were afraid he would make a fool of himself, perhaps create a scene and bring even the House into disrepute. Mr. X had risen three or four times already, but the chairman told me that he had carefully avoided seeing him. Mr. X was furious at not being called on. The chairman asked me to take his place. I was not supposed to know that Mr. X had risen previously, and so I could see other members and call on them. In committee each Member may speak several times on the same subject, but the speeches are almost invariably short.

I took the chair, and as soon as the member who was speaking sat down, Mr. X sprang to his feet, but I saw another member who had risen. Mr. X felt there was a conspiracy not to let him speak. And so there was.

The members were determined to save him from himself.

Leaders have prior claims to be called, and the leaders of the Government, Opposition and Labour Parties each rose to postpone the necessity for calling on Mr. X to speak.

All attempts to get him out of the chamber and so close the discussion, by passing to another clause, failed.

Mr. Deakin had charge of the Bill, and finally I had to let him know that there was no alternative but to call upon Mr. X and to look out for a squall.

Mr. X was sitting in his place on the back cross benches, his face red as fire and his eyes blazing. When the opportunity came he sprang to his feet and I called on him.

His fury was so intense that he could not speak for a few seconds. When his voice came it was thick with whisky and rage.

“Mr. Deputy Chairman,” he roared, “I have been ignored, slighted, insulted by the chairman and also by you.” Suddenly a spasm passed over his face, he grabbed his side, he looked behind him and collapsed to his seat. Soon after he left the chamber.

What happened was something that the reporters could not see from where they were. Mr. X's friends, in their despair, had brought Mrs. X to the House and had placed her in a gallery immediately behind where he sat. The gallery was level with his seat. She got there just before he rose. She was a stern lady with a long umbrella. When her husband rose she thrust the umbrella through the rails of the gallery and gave him a terrific prod in the ribs. Hence his collapse.

I could not see the prodding from the chair. It was highly disorderly to interfere with a speaker when addressing the chair, but my attention was not drawn to it.

Effective as was the method adopted in the case of Mr. X, a
parliamentary official told me of a method that was still more effective. The incident happened in a later Parliament. A member was drunk and troublesome. The Speaker warned him several times. The official spoke privately to the Whip of the unruly member's party. The Whip went to the member. They engaged in an animated discussion in a low tone. Finally, the Whip got up and left the chamber. Shortly after, the member who was causing trouble also went out. When the Whip was asked how he got his drunken colleague from the House, he said: “I went to him and whispered to him that he was drunk and should leave. He refused, and I said he was a disgrace to Parliament and to the party we both belonged to, and that if he came out I would give him such a thrashing that he would behave himself for the rest of his days, but I knew he was a coward and would not dare to come out. This roused his ire. I then went out and locked myself in a room whilst the irate drunkard went searching for me everywhere.”

* * * * * * *

Sir Edmund Barton was ponderous in speech and appearance. His language was involved and appeared to have been given to him to conceal his thoughts. His parliamentary speeches were difficult to follow. One paper accurately described the Prime Minister's speeches in pointing out that an ordinary person would say, “To-day is a fine day,” but Barton, in his parliamentary language, would say it thus:

“I have considered all that bears on atmospheric conditions, that is so far as they apply since sunrise, and having taken them fully into account—and duly weighed them—I have no hesitancy in stating that from the point of view of the person who considers firstly his personal comfort rather than what perhaps may be best for those interested in, say, the agricultural industry, the climate is favourable, in fact fine, but I wish it to be clearly understood that in making this statement I am speaking only of what exists at the present moment and am not prognosticating what changes may take place before nightfall.”

Amongst members of the first Federal Parliament Sir Edmund was extremely popular, and properly so. He was unfailing in his courtesy and never personal in his criticism of opponents. He was generous to all; he did not value money, though he was known to be in anything but affluent circumstances.

When the term of the Parliament was drawing to a close there was much discussion as to who should be the first judges of the Federal High Court. Amongst members the hope was general that Sir Edmund would be the Chief Justice. It was felt that he was in every way eligible. His standing as a lawyer justified the appointment, and it was also a fitting reward for his
services towards the accomplishment of Federation. It was stated in the Press that he would be Chief Justice. That evening he solemnly informed the House that the announcement was incorrect, as he would not take the position. His exact words were, “I find that a constant misrepresentation has been made and is being reasserted each day to the effect that I intend to appoint myself to be Chief Justice. I wish to state that the idea of doing so has not been present in my mind, and that nobody knows better than the Attorney-General that it is not and never has been my intention to do so.” Mr. Deacon said, “Hear, hear,” and Mr. Andrew Fisher voiced the feeling of the House by interjecting, “The Right Hon. gentleman is quite entitled to the position.”

Most of us regretted his decision, but we did not realise that he did not pledge himself not to go on the bench, and a few days later were surprised to hear that he was one of the three who had accepted High Court judgeships, Sir Samuel Griffiths being Chief Justice and Sir Edmund Barton and Senator O'Connor his colleagues.

The day the appointment was officially announced he remarked to me that it was not without regret he left public life for the placid atmosphere of the High Court bench. “Public life,” he remarked, “with all its worries and striving, is diversified and has compensations.”

I was a member of the Revenue Tariff party that sat in opposition to his Government because of its policy of protection. Knowing that he could have got the senior position had he wanted it, I said to him:

“As you are going on the bench, I am certain the members on both sides of the House are sorry you did not take the Chief Justiceship.”

“I would not take it, as I am convinced that Sir Samuel Griffiths is a better man for the post than I am.” Such was the reply of Sir Edmund Barton.

Probably Sir Edmund was right. Griffiths enhanced his reputation on the High Court bench. Barton's brilliancy was universally admitted, but his friends said he was lazy. He could not have been as lazy as they represented or he never could have done all the work he got through both before and after he became Prime Minister. Certainly, after he became a judge, he seemed to lose energy and the bonhomie that was his great attraction. His most characteristic utterance from the bench was, “I concur.”

* * * * *

Alfred Deakin, who succeeded Barton as Prime Minister, was tall and handsome, dark featured and with a full black beard; the most charming
personality in the first Parliament; a delightful conversationalist—bright, witty and novel. When Parliament adjourned each evening for tea there was always a spare three-quarters of an hour, and he usually spent that time walking in the delightful garden at the back of Parliament House. I was often his companion, and I look back on my talks with him as amongst the happiest of experiences. He loved reading, and his knowledge of English literature was extensive, and whatever subject he discussed he adorned.

“Come, Kirwan,” he would say to me, “let us have a walk and a talk.”

That meant we walked and he did the talking. It was as I wished. I was a deeply appreciative listener, and he seemed to know it.

It amazed me the length and variety of the passages from great writers that he could quote in verse and prose.

Our views were far apart on the subject of protection, which was then the bone of contention between federal parties. We never talked about politics, and he rarely mentioned his work to me, but I remember his confiding in me his wish to produce a speech worthy of the occasion when as Attorney-General he was introducing the High Court Bill.

“I am,” he said, “cursed with the fatal gift of fluency.”

His words, he said, always carried him away and he wished he could deliver the speech slowly and deliberately. We had more than one talk about it, and I was naturally interested and was in my place when the time came for him to deliver it.

He began as he had intended, carefully choosing his diction and avoiding rapidity of speech and super-abundance of words. That continued for about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, then some interjections came and he verbally bolted—the usual torrent of words flowed freely.

I watched, and perhaps looked disappointed.

In the midst of his outpourings he caught my eye. My face must have reminded him of his original intention.

He paused and once more proceeded to deliver his speech as he had arranged in his own mind, but further interruptions again caused him to rush along, and finally he seemed to abandon any attempt of departing from his usual style as hopeless. He raced through what he had to say—a torrent of words.

He was most careful in his personal expenditure. It was said he would never take a cab when a tram would serve.

A close friend of his has written that Deakin's philosophy on lying was a curious inconsistency, for he certainly believed that a lie was justifiable if the higher interests of the state demanded it. I cannot think that of Deakin.

Though I was in opposition to the Government, Deakin was kindness itself to me. When I lost my seat at the general elections he immediately
wired to me—he was then Prime Minister and I was an Oppositionist—his personal regret, and added, “Hope fortune of war will not discourage you at one rebuff.” It was just like him to say that. He could never be other than thoughtful and considerate, and was specially kind to the younger men in politics, even those who were opposed to his views.

* * * * *

Sir George Reid delighted in a hostile audience, and by his witty replies to interjectors he could always put it in good humour and so get a hearing.

He always drew enormous crowds when billed to speak. People flocked to hear his humour and his eloquence, and before his political foes realised what had happened to them he had won them to his views and were wildly cheering opinions that they had come to condemn.

I was a member of the parliamentary party of which Reid was the leader. When as leader of the Opposition he was preparing his first speech in the Federal Parliament, he was desirous of showing that whatever fiscal policy the Government decided on, a majority of the members were returned to support a tariff framed for revenue rather than for protection purposes. He asked a couple of the younger members, including myself, to find out from the election speeches what were the views expressed by members when on the hustings. We made investigations and were doubtful only about one man, a Labour member, Mr. Bamford. Someone said he was a free trader and Mr. Reid put him down as such. The galleries and members' benches were crowded, and when Mr. Reid came to this part of his speech in his notes the names of members were arranged alphabetically and the individual in question happened to come first. “The first name on my list of Revenue Tariffists,” said Reid, “is Mr. Bambord.” A member with a scraggy white beard in a far-away corner interjected, “No, I am not.” The Government benches cheered. Reid was not disconcerted. He adjusted his eye-glass and, looking at Mr. Bamford, remarked, “Thank you, that is just what we wanted, we were doubtful about you; our wish is to separate the sheep from the goats; and so you wish us to put you down amongst the goats.” The reply so fitted in with the member's scraggy beard, the whole chamber rocked with laughter.

When addressing a public meeting he was asked to explain some seeming inconsistency with his present views and those expressed in the past.

“Since then,” he replied, “much water has been under the bridge.”
“Which bridge?” cried an interjector.
Quick as lightning Reid replied, “The bridge the water ran under.”
Much of Reid's humour was unconscious. His rotund appearance, his big body, short legs and strange, rather plaintive voice excited humour.

During his later years in public life in Australia he was engaged in a constant effort to appear before the public as a serious-minded statesman. His opponents sought to injure him by representing that he was the “funny man” of politics and nothing else. He strove hard to avoid creating that impression.

One evening on the Western Australian goldfields, before he went on the platform to address an immense crowd that was waiting evidently expecting to be amused, he turned to me and said, “I must not make them laugh.” When he appeared they laughed, and in every sentence the audience sought to discover some humorous hidden meaning, and they often did, though it was not meant, and they laughed. No matter how he tried he could not help creating humour.

Reid rarely used his humour except when replying to bitter personal attacks or interjections. He did not indulge in

“The aimless jest that striking has caused pain, The idle word that he'd wish back again.”

Reid once told me how troubled he was about a remark he had made in the House a day or two previously. He was grievously concerned about it. There was a kindly, well-meaning and industrious member of the first House of Representatives from Tasmania named Piesse. Mr. Piesse was blind of one eye, but Reid did not know it.

Piesse was endeavouring to explain something in one of his speeches in the House. Mr. Reid could not follow his remarks, and he interjected, “I cannot see what the honourable member has in his eye.”

When Mr. Reid was told that Piesse had a blind eye, he could not explain or apologise. It worried his kindly nature for some time afterwards.

* * * * *

The Government and the Opposition were fairly evenly divided—the former had a few more votes than the latter. The Labour Party with sixteen members in a house of seventy-five was able to hold the balance of power. Sir Edmund Barton was accused of pandering to the Labour Party, and his successor in the Prime Ministership, Mr. Deakin, was subjected to a similar accusation. Mr. Chris Watson, the leader of the Labour Party, was spoken of as the Dictator of the Government policy. Sir George Reid invariably represented the Prime Minister in an obsequious attitude, answering “Yes,
Mr. Watson” to all demands, no matter how preposterous. Whatever truth there may have been in this, it is certain that the Legislation passed by the First Parliament was more democratic than that of any Parliament previously known in Australia.

Mr. Watson was a compositor by trade, possessed of considerable common sense, moderate and practical in his views and direct in his speech. He was a young man, still in the early thirties, and had served for six years in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, where he was credited with having secured the amendment of the Municipal Act by abolishing plural voting by property owners and giving a vote to occupiers. His party had frequent meetings, and the various aspects of questions coming before Parliament were discussed in detail. The party consisted of twenty-four members, including eight Labour Senators, and, as Mr. Watson invariably was the first of them to speak, it was said that it was not surprising that he had a great reputation for ability, as he voiced the ideas of not one but twenty-four brains. This did not apply to the other parties, as they rarely met and did not discuss either the general principle or details of the Bills presented by the Government. There was, in fact, a certain soreness amongst some of the Labour members because all the kudos went to the leader.

In the first Parliament W. M. Hughes was one of the brightest of the Labour Party. I remember his short erect figure, whilst he delivered a speech on the first Address in Reply. His pronunciation was good, his grammar perfect and his utterance indicated culture. The speech was an advocacy of the Swiss system that then existed of compulsory military service.

Like Lloyd George, he was born in Wales. Their characteristics in many respects are similar. In each case their parents were poor; they were both born in 1864 and are self-made men. Lloyd George became an attorney early in life, and Hughes also took to the law, but not until he was thirty-nine years of age. Lloyd George entered Parliament in 1890, was Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1916 to 1922. Hughes became a member of Parliament in 1894 and Australian Prime Minister in 1915, an office that he retained until 1923. Lloyd George, however, never had the experience of life of Hughes in battling for existence in a new country. After Hughes came to Australia a young man of twenty he was stone-breaking, a carpenter, boundary riding, sank post holes, shed building, droving stock, a hand on coastal vessels, “super” in Shakespearian performances, small shopkeeper and repairer of locks and umbrellas. When engaged on such odd jobs little did he himself or anyone else expect him to become what he was during the war—one of the Empire's foremost public men.
Though Forrest and Kingston did not like each other personally, they had several characteristics in common. They were both tall and heavy, hard workers and never spared themselves. In his early life as a surveyor and later as an explorer Forrest to his associates seemed tireless. Mr. W. A. Saw, who accompanied him as a surveyor on some of his bush trips, has described how at peep of day he would arouse the party by saying, “We must not eat the bread of idleness.” The horses had to be found and brought in before anyone had breakfast, after which the men put the packs on the horses and started off. It was frequently ten or eleven at night before camp was reached, and then they had tea. Forrest came in on one occasion at 2 a.m., and he left again at sunrise. Many times the party were short of water. After breaking camp in the morning none were allowed to drink until other water had been found, and no food was eaten until a new camp was fixed. The party carried two small kegs and water bags as a standby. The water found was frequently too salt and brackish to use, and on one occasion the party had to tie up the horses all night and continue the search next day. Forrest cared little for food. He was always in good condition and happy, and when travelling to a new camp he would never think of stopping for a mid-day meal. The principal food his party had was pork or bacon and damper, but at times the men ate almost anything they could shoot—shags, cranes, kangaroo rats, etc.—but they did not get down to snakes and iguanas. There were no vegetables, and a boiled plum pudding on Sundays while the raisins lasted was quite an event.

That spirit of cheeriness shown by Forrest in the bush was maintained in Parliament, where he had the qualities of a leader, was good-tempered, displayed a marvellous memory, was tolerant towards views that differed from his own and was ever ready and in fact eager to placate his opponents. Amongst Federal members there were few who were better liked.

II

The proportion of lawyers in the first Commonwealth Parliament was high. Amongst them were Sir Edmund Barton, Alfred Deakin, H. B. Higgins, Sir Isaac Isaacs, Sir George Turner, Sir George Reid, P. McManus Glynn, C. C. Kingston, Bruce Smith, Sir Josiah Symon, Sir John Quick, R. E. O’Connor, Sir John Downer, Sir Richard Baker, Senator Keating, Senator Clemons, and a host of others, more or less distinguished.
Much discussion took place on the interpretation of the Commonwealth Constitution.

H. B. Higgins, afterwards a High Court Judge, was prominent in discussing legal points. He suffered from a serious impediment in his speech. Therefore he spoke with great difficulty, and slowly and evidently used as few words as possible, but invariably he made his meaning plain and impressed the House.

Sir Isaac Isaacs was also a potent voice in debates. His speeches were appreciated because of his clear enunciation, his correct English and precise reasoning. Later he showed his capacity for high office when he was Federal Chief Justice and subsequently Governor-General of the Commonwealth. He had a good sense of humour. One day he told me he had just come from court where a man charged with assault and robbery was defending himself, and in an endeavour to prove an alibi he called a friend to give evidence that at the time the offence was committed he was several miles away from the scene. The first question he put to his witness was, “Where was I, Joe, when I knocked down that man?”

A most difficult task in the first House of Representatives was allotted to C. C. Kingston, who as Minister for Customs had to pilot through the chamber a protectionist tariff when the Opposition was pledged to a revenue tariff. The members of the Labour Party held the balance of power, but were free to vote individually as they wished on tariff questions, and the majority of them were either revenue tariffists or lukewarm protectionists. A born fighter, he took his work seriously and fought with vehemence. The strain was too much for his health, and he had not been many years in Federal Parliament when failing health compelled him to abandon strenuous work. As an advanced Radical, had his health remained good, it is possible he might have become Prime Minister of a coalition between the Labour Party and the more advanced members of the Government and Opposition parties. The intense hostility between Kingston and Forrest, though both members of the Ministry, was marked. Each was an autocrat and neither could abide the other.

Once, shortly after I became a member of the Federal Parliament, Kingston came to me and spoke about an individual of good repute whom we both knew in South Australia, a man who had been working for a small salary and was ever trying to make money by gambling in mining shares. A parcel of scrip he held had been forfeited for non-payment of a call. Soon after the forfeiture the shares had a most sensational rise in their market value. The story we heard was that he had not seen the announcement of the call and therefore did not pay it. He felt sore and bitter when the price rose to about twenty times its former value and
thought he had been swindled. Then he committed the unfortunate criminal act of forgery in an endeavour to show that the shares he held were valid and sold them. He was tried, found guilty and received a heavy sentence.

In Kingston's opinion the defence had not been properly conducted, the facts had not been brought out as they should have been, and in any case the punishment inflicted had been much too severe. There was no criminal record against the accused, and we knew him to be peaceful and law-abiding.

Kingston had a petition asking for leniency. He signed it, got the signatures to it of four or five members of the Federal Parliament who knew the man, including myself, and he saw the South Australian authorities and the judge.

“That's all right,” said Kingston to me as we met in one of the corridors of Parliament House. “I had some difficulty about it, but he's to be released this morning. I'm glad I managed it.”

Next day I saw him again. He had a telegram in his hand and a puzzled, troubled look on his face as he said, “We're in a blasted mess.”

He handed me the telegram, which stated that the man, whom we had got released after less than half his sentence, had left the prison the previous morning. Somehow he got a revolver and ammunition, and in the evening he tried to rob a bank and was caught in the act.

Prison environment had seemingly converted him into a desperado at war with society.

“The blasted fellow,” said Kingston, “must have lost all sense of decency and gratitude. He was told that we got him out and he might have thought of the awkward position he has put us in.”

For the second offence he received several years' hard labour.

* * * * *

R. E. O'Connor, who was leader for the Government in the Senate, was popular. There was no man in either House whom all parties held in higher respect. Even those who differed from him politically paid tribute to his honesty of purpose. A majority of the Senate were pledged to a revenue tariff. Perhaps no other man could have successfully steered the protective tariff of the first Federal Government through that chamber. When the High Court was constituted, his legal knowledge and experience and his judicial mind were recognised as eminently qualifying him for the bench, but regret was felt that his services were to be lost in the Commonwealth Parliament. His health, however, was far from good. He knew it, and by accepting judicial office he unquestionably prolonged his life a few years.
He was sixty-one when he died.

The first Federal Treasurer, Sir George Turner, a practising lawyer, was less interested in points of law than in endeavours to avoid unnecessary Government expenditure. Cautious and a believer in the policy of “safety first,” there was nothing spectacular about him. A plain man and a hard worker, his financial speeches were masses of figures and unembellished statements of fact. As Premier and Treasurer of Victoria he was the type that was needed to straighten the finances during a troublous period, and he well deserved the credit he received for his careful management of the public money. Similar competency was shown by him during the early years of the Commonwealth. In those days expenditure was restricted. I can recall the look of horror that came into his face when Sir John Forrest, referring to a proposed public work, grandiosely remarked, “What's a million?” as if a million were but a few pence.

An attractive personality in the Opposition was Sir Edward Braddon, over seventy years of age, white-haired and keen-eyed. His sister was the famous English novelist, Miss Braddon, the author of innumerable best-sellers; he said he had never read one of them. He had had a colourful career before coming to Australia. His father was a Cornishman, and Sir Edward was but eighteen years old when he went to India, where he saw much active service, including the Mutiny. After that he was in the Indian Revenue service, but he found time for big-game shooting and was never so happy as when villagers asked his aid (as they did more than once) to rid them of a man-eating tiger. He was fifty years of age when he retired on a pension. Instead of going to England, as is customary with Indian public servants, to spend the rest of his days lounging in London clubs, he settled in Tasmania, took up land, entered politics, became a member of Parliament and occupied several important positions, amongst them the Agent-Generalship and the Premiership.

He often expressed to me his gratification at having succeeded in embodying in the Commonwealth Constitution what is known as the Braddon Clause, by which for the first ten years after Federation the Commonwealth Government had one-fourth of the Customs and Excise revenue and the balance went to the states. Many called it “The Braddon Blot,” and it had some defects, yet during its operation it served a good purpose.

* * * * *

A friend of mine was Senator Staniforth Smith. We had been associated at Kalgoorlie, of which he had been mayor, and in the elections for the first
Federal Parliament he was returned at the head of the poll when six members were required to represent Western Australia in the Senate. His tall, well-dressed figure, his ever-smiling, cheery, handsome face and his genial personality took the electors by storm. More particularly was he a favourite with the fair sex, and the admiration he had for them was warmly reciprocated. After his six years' term as a Senator, he retired from the Federal Parliament and received a position in Papua as Administrator and Director of Education. In 1910 he led an exploring expedition into the Upper Kikori district, where it met with disaster. He and his party were missing for weeks. It was authoritatively reported that he was dead. The news was received with deep sorrow at Kalgoorlie, where he was extremely popular, and at a municipal gathering speeches were delivered deploiring his end, and a toast to his memory was drunk in solemn silence. A few days after news arrived that he had reached civilisation safe and sound! No one was more amused at the incident than Staniforth Smith. He took great pleasure in reading his obituary notices in Australian papers.

Another friend of mine in the first Federal Parliament was also a Senator from Western Australia: Ned Harney, an Irishman and a Trinity College graduate. He was a fine orator of the cultured, courteous, old-fashioned style. He had a wonderful rich deep accent, a delightful touch of the brogue, was full of humour, and he could always arouse a crowd to terrific cheering. His standing at the Bar was high, and he could not afford to neglect altogether his practice, for his allowance as a Senator was but £400 a year, and he spent money lavishly. He was compelled to leave his parliamentary duties frequently during his session in order to appear in the Western Australian courts, and his voyages between Fremantle and Adelaide (the Trans-railway was not then built) were so frequent that he became known as “the member for the Great Australian Bight.”

It was said that on one occasion Harney walked into the Senate, and after listening to the debate rose and made out a powerful case against a certain line of action. He had almost carried the whole House with him when the whip of his party, coming in, passed a slip of paper to him, saying the party had decided to vote in the opposite direction to the one he supported in his speech. Harney read the paper, destroyed it and proceeded to say that in a spirit of fair play he wished first of all to present in as favourable a light as possible the views of those who might be inclined to vote against the way he intended to vote. Then, with tremendous capacity, he demolished all his own arguments one after the other and won back the House to the second viewpoint.

Harney was not more than a couple of years in the Federal Parliament. He went to England, where he practised his profession. Some twenty years
later he was elected to the House of Commons as a Liberal member for South Shields.

* * * * * *

At this time I met several times in Melbourne a journalist who had never been in Parliament but whose influence on public affairs was tremendous, and who perhaps as much if not more than any man in the Commonwealth helped to make Australia a strongly protectionist country: David Syme, of the *Age*. He was tall, spare and thin, seventy-four years of age, grim of visage, keen-eyed and mentally alert, merciless towards political opponents and fanatical. He had warm friendships and pronounced hatreds.

The life-long association, almost love, that existed between him and Deakin had not then come to an end as it did later. It was said that Syme promised Deakin that the *Age* would adopt a certain attitude on a public question, but a day or two after a leading article appeared definitely committing the paper to the opposite view to what had been agreed on. It was one of the few occasions on which an article in the *Age* appeared without Syme having seen it. Deakin meanwhile had committed himself. Neither he nor the *Age* could retreat. The result was a wide breach between the two old friends.

I remember my first meeting with Syme. It was whilst lunching at the Athenaeum Club, Melbourne. Knowing that I had come from Western Australia and that the personalities of the Commonwealth Parliament were mostly new to me, he asked me who I thought were the outstanding figures. His hostility to George Reid was not merely confined to opposition to his revenue tariff policy, but extended to a deep personal animosity. Mostly prompted by a spirit of mischief and a curiosity to see what the reaction would be, I replied:

“Apart altogether from the views he holds, there is, of course, one figure, head and shoulders above all the other members, a man who thinks not for any electorate, town or state, but for the whole Commonwealth, a truly wide-visioned statesman, a really great statesman.”

“And who is that?” asked Syme.

“George Reid,” I answered.

A look of pain, mingled with indignation and anger, came on the wizened face. “You are quite wrong,” he hotly said. “You do not know him or you would not say that.”

My remark seemed to trouble him so much that I was sorry to have disturbed his equanimity. I listened patiently, and he told me at great length his opinion of George Reid. It was far from complimentary.
As I looked up I saw an amused smile on the face of my friend, Dr. McInerney, whose guest I was. As the dour, serious-minded Scotchman continued to warn me against the machinations of Reid, McInerney gave me a comical wink, and I had the utmost difficulty to avoid laughing.

III

A considerable part of the work of the first Federal Parliament consisted of legislation to create the necessary machinery to carry on the national duties entrusted to the Commonwealth. Most of the Bills were of a non-party nature, but there were features of them that were contentious, though not highly so. They chiefly related to the public service, and the amalgamation of the six post and telegraph departments and six defence departments and the institution of the high court.

A decision of vast importance was the institution of a common policy for the establishment and maintenance of what has come to be generally known as “A White Australia.” It meant a determination that Australia—the last of the world's great spaces that remain to be populated—shall be reserved for the surplus population of Europe. This policy to Australians is almost as much as if it were a national religion. It was in the first Federal Parliament that it was decided to adopt the education test for immigrants, a test that may be applied to all immigrants, but in practice is only applied to certain foreigners who desire to become permanent residents. Another vitally important decision of the first Commonwealth Parliament was that Kanaka labour should not be further employed on the sugar plantations of Queensland.

The real division between the Government and the Opposition was the tariff. The issue was whether the Customs duties should be solely for revenue purposes, as the Opposition contended should be the case, or have a strong protective incidence, which the Government favoured. New South Wales had a revenue tariff and Victoria was protectionist, but the Commonwealth Constitution provided for interstate free trade. Border Custom Houses or “Border Barbarisms,” as they were called, were abolished. In all the colonies the tariff had been a bone of contention, and it was not surprising that fierce discussions should be aroused in the Federal Parliament on the objective of the first federal tariff.

To those of us who were free traders it appeared clear that we were but an infant nation—we had then a population of less than four million—holding an empty continent with inexhaustible pastoral, agricultural and mineral resources which constituted the country's real wealth. Why should we handicap those engaged in the development of those resources, the
products of which could not be protected, in an endeavour to establish industries that merely built up Australia's big cities by artificial means? First make the continent populous and wealthy by encouraging the primary industries, and secondary industries would spring up naturally and under healthy conditions. These, briefly, were the arguments we presented.

We were utterly routed. The duties imposed by the first Australian tariff were high, but, as we pointed out, protectionists were never satisfied and would go on crying out for more and more duties. This prediction was in accordance with what has actually happened.

Lobbying was carried on to a great extent during the progress of the tariff. It was a source of constant irritation. Representatives of factories in the suburbs of Melbourne alleged that if duties were not imposed these factories would be closed down and hundreds of men thrown out of work. It was of no avail to point out that for every additional man protective duties might cause to be employed, the increased cost of developing back-country industries would throw two or three men out of employment in the industries of mining, wool production and wheat growing. To protectionists the vision of the greatness of the Commonwealth was obscured by the smoke of suburban factories. It seemed impossible for them to think continentally.

The atmosphere of Melbourne was strongly protectionist, and men, being only human, cannot remain uninfluenced by their environment. Had the first Parliament sat in Sydney amidst the free-trade atmosphere created there by Sir Henry Parkes, the struggle over the tariff would probably have resulted differently. Those members of the Federal Parliament who believed this felt that the framers of the Constitution were wise in deciding that the Legislature should meet in a federal capital far removed from the parochial influences of any of the state capitals. Hence it was that many of us favoured the selection of a site for the capital as soon as possible and the removal of the Legislature and Federal Government offices thence.
Chapter IX Searching for a Federal Capital


I

MR. J. D. EDGAR, one-time Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, writes:

“National capitals are seldom the result of deliberate choice. For the most part they grow with the race, as in the case of Rome, Paris and London. Alexandria waxed great and rich on the banks of the Nile; so did St. Petersburg on the Neva; and Washington on the Potomac bids fair to excel them both in stately splendour. When a country is young and its history is not yet told in monuments, nor trophied in ancient architecture, its capital should be adorned in other ways. The Tower of London and the memories that cluster round Westminster Hall must help to inspire even prosaic members of the British Parliament with a dominant consciousness of the continuity of the Government in which they are taking part, and of the enduring nature of the laws they are helping to frame. Wise then were the advisers of Queen Victoria when, to compensate for the monuments of the past, they gave to Canada for her capital a site of surpassing beauty. Equally to be commended were those who conceived and carried out the glorious national buildings with which the rocky heights of Ottawa are crowned. The patriotism of the Athenian was kindled at the sight of the Acropolis, and every Scottish heart beats high when he sees the ancient castle on Edin's Hill. To fill a Canadian with pride in his country and confidence in its future, show him the noble pile of the national buildings, as they tower and glitter in the setting sun, far above the foaming river. It may not be a logical ground for his patriotism, but it is a sentimental one, and it will influence his feelings and his actions when he goes back to his distant home, whether it be on the western prairie, on the shores of the Atlantic, or on the far-off Pacific slopes.”

Beautiful as these ideas are, the motives that prompted the founders of Australian Federation to insist on the establishment of a federal capital for the Commonwealth were practical rather than sentimental. The main motive was to remove the Commonwealth Parliament and central administrative offices to federal territory remote from the parochial influences of any of the largely populated state capitals. It was also in a practical spirit that it was arranged that members of Parliament should make a tour of the proposed capital sites. In the federations most akin to the Commonwealth—namely, the Dominion of Canada and the United States—the capitals were chosen after much care and deliberation. As
mentioned in the quotation given above, it was Queen Victoria, through her
advisers, who selected Ottawa. In the United States, Congress gave
President Washington extraordinary latitude in the choice of a site. He was
permitted to plant the city anywhere within an area about eighty miles in
length.

“The father of his country,” like Romulus of old, is described by Adams
as pacing off in person the metes and bounds of the city to which his name
is given.

The greater part of the site he chose proved to be in the rainy season a
morass wellnigh impassable. When the machinery of government was
moved there it was merely “a backwoods settlement in the wilderness.” In
1814, during the second war with Great Britain, it was captured by British
troops, and the public buildings burned. In 1839 it was “a large stragglng
village reared in a drained swamp.” In 1871 its condition was described as
deplorable, and one writer says: “The public buildings and grounds are
neglected. The streets are deep in mud or clouded with dust, the unbuilt
portions are morasses, and the sewerage is worse than useless.” All this has
been since changed into the wonderful capital of to-day!

* * * * *

The Commonwealth Constitution provided that the seat of government
should be in New South Wales, not less than one hundred miles from
Sydney and in federal territory containing an area of not less than one
hundred square miles.

Almost every small centre outside the one hundred miles radius put in a
claim for the honour, but the number of sites were reduced by a
commission to about a dozen. I accepted an invitation to join the members
of the House of Representatives who made a tour of the sites early in 1902.
It was a large party.

In those days motor-cars were unknown, and the tour occupied more than
a fortnight. In the course of our wanderings we covered over two thousand
miles by rail, more than four hundred by coach and a hundred and seventy-
six by sea.

Amongst the hundred and one points we had to consider in making a
selection were water supply, climate, facilities for drainage, proximity of
building material, picturesqueness, accessibility, nature of soil and cost of
resumption of land.

At Orange we climbed to the top of Old Man Canoblas, a mountain peak
that rises 4,600 feet above sea level. It was a bright clear day. There was a
picturesque drive along a tree-sheltered road that climbed upwards, skirting
awe-inspiring precipices. We were driven to a few hundred feet of the top. The remainder of the journey to the summit was done on foot. Sixty miles distant many towns were discernible. Round the foot of the mountain the country was dotted with smiling homesteads. In the foreground were the forest-clad mountain slopes.

We also visited Lyndhurst or Carcoa Garland, Bathurst, Armidale, Jervis Bay, Twofold Bay, Bombala, Dalgety, Queanbeyan, Bungendore, Lake George, Goulburn, Yass, Tumut, Wagga Wagga and Albury.

At each centre the local residents tried to impress on us that their town was the most suitable to be the federal capital. By a peculiar process of reasoning they argued that it was the real geographical centre of the Commonwealth. Finally, we thought Australia's real geographical centre moved round with us.

It was not clear that one site visited, Bathurst, was within the one hundred mile limit of Sydney. Local residents answered the objection by pointing out that a New South Wales statute directs that distances in all cases should be determined by the nearest practical road, and that by such measurement Bathurst is one hundred and twenty-four miles from Sydney. Another point advanced was that if the measurement were taken from the usual starting-place—the obelisk in Macquarie Place—instead of from the west boundary of the city of Sydney, Bathurst would be found to be outside the one hundred miles radius “in a straight line on a horizontal plane,” to quote the Interpretation Act of the Imperial Parliament.

* * * * *

From Jervis Bay we went by steamer to Twofold Bay, which we reached early in the morning. The port of Eden, perched on a green patch on the side of the hills overhanging the water, looked as though it were indeed well named. The water was gloriously blue, the air fresh and bracing and the whole scene brightened by a cloudless sun. Here was the harbour of what was one of the most favoured of the proposed federal capital sites. Some thought we were at the entrance to the promised land!

The drive to Bombala disclosed valleys on each side that in wealth of ferns and beautiful foliage are almost unrivalled. Running streams abounded, also bird life; the note of the bell bird was constant. The road climbs the Big Jack Mountain amidst magnificent scenery.

There are towering hills and immense gorges and green covered banks along the creeks. One enthusiastic writer put it thus:

“The first views of the new district showed wild flowers bursting out from the tracks left by some tumbling mountain torrent, the cress growing profusely in the
streams, the halting-place where water babbling over the pebbles, and rattling round the corners, where the willows bent to kiss them as they passed, gave a new and beautiful sensation. The immense gullies, with the timber-clad hills rising on either side to great heights, and almost excluding the sunlight, and the mountains towering away out in the distance, and spiking the clouds which endeavoured to pass over them, added to the elementary wonderment, and supplied the sensations of grandeur and immensity that were wanting to make the contrast with the rest of the tour complete. It was a sensation, indeed, of haunting trout streams, of soft hours spent in the blissful shade of overhanging boughs, of the peace and sweetness and luxuriousness of a country where the fall of rain is regular, and where the tired citizen can find perpetual recreation. At the top was the tableland, which spread as far as the eye could reach, and which, if not rich with the experience of recent abundant rains, was still covered with green fields and prosperous-looking homesteads, and intersected by a running river.”

Bombala is about forty miles from Eden. It is nearly equidistant in a direct line from Sydney and Melbourne. It is on a tableland averaging 2,400 feet above sea level. The thermometer ranges from an average of 66 deg. in summer to 43 deg. in winter and the rainfall is 29 inches.

About forty miles to the north-west is Dalgety, or Buckley's Crossing, where the Snowy river flows in a great volume along its winding course. Its water had not the brown muddy appearance of most Australian rivers. It was as clear as crystal; it ran over a stony bed, and, being snow-fed, it was icy cold. We were told it had more water in summer than in winter. In the distance there was the monarch of Australian mountains, Kosciusko, its top clothed in a white mantle of snow.

In Dalgety there was certainly no lack of building stone. As one of the Press reporters said:

“Boulders were everywhere. Wherever you went off the road you tumbled over boulders. You sat upon them. If exhausted nature asserted a claim for rest you leant against them; in climbing a hill you fell against them if you turned your eyes for a moment aside; you clutched hold of them to steady yourself in descending the river banks. They stood out on the top of every hill, half a dozen together, some seven or eight feet high. They were as thick as trees in the mallee, as conspicuous as cloves in a ham at Christmas, as plentiful as mosquitoes in a swamp.”

As the party came in sight of the Snowy river there was a lone fisherman sitting on a rock in the stream with a rod and line. Someone quoted Dr. Johnson's definition of an angler, “A rod, a line and a hook all joined together, with a worm at one end and a fool at the other.” He was wrong in this case. The man was certainly no fool. As we drew nearer the rotund form looked familiar. It was George Reid, the leader of the Opposition. Whilst waiting at Dalgety to join our party he was fishing for trout.

At one of the centres visited there was a huge gathering at which, whilst
he was speaking, he was asked by interjections if he would vote for that place as the site for the federal capital. He immediately answered, “Most certainly I will,” whereupon he was interrupted by rounds and rounds of tremendous applause. When silence was restored he repeated the remark, “Most certainly I will vote for this site.” There was further prolonged applause, and he then added, “provided I think it is the most suitable site.”

I remember that at Goulburn the party had a novel experience. On our arrival a dense mist prevailed in which it was impossible to see for more than a few yards. “What rotten luck!” said local enthusiasts. They insisted on taking us to view the site. In order to be agreeable most of us complied. We felt it was the big joke of the tour. I was one of those induced to climb a hill, not knowing the height. We painfully toiled higher and higher through the mist. After half an hour's exertion, the top seemed no nearer and the fog no thinner. Urged on by our guides, I was one of those who persevered. We found that the mountain rose above the mist and that at the summit the atmosphere was quite clear. That did not help us to view the site. Nothing could be seen but a great sea of clouds all around with the tops of hills standing out here and there like islands.

A favourable impression was created by Tumut. Many of the party strongly supported its claims. When we saw it, there was much to admire in the beauties of its scenery, its rich lands, and its plantations of healthy well-matured trees. It seemed almost intended to be a good site, not for the crowded haunt of busy people, but for a spacious and beautiful garden—perhaps a quiet old-fashioned garden city something like what several members hoped the federal capital would become. What seemed an ample water supply was provided by the Tumut river, a strong stream that runs (so we were told) all the year round between banks picturesquely clothed with luxuriant vegetation.

II

The strain of travelling day after day by trains, by sea and in lumbering four-horse drags over rough roads was considerable, especially as most of the members were middle-aged or elderly men. Happily, the journeying was relieved by cheery conversation and amusing episodes.

One of the liveliest of the party was W. M. Hughes. He was a martyr to indigestion and needed constant exercise to keep fit. Sometimes the track was heavy for the vehicles, and the horses painfully ploughed their way along. He usually jumped off the coach and ran beside it for miles. He did not seem to tire or perspire and he had not an ounce of superfluous flesh. Some of the younger members sought to emulate him, but not successfully.
As a practical joker he was inveterate. There was an elderly member, Mr. Solomon, who represented Fremantle. Mr. Solomon, despite his age and the whiteness of his hair, was a keen dancer. At one of the towns we were entertained at a dance in which he was participating. Mr. Hughes did not dance and found the time hanging heavily. Hughes had noticed that a shop in the main street had the name “Solomon” over the front. He pulled his hat low over his head, and disguising himself as much as he could, went to the dance hall and asked for the Fremantle representative. When Solomon came out he did not recognise Hughes, who drew him away into the darkness and told him a relative of his who lived in the main street over his shop was seriously ill, dying in fact, and wished to see him. Solomon said he had no relative in the locality, but notwithstanding he would go and see the sick man. He returned to the dance hall for his overcoat. When he came out Hughes was gone, but Solomon went to the main street and found the shop with the name over the door. He had to knock two or three times and loudly. Eventually the door was opened by a somewhat frightened old lady in a dressing-gown. Solomon explained why he had called, but she said no one of the name had lived there for years, and then slammed the door in his face with a loud bang. The next day Solomon confided to Hughes and other members how he was certain that the man who had called at the dance hall had intended to rob him as he was going to take him to the shop, but for some reason had not. No one disillusioned Solomon, who thought he had had a narrow escape.

One of Hughes's jokes had an ending that caused considerable laughter at his expense. When the party reached a town in the evening, a number of them would gather occasionally in a room of one of the hotels and indulge in comic tomfoolery. Hughes, who was a strict teetotaller, was a ring-leader of these gatherings and often enjoyed himself so hilariously that a stranger might for a moment think that he was intoxicated. One evening the party was engaged in a mock initiation ceremony to some supposed lodge with a high-sounding and absurd name. W. M. Hughes was the Master of Ceremonies. He grabbed a poker, stuck it in the fire, made it red-hot, and waved it about whilst he carried on strange antics and made excruciatingly funny speeches. He happened to lay the poker aside, where it lost its red glow but still remained burning hot.

A member of the party, Mr. Willis, who suddenly came into the room, thought he would join in the fun and seized the poker. Not knowing that it was hot, he began applying it to Hughes's legs playfully. Everyone shouted out to tell him that it was hot. In the clamour no one could be heard, and he continued to tap Hughes's legs with it.

The higher Hughes jumped the more the other continued to use the
poker. It was not until there was a smell of burning from Hughes's legs that he stopped.

Hughes's trousers were so burned that he could never wear them again, but he took the thing in good part.

Wherever we went we were taken to an eminence and shown a wonderful view. “It amuses me,” said Mr. A. Paterson, a Queensland member, “to see men climbing a hill and declaring their amazement at the view. Of course they get a great view if they ascend a height. Why, you would get a good view from a hill in the Sahara desert.”

Sir William Lyne was the federal minister who represented the Government with the party. The exchanges between him and Sir George Reid, leader of the Opposition, were witty. They were strong opponents, but warm personal friends. One day they had travelled together in the same buggy. They were both bulky men, and at a reception that evening Lyne said Reid had done him an excellent turn by sitting in the front seat of the vehicle and sheltering him from the cold wind and dust. Reid, in reply, jocosely observed that what happened was probably only in anticipation of a coming political change in the minister's views, as his friend had that day agreed to sit behind him for the first time in his life.

* * * * *

Amongst those who participated in the tour was one of the most singular of the members, King O'Malley, who told us he was born a few miles inside the Canadian border and thus missed “by a few miles” becoming President of the United States. He hoped to obtain a measure of consolation by getting the Treasurership of the Commonwealth, and had supreme confidence in his capacity for statesmanship.

For three years he had been a member of the Legislative Assembly in South Australia, but failed to secure re-election, and went to Tasmania, where at the first federal elections he was elected to the House of Representatives. Though he never was Treasurer, yet for more than four years he was Minister for Home Affairs.

He was typical of the old-time stage Yankee, and appeared to cultivate that character's accent, mannerisms and dress. A broad-brimmed hat, a full beard, his tall and lean appearance and flowing coat tails, accentuated his Americanism, also he addressed everyone as “brother” or “sister.” Even those who inwardly resented his familiarity and odd behaviour could not fail to like him and enjoy his humour. Early in the first session, when Mr. Bruce Smith was delivering an academic speech in choice and correct English, he declared that no great political economist was other than a free
trader.

“That's not so,” interjected King O'Malley.

“Perhaps,” said Bruce Smith, “the honourable member will name one
accepted political economist who is a protectionist.”

“Carey,” promptly came the answer.

“I confess,” said Bruce Smith, “I never heard of him. Who is he?”

Then came the startling reply, “He is the bald-headed eagle of the Rocky
Mountains.”

King O'Malley at times could be very caustic. He represented a
Tasmanian constituency, and another of the Tasmanian representatives
bitterly resented his state having as a member a man whom he was in the
habit of describing as “a mere Yankee bounder.” When he told O'Malley so
to his face, O'Malley's reply was to liken the other to “a withered sausage
skin filled with wind and water.”

*         *         *         *         *

He was a believer in professional politicians. He thought politics should
be a profession, legislation should be the work of trained experts, and
members of parliament should be well paid, not less than £1,000 a year.
Members were then paid £400 annually, and King O'Malley said he could
not make ends meet on his parliamentary allowance as he had to live in
two places at the same time—namely, his constituency in Tasmania and in
Melbourne, where Parliament sat, and he had to constantly travel. Giving
these reasons, he consequently formally applied for permission to erect a
tent in the gardens of Parliament House in Melbourne, so that he and any
other member who desired could camp there and do his own cooking and
washing. Permission was not granted, but members' allowances were
gradually increased and ultimately they were raised to £1,000.

*         *         *         *         *

As a raconteur O'Malley was appreciated during our tour. There was a
story that he told with great delight that purported to be a personal
experience of his when young and reckless. Many new religions had been
started in the United States, the promoters got large land grants, became
affluent and important men, and he and other young bloods did not see
why they should not found a sect. A few adherents were secured, a church
was established with some such high-sounding names as “The Rock-Built
Lily-Bound White Church of Jerusalem,” and bishops and other dignitaries
were appointed. A prophetic announcement was made by the chief founder
that in a certain remote mountain valley half an hour after midnight on a particular date an angel would appear and hand to a representative of the church tablets on which would be inscribed commandments which adherents had to obey.

King O'Malley explained that a man had been found whose family name was “Angel.” For a stipulated payment he was to appear at the right moment at the appointed spot. He was to cover himself with a huge white sheet, wear stilts, carry an electric battery for lighting purposes and hand over certain tablets that were to be given to him beforehand.

The man who received them could make a solemn affidavit that he had been given them by “an Angel,” and others could swear that they saw him get them from “an Angel.” None of them would thus commit perjury, but only two or three were actually in the secret.

The supposed prophet in a trance-like condition insisted that the angel would appear and that the world would be astounded. Religious fervour was worked up amongst some men and women adherents, who were convinced that a great revelation was about to be made.

It was a dark night when some twenty or thirty persons gathered together in the valley. The prophet was amongst them, urging them to engage earnestly in prayer. He got the group to go on their knees and solemnly plead for the messenger from heaven to appear. They waited a couple of hours. The time was drawing near. Everyone was in a state of silent expectancy. Suddenly they saw on a high rock an imposing figure all in white with a light above his head. It was an awe-inspiring spectacle. With a deep groan the crowd crouched down until their faces almost touched the ground. There was a hush and a feeling of dread. Slowly and reverently the prophet advanced towards the figure, and, falling on his knees, was seen to receive the tablets. “The Angel” then vanished.

Next day scores of fresh adherents joined the church. The story of the apparition got into the papers. It spread far and wide. Testimony was given by men and women who had no doubt that what they saw was supernatural. The church appeared to be firmly established.

According to King O'Malley the prophet announced that he was bound, after he had received the tablets, to take them with him and disappear into the solitude of the mountains to study and fast and pray. In a few days he would return to his disciples, and then the gospel would be explained and preached. In the recesses of a remote mountain cave he met “The Angel.” The prophet, who was armed with a revolver, said afterwards that all would have been well had he shot dead his fellow-conspirator, but instead a solemn promise was extracted from him that he would leave America and never again be seen in the country. Then the money stipulated was paid
When the prophet returned his disciples received him with respect that almost approached worship. More and more people joined the church. An appeal for funds for building a stately edifice in the valley where “The Angel” appeared to house the sacred tablets was meeting with a generous response. The future of the new church looked bright.

Suddenly the whole scheme was shattered. “The Angel,” whilst waiting at one of the ports for a ship that was to have taken him to Europe, became gloriously drunk in a saloon. He also became garrulous. He joked to the bar attendants about his being an Angel by name and also an angel messenger from heaven. They linked up what he said with what they had read in the Press. A reporter heard of it, interviewed the man, gave him drink and money, got the full story, and published it under scare headlines. Immediately a copy of the paper reached the prophet he got on a fast horse, was last seen riding for his life out of the reach of his infuriated disciples and dupes and was never seen or heard of after that.

Such was King O'Malley's chief story, told with many embellishments and great dramatic power. When he thought his audience was gullible, he described himself as the prophet, and when they believed him he was intensely pleased.

III

At Twofold Bay I was much interested in the ruins of Boydtown, which is on the bay opposite Eden. It had several tumble-down, uninhabited houses.

About it there are strange and romantic associations. It takes its name from its founder, Benjamin Boyd, who in the forties of the last century was a well-known Londoner, a member of the Stock Exchange, a financier, a banker and company promoter. In 1841 he decided to transfer his activities to Australia. He voyaged in his own yacht, Wanderer, and brought with him the artist Oswald (afterwards Sir Oswald) Brierly. Three steamers and a schooner flying Boyd's personal flag preceded him with stores.

He had founded the Royal Bank of Australia in London, and he opened a branch in Sydney. Then he embarked in the whaling industry, made Twofold Bay the base of his operations, and established Boydtown. Pastoral pursuits were what more particularly attracted him to the locality. He held extensive grazing areas, and his intention was to make Boydtown the port for the Monara Plains, to which he made a road.

The beauty of Twofold Bay entranced him, and he believed it was going to be of great importance. Blood-stock was imported. He got Kanakas as
shepherds, but neither he nor they knew anything about sheep farming. Wild dogs played havoc among the flocks. Furthermore, the coloured men did not behave themselves. They got into disfavour with the authorities, who insisted on their being deported. Money was spent lavishly. Boyd entered public life. For a short period he was a member of the Legislative Council.

Boyd's operations appeared to be successful for a few years and to promise well. Then a change came about. After seven years heavy losses were reported. The outlook was gloomy. Money for the enterprise had been obtained from the bank he had established, and the bank was compelled to close its doors, whilst the shareholders had to provide nearly £100,000 to meet liabilities incurred by Boyd. An arrangement allowed him to retain some ships and also land at Twofold Bay.

At this time there was a rush to California, where new goldfields were being opened up. Boyd sailed for California in the Wanderer in the hope that he might restore his shattered fortunes, but was not successful. In 1851 he was on a cruise in the Pacific Islands, where he met with a mysterious end. The Wanderer anchored in a small bay off an island of the Solomon group, supposed to be uninhabited. One morning, with a member of the native crew, he went on shore to shoot game.

Later an attack was made by natives on the yacht. There was a hard fight, but they were prevented from getting on board. Boyd had not returned. An armed boat crew were sent on shore.

The marks of knees were seen on the ground as if there had been a struggle. There was also gun wadding that must have fallen out of Boyd's pocket. A vigorous search was made, but nothing further was discovered. Boyd could not be found.

The Wanderer set sail. Soon after she was wrecked on the Australian coast.

Statements that subsequently were made caused the belief that Boyd was detained on the Solomon Islands by the natives in order that they might learn from him some of the arts of the white man. It was said that he was taken away and hidden when vessels came within sight. Belief in this theory was strengthened by the absence of any bloodstains on the scene of the struggle. As the islands were approached by sea, natives were often observed (so it was reported) hurrying away a curiously dressed individual as if anxious to place him in hiding. The captive was supposed to be the unfortunate founder of Boydtown.

A warship, sent many years later to the island by Sir William Denison (then Governor of New South Wales), found trees and rocks marked with the word “Boyd.” The natives denied any knowledge of him, and nothing
further could be learned as to his fate.

What is told to the visitor to Twofold Bay is mostly vague and legendary. The particulars I have given were related to me in Melbourne by a man who was a friend of Boyd in California.

* * * * *

I went over the deserted ruins of Boydtown. Someone has said that the first institution to be established in a new town in America was a saloon, in England a church, and in Australia a racecourse. Boyd supplied not only the American but also the British requirement.

The hotel had what must have been a well-furnished saloon. In one room there was the dilapidated remains of what had been a fine billiard table. The church, which had a substantial tower, was never used. In its vicinity were three or four graves. They were grass-grown, but the tombstones still showed the short and simple annals of those who half a century previously found their last resting-place in Boydtown.

There was what was left of a store, also a building that was Boyd's private residence. There were evidences of streets having been laid out, and other indications of an extensive town having been planned.

On a headland at the entrance to Twofold Bay an excellently constructed lighthouse was erected. We were told it was not allowed to be lighted, as if it were permitted the Government would be under the obligation of keeping it lighted, and there was another lighthouse on the other side of the harbour.

My attention was directed to an old two-story house from which the doors and windows had disappeared. It was perched on a lofty crag like the eyrie of an eagle. It was the home of Boyd's friend, Brierly, the landscape painter. Certainly the dwelling was picturesque and commanded a wonderful view of the sea and the coastal cliffs.

* * * * *

The subsequent career of Brierly was different from that of Boyd. He had studied art under distinguished masters, and had two pictures in the Royal Academy when he decided to join Boyd and come to Australia with him. He was then twenty-four years of age. Boyd gave him the management of his whaling enterprises, a position for which the young artist could not have had many qualifications. He made his home at Twofold Bay for five or six years, and probably tried to learn what he could about whaling. His brush was not idle. There is a picture by him in the Sydney Art Gallery,
“South Sea Whaling off Twofold Bay.”

The captain of a warship induced him to go for an extended voyage made for survey purposes in Australian waters. That and other voyages unsettled him. He did not return to the solitude of his picturesque Boydtown home, but went to London. A few years later, through the influence of naval friends, he was brought under the notice of Queen Victoria, from whom he received many royal favours, including commissions to paint pictures, also a knighthood. He lived to be nearly eighty. Boyd's vision and enterprise ended in his failure and destruction. It was his comrade, the artist, who prospered.

IV

A party of Senate members similar to that from the House of Representatives also made a tour of inspection of the proposed sites for the federal capital. When votes were taken by an exhaustive ballot in each federal chamber, the Representatives chose Tumut and the Senate Bombala. Neither of these two sites was ultimately selected.

A New South Wales member confided to me that he was awkwardly situated, as he had two of the proposed sites in his electorate. His constituents required him to declare which of the two he would vote for. If he did not vote for either of them, he felt he had no hope of re-election, but if he voted for one of them he would be bound to have the hostility of the voters who favoured the other side. He was a conscientious member, and he was extremely worried, as I knew he did not favour either of the sites in his electorate, and thought a site in another part of the state was the best.

An even more difficult problem faced Sir William Lyne. There were three towns in his electorate, each claiming to be the capital site. He had an uncertain seat. We thought that no matter how he voted he could not fail to arouse the hostility of two of the three towns. We were mistaken. We did not know what a wily politician he was. He actually succeeded in doing what appeared to be impossible—namely, pleasing all three. The exhaustive ballot system was adopted for selection. He voted in the first ballot for the town that of the three was most likely to be eliminated. Then he voted for the next of the three that he knew would be least favoured. When the second was eliminated he voted for the third. He thus voted for the three.

He was a big, heavy man, and was usually known as “The Rogue Elephant.”
It was in May, 1902, that the parliamentary tour I have referred to was made, but it was not until long after that that the site of the federal capital was selected.

The fact that in the first Parliament the Senate selected Bombala and the House of Representatives Tumut created a deadlock. The next Parliament passed an Act favouring Dalgety. This decision met with strong opposition in New South Wales, as the site was too far from Sydney, and the New South Wales Parliament, by resolutions carried in both Houses, suggested Tumut, Lyndhurst or Yass. Alfred Deakin was Prime Minister, and the question was then deferred for years on the plea that it might create friction between the Commonwealth and New South Wales. It was not until 1909 that Canberra was finally selected as the best site, and it was not until four years later that the official ceremony was held to mark the initiation of operations in connection with the establishment of the seat of the Commonwealth Government.

Curious to say, neither the party from the House of Representatives nor the party from the Senate in 1902 visited Canberra, though we went to Queanbeyan, which is but four or five miles distant. I remember we viewed the Queanbeyan locality in unfavourable circumstances. It seemed to be suffering from a drought. A lake we saw was dry except for some shallow water near the centre. Forests of ring-barked trees, standing bare and white, like so many skeletons, gave an air of desolation. The land was, however, some of the finest for agriculture in the state. It was unfortunate we were not taken to what is now Canberra, which is unquestionably an excellent site. It is 2,000 feet above sea level, two hundred and four miles by rail from Sydney; it is seventy-five miles in a direct line from the sea, and access to it can be obtained by a railway one hundred and twenty-three miles long to Jervis Bay, which is its port. The federal territory comprises an area of nine hundred and twelve square miles and twenty-eight square miles at Jervis Bay.

It was not until May, 1927, more than a quarter of a century after the establishment of the Commonwealth, that Parliament House at Canberra was officially opened by H.R.H. the Duke of York. I was present at the Canberra ceremony, which took place in the Senate chamber. The Duchess looked pretty and charming, winning everyone's heart there as she did throughout Australia.

W. H. Hughes was amongst those present, as bright and cheery as when
we were touring in search of a site for the federal capital. He came to me, and pointed to a mutual friend who was standing near and remarked, “That blighter has no right to be here.”

“Why not?” I replied. “That is Drake. He was Postmaster-General in the first Federal Ministry.”

“That is so,” said Hughes, “but in an article I wrote that was published a few days ago in a Sydney paper I said he was dead. I thought he was, and now I feel it is not right that he should be walking round here making a liar of me. I must go and ask him what he means by treating me like that.”

* * * * *

Stanley Bruce, who was Prime Minister at that time, did not come into federal politics until 1918, and he was different in many ways from other holders of the office.

Barton's reputation rests, not on his work as first Prime Minister, but on his efforts before the establishment of the Commonwealth to secure federal union. Two of Deakin's Governments were short-lived, and the third left nothing remarkable to its credit. Watson, during the three or four months that he led the first Federal Labour Ministry, lost the commanding position he had previously of holding the balance of power between the Government and the Opposition.

When the Revenue Tariff or Free Trade Party were badly routed at the polls, Reid recognised that a vast majority of the electors was against him. Wisely he accepted the verdict. He and that dour Scotchman, Allen McLean, came together and formed a Ministry, but it existed less than twelve months.

Andrew Fisher was three times Prime Minister, and his second Labour Government was responsible for important undertakings that are elsewhere referred to in this book. The Cook Ministry lasted between two and three months. Hughes was Prime Minister of one Labour and two National Governments. When he resigned in February, 1923, he was succeeded by Stanley Bruce, who became a new force in federal politics. Bruce had been Treasurer for fifteen months previously, but to the great bulk of the Australian people he was almost unknown. He was then but forty years of age, handsome, well groomed, dressed with scrupulous care, and possessed of independent means. Though an Australian by birth, yet in accent, diction and other respects he seemed less Australian than English. Spats are not worn in Australia, but, despite the jibes of week-end papers, he wore them constantly.

His sporting and war record, as well as his great ability, won him the
respect of even his severest critics. A student of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, he was a member of the Cambridge crew who in 1904 beat Oxford, and seven years later he coached the Cambridge crew. During the war he served with the Worcester Regiment in Gallipoli and was severely wounded. Later, as captain with the Royal Fusiliers, he was again wounded. In 1915 he won the Military Cross, and the following year the Croix de Guerre.

A ready, polished speaker, he could always hold the attention of audiences. Sometimes, but not often, he was humorous. Once at a Kalgoorlie gathering Mr. E. A. Mann, then federal member for Perth, said that a man who at the close of a meeting was asked to make a speech of thanks should “stand up, speak up and shut up.” Mr. Bruce, in reply, said a better definition of a speech for such an occasion was that it should be “like a lady's dress, short enough to be interesting and long enough to cover the subject.”

Bruce's chief achievement as Prime Minister was his preparation for the financial depression which he announced as inevitable. The passage of the financial agreement between the Commonwealth and the states was a wonderful achievement, for which he deserves most of the credit. It had to be carried through thirteen Australian Houses of Parliament and afterwards submitted to a referendum of Commonwealth electors. It resulted in placing the power of all further Government borrowing in the hands of a Loan Council and made the whole of Australia responsible for the payment of not merely Commonwealth, but also state Government debts. That and the heroic financial emergency legislation of the Commonwealth and state Parliaments saved Australia's credit and solvency.
Chapter X World Wanderings


I

ON December 16, 1903, there was a general election for the Federal Parliament. I stood for re-election and was unfortunate. Various things militated against me. Years of overwork had undermined my health, but I did not realise how really ill I was, and so went on working.

My supporters were over-confident of my success. My opponent, a young man, utterly unknown and without parliamentary experience, Mr. Charles Frazer, secured the nomination of the Labour Party because no one wanted it, as my return was considered certain no matter who stood against me.

I did no organising, and my friends thought none was necessary.

The Labour Party was just coming into power. Their leaders throughout the Commonwealth and on the goldfields preached with fervour the doctrine, “Vote Labour.” Labour enthusiasts who arose everywhere became fanatical in their zeal. My supporters were not concerned. They thought—and they were right—that at that time the Labour supporters were in a minority.

An untoward event upset calculations. The elements intervened.

On election day a cyclone passed over Kalgoorlie and Boulder City. It blew with terrific force. Rain fell in torrents. The water channels in the roadways became rivers. There were seas of mud, ankle deep.

Numbers of private and public buildings were wrecked. Schools, crowded with children, were blown down.

There was consternation. No one thought of the election, except Labour Party fanatics, who, notwithstanding the storm, polled every vote. A small percentage of the electors voted—only about 35 per cent.—and I was defeated. Great numbers of my friends and supporters had not voted, believing me to be quite safe. Such are the uncertainties of parliamentary elections!

No one likes to lose an election, and I did not like it. Later events showed
that what happened was best. Although I ought to have won the seat at that
election, it would probably have been impossible to hold it later owing to
the rapid growth of the Labour movement amongst wage earners. It was
better to have lost the seat at that early stage than later. Besides, it is
extremely difficult to sit in the Federal Parliament and at the same time
attend to a business that needs personal supervision in a distant state. The
only alternative is to become a professional politician.

When elected, my successful opponent, Mr. Frazer, proved himself
remarkably well adapted for political life. Parliament acts as a university to
bright young men such as he. It was not long before he was a member of
the Federal Ministry, and he was frequently spoken of as probable leader of
the party. A promising career was cut short in 1913 by death at an early
age.

II

After my experiences in the Federal Parliament I resumed my ordinary
occupation, and took charge of the daily and weekly Kalgoorlie
newspapers in which I had a proprietary interest. I worked hard, but
ultimately had to go into hospital. After that, acting on medical advice, I
sailed from Australia for a prolonged visit to Europe. It was a holiday trip.
I arrived in the early European spring, and, with two Australian friends, I
left the steamer at Marseilles and went to Monte Carlo. It was the height of
the season; the place was crowded with visitors from every country in the
world. All was gay.

My companions had a wonderful system for breaking the bank. Had we
played it long enough the bank would have broken us.

When we arrived we pooled some money and decided to test the system,
which was worked in series. The objective of each series was to win a
certain amount. We backed the red against the black—an even money
chance. The system worked splendidly for a couple of evenings. Slowly
but steadily we won. The first night we more than doubled the amount in
the pool. There were even better results from the second and third nights of
play.

We thought we had got an excellent system. Alas! The fourth night about
seven blacks turned up in succession.

* * * * *

Monte Carlo was decidedly interesting. The well-dressed crowds were
the most remarkable mixture of young and old, staid respectability and
adventurous rascality, virtue and vice. At the tables were fresh-complexioned English girls, full of fun, brushing shoulders with other women looking just what they were. Then there was the wizen-faced, hook-nosed old habitué of the Casino watching eagerly the turn of the wheel. Monte Carlo's glitter, its bands, its brilliant cafés, its fine hotels, its beautifully kept streets and drives, its gardens, its trees and its green, well-grassed plots, the blueness of the Mediterranean and its wonderful picturesqueness could not but attract. Still, with all its beauty, it was a place suggestive of the disappointments, failures and tragedies of life. Nice and the whole Riviera were, however, all that could be desired.

* * * * *

One evening after reaching London I was in the gallery of the House of Commons when the House was in committee dealing with a Bill of a non-party nature. The proceedings were business-like. I was specially interested in a clean-shaved, boyish-looking young man on the Opposition side who evidently knew more about the Bill than anyone else, not even excepting the Minister in charge. He spoke frequently—perhaps half-a-dozen times in the course of an hour—but it was not too often. What he said was always short and to the point. No one could say he once spoke except to throw light on the meaning of a clause, or to make a suggestion in the direction of improvement. His ability, his mental alertness, his clearness of expression, his facility of language and his knowledge of the subject impressed me. I asked an attendant for his name. It was a newly elected member for a division of Liverpool—Mr. F. E. Smith, later Earl Birkenhead, who became Lord Chancellor when forty-seven years of age.

At a banquet I attended an incident occurred in which another famous statesman figured, Winston Churchill, then quite a young man. He had just been appointed Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, and he was not popular with Australians in London because of his fierce attacks on Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, whose preferential trade policy found much favour with them. Mr. Churchill was invited to attend the annual Western Australian dinner. A few Western Australians, whose ideas of the fitness of things were somewhat imperfect, thought he should not have been asked.

* * * * *

When the night came and as the representative of the Government he rose to speak, the coldness of his reception seemed to freeze the atmosphere. It was an immense gathering, and the few who cheered out of
courtesy made the silence of the others present the more noticeable. He was not disconcerted. His speech was decidedly the best and most effective I have heard him make. It was not long before it won the audience to him. He dwelt on how it was by giving the Colonies freedom to go their own way that Britain had won their love and affection. It was not any attempts to bind them closer to the Motherland that kept them within the Empire—such attempts always resulted in disaster—but it was by saying to all parts of the Empire, “Do what you like, how you like and trade with whom you like,” that the wonderful unity of the Empire was achieved.

The effect of the speech was that men who went to the dinner ready to curse Churchill were led to cheer him with the wildest enthusiasm, and at his conclusion he was given a tremendous ovation.

Then a dramatic thing happened.

One Australian present, who had slept peacefully through the address and consequently could not be influenced by it, was awakened by the cheering. His view regarding Churchill had not changed though the views of the others present had. When the cheering subsided he staggered to his feet, raised his glass, and in a loud voice that filled the hall said, “Rise and drink long life, health and success to the greatest living statesman, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain.”

There was consternation. Then cries of “Throw him out” from those who felt the toast was intended not to honour Chamberlain, but to insult Churchill.

The interrupter's friends induced him to leave.

The Agent-General, Sir Walter James, who was in the chair, rose and, remarking that they had better adhere to the programme, called on the next toast, and the incident was not reported in the Press.

* * * * *

One experience was a visit to the fiords of Norway. I had a day on shore at the old historic capital of Norway, Bergen, which was founded in 1070 and is distinctly unlike other European towns. There were the remains of the factory established there in the fifteenth century by the Hanseatic League. The steamer penetrated through the fiords into Gudvavgen, which is eighty-eight miles from the sea; Loen, which is sixty miles; Mesole, which is seventy miles; Nais, which is sixty miles; and Odda, which is a hundred miles. In places the fiords are very narrow, and on either side are towering mountains with occasionally immense waterfalls and cascades splashing down from unseen snowfields. Houses were sometimes built on ledges, and the only access to them was in boats, ladders leading upwards
from the water. Mothers on these inhabited ledges tethered their young children to prevent them falling down the cliffs. The fiords went through fertile valleys extraordinarily beautiful and where there was meadowland there were long fences on which the hay was hung to dry. Norwegian peasant women say that women and men do the same work, for while the women hang out clothes to dry, the men hang out hay. I had many trips on shore, travelling considerable distances inland, meeting the picturesquely dressed peasantry and getting into the regions of giant glaciers, rushing torrents, immense pine forests and snow-clad peaks.

We voyaged far north to the land of the midnight sun, where at midnight on deck I read without artificial light. Ice and snow could be seen everywhere in the Arctic regions, but the weather was not cold, as the twenty-four hours of continual sunlight kept the temperature from becoming very low.

*         *         *         *         *

I spent a few months in Germany in the Rhine Valley, travelling by steamer up the river, viewing its shipping, its high vine-clad banks and the amazing Gothic cathedral of Cologne with its lofty spires, which took six hundred years to complete. What interested me more was the church of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, which was erected in memory of the massacre by barbarians of Christian women pilgrims to Rome. Wherever we looked in the interior there were rows and rows of grinning skulls—thousands of them. It was a truly gruesome sight that gave a feeling of gloomy depression similar to what I felt when I visited the vaults of a church in Dublin close to the Liffey, where human bodies buried fifty and a hundred years have not decayed and the features remain clearly recognisable. It was ghastly, but neither what I saw in Dublin nor Cologne created in me quite so revolting a sensation as when, in Bombay outside the Towers of Silence, I saw, quietly perched on tree limbs, huge, fat, hideous vultures waiting to feast on corpses left for them to devour by the relatives of the dead.

Specially interesting were the “castled crags of Drachenfels”; Coblentz, with its statue of William the First; Ebrebreitstein, Stolensfels, the castles of the hostile brothers; Rheinfels; the Lorelei Rock; the Mouse Tower, Bingen; and the scenes of many other wild legends of the long ago. A few weeks was spent at Wiesbaden, a city of mineral waters and invalids.

*         *         *         *         *

One Sunday in London I went to Farm Street Church to hear the Rev.
Bernard Vaughan deliver one of his great sermons denouncing the sins of the smart set. I found outside the church rows and rows of carriages in charge of liveried servants. The entrances were blocked by fashionable crowds. The smart set had swarmed to hear about their sins.

There was no room for more people, and I was turning away disappointed when I met a priest, told him I was from Australia and might never have the chance of hearing Father Vaughan again. He courteously brought me through the vestry and gave me a chair in front of the pulpit.

Father Vaughan looked the aristocrat that he was by birth and training. Tall and of striking appearance, his voice, his accent and his diction commanded attention, and he gave unexpected endings to his sentences. No wonder he drew crowds to hear him. The sermon was free from cant; none who heard it could forget it.

III

I have always loved roaming round the world. More than two years of my life have been spent at sea—as a passenger. Dr. Johnson's definition of a voyage at sea was, “Imprisonment with a chance of being drowned.” Perhaps that was fairly accurate in his day, when voyages were made in small vessels that were at the mercy of the winds. It must have been specially trying to a bad sailor, such as one would suppose the portly lexicographer would be. In any circumstances a long voyage would not then be associated with comfort or pleasure. The ships were leaky and unsafe; below decks they were stuffy and smelly; fresh water was scarce and often not very fresh; biscuits and salt junk were the chief stand-by for food; vessels were driven hundreds of miles out of their course, and they were becalmed for days if not weeks under the stifling heat of a tropical sun.

How different are the huge floating hotels of to-day! Dr. Johnson would indeed have to revise his definition. What a staggering surprise he would get at the bulletin available daily of the news of the world received by wireless!

Travel removes many misconceptions. The Bay of Biscay has a reputation for boisterous roughness. It is rarely rough, and more often than not it is quite calm. The Pacific frequently belies its name. One of the worst storms I have experienced was in that supposedly pacific ocean. The Red Sea has a vile reputation for heat—and deservedly so. Still, I have known it to be otherwise. I have shivered with cold in it, despite a warm overcoat, gloves and muffler. I had always thought of the Arctic regions as icy cold where furs had to be worn constantly. In midsummer I altered my
views as I sat on deck without an overcoat and viewed the icebergs that reflected the brilliant colouring of the sky, the whole seascape representing a scene like a child's idea of fairyland.

The delight inspired by the beauty of an iceberg may turn to apprehension. Near the coast of Newfoundland the passengers of an Atlantic liner on which I was travelling were enjoying the splendour of icebergs that looked like magnificent cathedrals of crystal when we ran into a heavy fog in which objects but a few yards away were obscured. Visions arose of the tragic ending of the *Titanic* on her maiden voyage through colliding with an iceberg in the Atlantic and the consequent loss of 1,513 lives out of the 2,224 persons on board. As we heard the continuous sounding of the fog-horn, it seemed the most mournful of funeral dirges—a dirge that we felt might be the preliminary of our own funeral.

* * * * *

The play of dolphins and porpoises as they jump from the water and dive, and the distant spouting of whales, are amongst the numerous sights of marine life. In tropical seas I never tire of watching flying fish, pretty and attractive, leave the water, skim rapidly over the waves on flights that sometimes exceed one hundred and fifty yards. The flights that are longest are against the wind. During daylight their flight is away from the ship, but at night they cannot see. Sometimes they are carried upwards by currents of air and fall on deck.

One night at dinner, just as a lady passenger sitting next to me had a plate of soup before her, a flying fish came through an open porthole and landed with a splash in the middle of the plate. Its intense activity was accelerated by the heat of the soup. The lady was scarcely less surprised and agitated than the fish.

Sea birds are always attractive. How fascinating it is to lean over ship's bows off the Cape of Good Hope and watch the fluttering flight of Mother Carey's chickens, those small birds, light as a feather, that old sailors regard as harbingers of bad weather!

There are in the southern seas the graceful albatrosses, the largest and strongest of sea birds, often seventeen feet from tip to tip of their wings. When viewed through field-glasses, how truly wonderful they are skimming the water at the bottom of ocean valleys and then soaring aloft and circling round the ship, their narrow wings never flapping even when travelling at a rate that made the steamer appear in comparison as though she scarcely moved! They are experts in gliding, and are supposed even to sleep on the wing. When they come close to the deck looking for food,
there is something terrifying in their cruel, greedy-looking eyes and their large, strong, sharp-edged beak terminating in a hook.

An old sailor with whom I struck up a conversation on board a steamer in the Great Australian Bight did not view them with the feelings of attachment and superstitious awe with which they are supposed to be regarded by seafarers. Quite the contrary. He was smoking a pipe which he said he made out of the long wing bones of an albatross.

“Them's horrid brutes,” he said, pointing with his pipe stem to a couple of albatrosses sailing beautifully. “A mate of mine fell off a ship somewhere about 'ere. It was a fine day. We got out a boat quick. He was a strong swimmer, but them brutes 'ad him. They never gave him a chance. Down on his head with their beaks, and at his eyes and hands. I helped to get him in. It was awful. Head covered with blood, skull smashed, eyes torn out. He died soon after.”

The old man was visibly affected. He did not feel like Coleridge's “Ancient Mariner,” who, after he had shot with his cross-bow the bird of good omen, knew that an evil curse would follow accordingly. My seafaring friend would shoot all of them he could without any fears of ill-results.

* * * * *

Half-way between Colombo and Fremantle the Cocos, or Keeling, Islands are passed. I have been on board steamers that went sufficiently close to enable an excellent view to be had of the beach, cable station and vegetation. They are low islands covered with coconut palms. The highest point is only eight feet above sea-level. Sometimes a barrel with mails and papers is thrown overboard with a flag attached and it is picked up by a boat from the islands. It was here that the German warship, the *Emden*, was smashed by the *Sydney*, and for a great many years the wreck of the raider could be seen close to the shore.

The story of the Cocos Islands and of the Scotch family that has ruled them for more than a hundred years was related to me one morning whilst I lay in a deck-chair as we passed the islands. They are coral and looked like bright green emeralds set in a sapphire-coloured sea.

My informant related how in 1823 the islands were uninhabited. An English adventurer, Alexander Hare, decided to exploit them for coconut production. He settled on the southernmost island with a number of slaves. A couple of years after, a seafarer, John Clunies-Ross, from the Shetland Islands, settled on another island with his family and some Malays. His little colony was soon strengthened by Hare's runaway slaves. The relations
between Hare and Clunies-Ross became strained. Something like a state of war existed between them. There are those who say Hare was eventually driven from his island. It is certain that he retired to Singapore.

Clunies-Ross then held absolute sway over the islands for twenty-seven years. His son, John George, succeeded him, and at his request the British Government annexed the islands, he being appointed governor. His wife, who was a Malay of royal blood, was a most valued assistant, and they had six sons, who were educated in Scotland.

George, the eldest, who succeeded the father, was an able administrator. He also married a Malay wife, and the union was in every way a success. He and his men in 1875 built a vessel of 178 tons in which the family and a crew of islanders sailed round the Cape of Good Hope to England, the voyage taking six months. He died in the Isle of Wight in 1910 when sixty-eight years of age, and left a fortune of a couple of hundred thousand pounds sterling.

The family still hold sway over the islands, which are their private property, they having been granted by Queen Victoria in 1886 to the Mr. Clunies-Ross who was then head of the family. Excellent order is maintained. The drink traffic is controlled. The climate is equable and healthy.

* * * * *

How remarkable some of the people are one meets when travelling on shipboard during long sea voyages! The type ranges from old seasoned travellers to the retired businessman who has amassed a fortune and who is making the first big journey away from his office or counter, and in whom it sometimes happens the bottled-up frivolity of thirty or forty years suddenly breaks out and he becomes as playful as a schoolboy. The close friendships even between total strangers that are quickly established rarely endure after the voyage.

A never-to-be-forgotten fellow-traveller of mine was Sir Joseph Ward, then Prime Minister of New Zealand. We sailed together across the Pacific from Vancouver to Fiji, where he was met by a warship that brought him and Lady Ward and their charming daughter, Miss Eileen Ward, to New Zealand. It was during the latter part of 1909.

An intense believer in Empire unity and a warm advocate of its maintenance, Sir Joseph also strongly favoured a better understanding between the British Empire and the United States. He told me that, when lunching in Washington with Theodore Roosevelt, he found that they agreed as to the wisdom of the two nations getting closer together in
furtherance of their common interests. According to the President, his chief difficulty in furtherance of friendship with Britain lay in the anti-British spirit of the Irish and German elements in the United States population. He could ignore either of those elements, but not both, and he urged Sir Joseph to use his influence towards a settlement of the Irish question in a way that was satisfactory to the Irish people. “It is,” said Roosevelt, “most essential to the furtherance of friendship between America and Britain.”

One of the most entertaining of the men whom I met when travelling was Lord Frederick Hamilton. It was on board the Empress of Britain whilst voyaging from Quebec to Liverpool in May, 1909. He was on his way from the Far East. On board he showed himself “a good mixer”; became extremely popular; he was a bright and entertaining conversationalist, a man who could talk well and had an amazingly extensive repertoire of experiences and stories.

In the smoking-room or on deck there was invariably a group of passengers about him who listened with delight. Occasionally he gave graphic descriptions of big-game shooting, but through most of what he said there was more than a touch of humour. Incidents of his schooldays at Harrow especially were brightly related, also experiences in the diplomatic service at Lisbon and Buenos Ayres, electioneering in England and Ireland, and as a member of the House of Commons.

One story that he told us was of an elderly English lady who died in the South of France. Her relatives had her body embalmed and sent to England to be interred in the family burial-place. Almost simultaneously a Russian general died in the same locality, and his body was embalmed and instructions issued that it be sent to St. Petersburg. When the lady's relatives in England received a casket with her name engraved outside, it was opened and found to contain the body, not of the deceased lady, but of a Russian general in uniform. A nephew who had just come from where the embalmment took place realised what had happened. He telegraphed to a St. Petersburg friend who knew the deceased general's relatives, and received the following reply: “Say nothing. Your respected aunt has been buried with full military honours.”

At a concert given by the passengers on board he was persuaded to tell humorous stories. They were chiefly about the witticisms of the Irish peasantry, and excited roars of laughter. When encored over and over again he was always ready with a story, even better than the one that preceded it. His contribution to the evening’s entertainment outshone those of all the other performers.

When we reached the coast of Northern Ireland Lord Frederick was at home. Tory Island, Malin Head, Inishtrahull, Rathlin Island, Fair Head,
Maidens, Mew Island and Skulmartin were known to him, and he could tell us the history of each of them.

He had been editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, but his career as an author had not commenced. It was years later that he began his delightful series of books, “Vanished Pomps,” “My Yesterdays,” and “Here, There and Everywhere.” Evidently he enjoyed relating his reminiscences. I hope the writing of them also gave him pleasure, as much pleasure as he gave many of us when he talked so fascinatingly on the *Empress of Britain*.

*         *         *         *         *

During one of the numerous voyages I made between England and Australia there was a young lady passenger, bright, vivacious and extremely pretty, who was travelling alone and who told us she was going to be married to a professional man in Melbourne. It was the first time she had been out of England.

She talked freely about her fiancé; she had not seen him for a couple of years; they had become engaged whilst he was visiting England, and both her parents liked him. She added that her family were in poor circumstances and her fiancé had made her a present of a first-class ticket to Melbourne.

She made us think that both he and she were a lucky pair. Certainly she was supremely happy about her prospects and full of interest in what her life in a new country would be like. To her it was all a thrilling adventure.

She was popular amongst the passengers. She played all the deck games. At dances in the evening she was much appreciated as a partner.

There were numbers of attractive young men on board. Amongst them was a cheery young Scotchman. She and he became friendly. They had much in common and became good companions. Gradually the friendship developed. They spent their days and evenings together.

The passengers heard less and less about the lady's intended husband in Australia and her future home. Within a fortnight of our leaving England she had stopped making any reference to the matter. A week before we sighted the Australian coast she and the Scotchman announced that they were engaged and would be married soon after reaching Australia. Many thought of the man in Australia who was waiting to make the lady his bride and who had paid her passage out, but it was none of their business. They were too polite to discuss it with either of the newly engaged passengers. They congratulated them instead.

In the Great Australian Bight the weather became extremely rough. A storm arose, and the steamer rolled and pitched and shipped heavy seas.
Owing to the unsteadiness of the vessel, the Scotchman met with an accident. He was thrown with violence against the railings of the companion-way and received a painful hurt in the side. The pain did not last long, and he thought nothing of the affair.

A day or two subsequently he became ill, but did not associate it with the mishap. He became worse, and when the ship's doctor was called to attend him, it was not thought necessary to mention the accident. The doctor treated the patient for a complaint from which he was not suffering. The Scotchman's fiancé nursed him with care and tenderness, but he sank rapidly, became delirious, and died in great agony.

We sailed into port in the morning with the flag half-mast.

In the rush and excitement of arrival, most of us did not think much of the dreadful position in which our young travelling companion was placed. The dead body of her fiancé was lying below, but the man that she had come to Australia to marry, not knowing the position, was there to meet her, and she was in a strange land without friends and with but little money.

She came on deck dressed in deep mourning; the man and his mother were on the wharf. She went away with them. I heard later that she told them the whole story. It did not change the first fiancé's views, and he ultimately persuaded her to become his wife.
Chapter XI Western Australian Parliament

I am elected to the Western Australian Parliament—Evil of centralisation—Members of Parliament—Premiers—State trading—Land settlement—First lady member.

IN response to a requisition, signed by a large number of electors, including many representative men, I became a candidate for the Legislative Council at the biennial elections of May, 1908. I was duly elected, and have been a member of the Western Australian Parliament from then up to the time of writing—a period of some twenty-seven years.

A prominent question on the goldfields was the growth of centralisation. One of the promises I made on the hustings when first elected was to do all in my power to check it if returned. Western Australia extends over one-third of a continent. Its population in proportion to its area was at that time a mere handful—a couple of hundred thousand. Yet nearly one-half of that population was crowded together in the immediate vicinity of the capital. Instead of endeavouring to get people into the backblocks to help to develop the state's great natural resources, legislators and administrators favoured a policy that was certain to draw people towards the metropolis. The railways all led to Perth. Huge expenditure was incurred making a harbour at Fremantle, whilst Albany, with its magnificent natural harbour, and Geraldton were neglected.

One way to strike a blow at centralisation was to secure the construction of a railway from the state's main railway system at Coolgardie southward to Esperance Bay, where a harbour could be constructed at comparatively small cost. As already pointed out in the references to the federation movement, Esperance, which is most picturesque, is not only the natural seaport, but should also be the holiday and health resort for the goldfields during the warm summer months, when a change to the coast is essential. The opening of the Port of Esperance during the early days of the goldfields would have caused a large population to be established in that part of the state. That population would naturally be opposed to centralisation. In fact, the whole battle of centralisation or decentralisation in Western Australia resolved itself round the Esperance Railway.

The struggle against decentralisation had been in progress some fourteen years when I was elected to the State Parliament. It took some thirty years of continual struggle before the Coolgardie-Esperance Railway was
completed, and it was only secured in sections. First the Coolgardie-Norseman Railway was completed. Then a great many years later—in 1915—it was decided to build a railway sixty miles north of Esperance to Salmon Gums. It was not until the beginning of 1927 that the gap between Norseman and Salmon Gums was completed. In Perth for years the mere suggestion of the Esperance Railway was sufficient to arouse the warmest resentment. The case in its favour from the viewpoint of the whole colony was irresistible. There was nothing reasonable to be said against it, but the Perth people simply would not have it. No ministry could hold office and build it until after years and years of strenuous effort.

Goldfields members were all pledged to the Esperance Railway, but if they were in earnest over it they could not hold ministerial office. Some goldfields members flagrantly betrayed their pledges. During my absence in Perth a leader writer on the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, whilst I was editor, in an article condemning three goldfields members, who were Ministers, for outraging the promises on which they were returned, made some comments that might bear an interpretation different from what was meant. The three Ministers took an action for libel, and a Perth jury gave them a verdict. At a general election held soon after, the Ministry were almost wiped out of existence, their rejection by the electors was so emphatic. Only one of the three Ministers ever dared again to face a goldfields constituency, and he was defeated.

Had the Esperance Railway been built a quarter of a century earlier than it was it would have hastened considerably the progress of Western Australia. The life of many of the mines would have been prolonged, owing to the reduced cost of working by reason of cheaper supplies, and the agricultural and pastoral country between Norseman and Esperance, and to the east and west of that area, would be peopled by thousands of prosperous and contented farmers. Probably that part of the state would have had a hundred thousand people, whereas the rest of West Australia would be no less populous than it is to-day.

To me the work of the state Parliament was of intense interest. The problems were complex. There were the usual industrial questions, and I saw the institution of the Arbitration Court and its operations, and the endeavours to make it perfect, and to ensure that its decisions were respected by both sides. The trouble is that whilst the arbitration law can be enforced towards the employer, it becomes a dead letter when the employees refuse to obey it.

What, however, is the most attractive work in Australian politics is the peopling of the vacant spaces of so vast and empty a continent. In Australia, perhaps more than in almost any other country of the present
day, statesmen have the satisfaction of being able to “read their history in the nation's eye.” It was a common occurrence for, say, a railway to be built through virgin bush and then for those responsible for its construction to travel through the country served by the line a year or two later and find it dotted with hundreds of homesteads and carrying a large population.

Future generations of Australians will probably say of the men of to-day that they “builded better than they knew.” The great bulk of men think only of the immediate present, and hardly realise how much they are working also for the future. It is amazing what Australians have done in the way of work. Take Western Australia, and considering that the population to-day is still less than half a million, yet the length of railways built, the harbours constructed, the roads made, the country cleared and cultivated, is an almost staggering record.

The Australian public man possesses considerable ability. He may not have much book learning, but he is well educated as regards practical knowledge. Often his ways of solving problems are rough and ready, but they are effective. And he is honest. Like politicians in all parts of the world, he may at times break his pledges and sacrifice his political convictions to expediency. No ministry could hold together a week if members were not prepared to surrender their convictions on minor points in order to achieve some more important objective. It would not be possible for Ministers to agree on every question that arises, and it is only by a spirit of compromise that unity can be attained. There are those who consider compromise dishonesty, and it may be in some instances, but what I refer to as honest in the Australian public man is the absence of corruption. In parliaments all over the world, even in the House of Commons, cases of corruption have occurred. That is inevitable, for there are black sheep in every flock, but no legislative bodies anywhere are freer from corruption than those of Australia. Statements may be made to the contrary. In Australia evil-minded persons occasionally insinuate that legislators are open to receive bribes, but such statements are made by those who cannot verify them. Australian members of Parliament are incorruptible. Most of them live and die very poor men.

They do not stand high in public estimation. Perhaps some of them, as well as back-country pioneers, find consolation in the words of Kingsley Fairbridge:

“Yet in the end they will fathom our secrets:
Say it was easy to make what we made:
Turn us and criticise, handle, dissect us,
See where we fail'd and forget where we conquered—
Point us a way that was better and surer—
Show us a road that was swifter and straighter.
We, who are moulding the hope of a People:
We, who are finding a world for our nation;
We, who are giving our lives and our efforts:
We shall be blamed that we did not do better.
Blamed? But who cares—as the lights that we follow
Have shown us a Thing to be done, to be lived for—
Just so shall we struggle, just so shall we labour,
Just so, though unthanked, we shall live for and do it.”

* * * * * *

Often Australian public men make immense sacrifices of time and money. Sir Edward Wittenoom told me that in 1883, when he first became a member of Parliament, he had to ride on horseback three hundred miles to attend Parliament, and the same distance back, covering fifty miles a day. That was before payment of members was in operation. As a rule, entering Parliament is injurious to a man's business or profession, yet, notwithstanding, large numbers of men go into public life well knowing the cost. Members of the Federal Parliament representing states distant from the seat of Government must be either wealthy men or professional politicians. A member representing, say, Western Australia must be away from the state for many months each year—in fact for most of the year. Even when Parliament is not sitting there is usually work for him to do at the seat of Government. Much the same thing applies in the state Parliament to a member representing a distant constituency. If he lives in his constituency he must also have a home in the capital. Numbers of men in the Federal and State Parliaments travel each week-end from the capital back to their country homes. It is said that this constant travelling has shortened the lives of many members, especially of the Federal Parliament, amongst whom the mortality has been at times heavy.

For more than twenty years I travelled over seven hundred and fifty miles by train each week (that is between my home in Kalgoorlie and Perth) whilst Parliament was sitting in Perth. I was not conscious of its affecting me in any way injuriously, though it was tiring.

II

Both as a journalist and as a member of Parliament I had singular opportunities of meeting the various men who were in public life in Western Australia. Full responsible government was granted in 1890, and I
was intimately acquainted and worked with the different Premiers. The first, Sir John Forrest, a surveyor and successful explorer, ruled for more than ten years with autocratic power. Loud-voiced, domineering and far-seeing, he had the courage to carry out public works that were stupendous for so small a population. When the Commonwealth was established and he went into the Federal Parliament, the absence of his great ability and strong personality caused state politics to become unsettled.

The second Premier, George Throssel, was hardheaded and practical, but lacking in imagination, barren of humour and without qualifications for leadership. He was handicapped (his opponents said he was helped) by deafness. A large sheet of cardboard was held by him against his chest, and, putting a corner of it in his mouth, it acted as a sounding-board. When requests were made to him as Premier he acknowledged hearing only what he wanted to hear. For instance, he never admitted hearing any request for public expenditure. Some said that was why his Ministry only lasted three months.

George Leake, K.C., next became Premier; he had led the Opposition to Forrest, was brilliant, witty and popular. In six months he was succeeded by A. E. Morgans, a mining man and member for Coolgardie. Morgans had been but a few years in Western Australia, had had an adventurous career in Central America, was a Welshman with the courteous, cultured manners of an old-time Spanish aristocrat, had great ability, was opposed to the policy of centralisation, and favoured a railway between Coolgardie and Esperance. His Ministry lasted only thirty-two days. He was the forerunner of that influence that was later to be exercised by new arrivals that the gold discoveries had attracted to Western Australia.

George Leake came back to office, but his second term lasted only six months, when he died. Another lawyer, Sir Walter James, followed. He was cheery, eloquent and democratic. His Premiership lasted two years. An ex-detective, Henry Daglish, then led the first Labour Ministry for a year, and after that Sir Hector Rason was Premier for nine months.

Stability was brought into Government affairs by Sir Newton Moore becoming Premier in 1906. In four and a half years he resigned and went to London as Agent-General. Later he was for many years a member of the House of Commons, and afterwards accepted an important position in Canada. His tact, wonderful knowledge of men, and shrewdness enabled him to win a reputation in three continents—Australia, Europe and America.

Mr. Frank Wilson, a keen business man and decidedly capable, but without broadness of vision or political acumen, succeeded as Premier. A Redistribution of Seats Act passed by his Government aroused great public
indignation, and after holding the Premiership for a year his Ministry was heavily defeated at a general election.

A Labour Government came into office under the leadership of John Scaddan, a truly remarkable man; a miner who when elected to Parliament seven years previously was utterly ignorant of all that should make for success in politics; a poor speaker and ill-educated. He was a quick thinker and had the capacity and desire to learn; he was wise enough to realise his own deficiencies, and set to work to make himself efficient. He was seven years in Parliament and had no ministerial experience when he became Premier. The Daglish Labour Ministry had not behind it a majority of Labour members. It had office but not responsibility. When the Scaddan Government was returned the Labour Party held a large majority of the Legislative Assembly seats and the party proceeded to put its policy into practice. Various socialistic ventures were started. Amongst them were Government-owned and controlled hotels, brick-works, sawmills, implement works and ships. Meat preserving works were established at Wyndham in the far north, and the Government purchased the Perth trams. Most of these Government concerns were non-paying, but their supporters claimed that, though they showed a direct loss, yet they were all a source of indirect gain to the community. They said the state ships and the Wyndham meat works helped the country's development, and other state activities improved public conveniences or lessened the charges made on the goods produced. The merits of state trading concerns has long been the main bone of contention between politicians.

A great service was rendered to Western Australia by Sir James Mitchell. The Labour Party always have had a definite policy. Sir James Mitchell as Minister and later as Premier came into public life with an alternative policy in the form of constructive statesmanship. He never forgot that Western Australia is a vast empty land with immense areas of fertile country awaiting settlement. The policy he advocated was to encourage land settlement and the development of the agricultural areas. To him more than anyone else is due the credit of opening up the wheat belt and establishing thousands of settlers on the land. His broad-visioned immigration policy was not as successful as it deserved, but that was not his fault. The failure of his group settlement scheme to realise expectations was due to errors in selecting the proper type of settlers and to faulty administration of the scheme. The value of his work will be appreciated when ultimately the agricultural resources of the state, including the south-west, have been fully developed. Setbacks and disappointments are inevitable in carrying out great projects, especially in the settlement of new land, but wheat growing and mixed farming have been established on a
sound basis in Western Australia as a consequence of his work and foresight.

In Western Australian state politics the struggle during recent years has been between three parties. There is the Labour Party, who mainly represent wage earners, and opposed to them are the Nationalists, whose stronghold is amongst city and commercial people, and the Country Party, who are the special champions of farmers. As happens in parliaments in most other parts of the world, it is not unusual for the Government of the day, whether it be Labour or otherwise, to put into operation much of the policy of its opponents. The political stage in Western Australia is small, but the drama that is acted is identical in all its features, good and bad, with that of the great parliaments of Europe.

III

It would be tedious to go through the more or less important achievements of various Premiers and public men with whom I was brought into contact during some thirty years' membership of the Western Australian Parliament. Besides, it is not my desire to deal with the more serious questions of state politics. In looking back my mind rests more upon individuals.

The Western Australian Parliament was the first Australian Legislature to include ladies amongst its members. Mrs. Cowan, the first lady member, was viewed at first as something of a curiosity. A charming white-haired lady, she was born in Western Australia, and took herself and her duties very seriously.

She devoted herself to social work. Her husband was a police magistrate at Perth. As illustrating how much she had to be away from home attending to her countless duties, she told me that when a lady called at her residence and, meeting Mr. Cowan outside in the garden and not knowing him, asked, “Does Mrs. Cowan live here?” “Well,” answered Mr. Cowan, “she sleeps here.”

Soon after Mrs. Cowan's election she was much concerned because ladies were not admitted to the Speaker's gallery. She could get her husband admission to it, but other members could not get their wives there. Finally she got this altered, but the ladies' gallery was made available for men.

When advocating on the floor of the House that ladies should be admitted to the Speaker's gallery, she reminded her hearers that not only did the Bible tell us that it was not a good thing for man to be alone, but that “male and female created He them and gave them dominion over all things.”
It is not always wise to quote Scripture. One of the members, Mr. Walker, cruelly pointed out that “He made woman out of a man's rib” and “brought her unto the man.” He added that St. Paul said that woman was created for man, and quoted the same authority as saying:

“Let your women keep silence, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home.”

Mr. Angelo appropriately remarked that St. Paul was an old bachelor.

* * * * *

Two remarkable members were Frederick Charles Burleigh Vosper and George Taylor, both of whom had served terms of imprisonment in Queensland in connection with a shearers' strike in the eighties and early nineties of the last century.

Vosper's appearance was striking. He was tall; his face was clean-shaved; his features were clear-cut—a well-formed prominent nose, a firm mouth, bright intelligent eyes, and he looked young; he was about thirty years of age. But what was most noticeable about him was that he wore his hair long like a woman. It was thick, glossy black and hung to his shoulders. He had kept it long since his imprisonment some years previously.

Originally Vosper came from St. Dominic, Cornwall. He was a polished speaker, cultured and well educated, and had a thorough scientific knowledge of mineralogy and geology. Highly intellectual, a deep student, a magnetic personality and a wonderful platform speaker, he had also brilliant qualifications as a parliamentarian. Had he not died about 1900, when but thirty-three years of age, he would have become a power in the public life of the Commonwealth. His political views were advanced, but what he advocated then is to-day universally accepted, and though he was amongst the radicals yet the bent of his mind was actually towards conservatism. His subsequent career would have tended towards hostility to violent change and strong support of Empire unity and imperialism.

His retorts were clever if at times somewhat rude. A Minister in Parliament in an endeavour to emphasise his remarks was in the habit of saying the same thing over and over again. The Minister happened to say “History repeats itself.” “Yes,” interjected Vosper, “but not so often as you.”

When Vosper was speaking on wheat growing a member interrupted with the remark, “You don't know what you are talking about. You never ploughed an acre in your life.” Quick came the retort from Vosper: “It is
strange you ever had a chance to be anything but a ploughman.”

Once he told a persistent interjector in Parliament that he was a “tergiversating, tantalising troglodyte.” The member thus described rose to leave the chamber. “Why run away like that?” remarked a colleague. “He's not running away,” said another member, “he's going to get a dictionary to see the meaning of the names he has been called.”

Of a somewhat different type, George Taylor was self-educated, a rough diamond, original and possessed of a keen sense of humour. He was one of a small batch of Labour members who were returned to the State Parliament early in 1901. A few months later there was a by-election consequent on the acceptance of the Attorney-Generalship by a lawyer of exceptional ability and of high standing at the Bar. He was opposed by a Labour candidate, a barber by trade, without parliamentary experience or qualifications. To the surprise of the public, the lawyer was defeated, and Taylor exultantly declared, “We, the Labour Party, put up a barber, and had we put up his poll it would have been elected.”

Taylor was in the habit of entertaining parliamentarians in the lobbies of Parliament House with stories of his prison experiences. One story that he asserted was true was of two Queensland policemen bringing a Chinese to jail to be tried for murder. They stayed at a wayside inn, the policemen got drunk, and during the night the Chinese escaped. The constables left the inn before the innkeeper knew of the escape; they went to where there were some Chinese working in a garden, seized one who could not speak a word of English, and, despite his evident indignation and anger, rode off with him. He was found guilty, sentenced to death, but the penalty was commuted to penal servitude for life. The Chinese nearly went mad and was viewed as a lunatic. Some years later the truth was discovered, and he was released and compensated.

Both in speech and appearance George Taylor when he was first elected was “the wild man” of Parliament. He did not mind what he said, and he was rugged and fierce-looking, with a great growth of hair. His beard was full and wide and long and thick. It was said birds might build their nests in it with perfect safety. The strange grotesque and fantastic scrub tree was likened to him, and not inappropriately he was called “Mulga.”

Time showed he was adaptable to his environment. He was more than three years in Parliament when Labour came into office, and he became Colonial Secretary. It was not long before he had his hair cut; his beard was shortened and trimmed to a point of exceptional smartness. He occasionally appeared in Parliament in all the glory of a well-fitted dress suit; his manner became suave, and when the judges of the High Court sat in Perth it was his duty to preside at a dinner given by the State
Government to them. The Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Griffiths, sat on the right of the man whom as a Queensland judge he had sent to prison for five years.

Whilst Colonial Secretary, Taylor asked the Queensland Government to grant leave to the superintendent of the jail in which he had been imprisoned to visit Western Australia and recommend improvements in the conduct of the state's prisons. Leave was granted, and the recommendations made were adopted. Taylor was in fact responsible for the drafting of reformatory principles for first and second time offenders that have been embodied since in the penal systems of most of the Australian states.

The Great War brought about a split in the Labour Party over the question of conscription. Taylor sided with those who favoured conscription and thus parted from many of his old political comrades. For twenty-three years he was a member of the Legislative Assembly, and during the last seven years he filled the position of Speaker. In that office he was no longer the rough, uncouth “Mulga” of former days, but a white-haired, carefully dressed, alert and charming old gentleman, who as Speaker was fair, correct and consistent with the best parliamentary traditions. He was universally respected and popular.
Chapter XII Passing Years

Sir Winthrop Hackett—Founding a university—Outbreak of the Great War—A major-general's prediction—Soldiers' stories—Andrew Fisher—Trans-Australian Railway—A camel's peculiarities—War talks—Nullarbor Plain—Huge caves and huge owls—Mrs. Daisy Bates amongst the blacks—An aboriginal claims me as a nephew.

I

ONE of the most useful of Western Australia's citizens was the late Sir Winthrop Hackett, the founder and benefactor of the state's university. I saw much of him. He controlled the leading daily newspaper of Perth, the West Australian, and it co-operated with the morning daily I controlled at Kalgoorlie. In addition, he and I were each members of the Legislative Council. There was a long-continued and close relationship between us. The two papers had a joint news service from the eastern states, we received the same cablegrams from London, and there was an exchange of local news. Throughout the long years that that arrangement lasted, there was never any misunderstanding between us, and the association was amicable and satisfactory to both parties. The agreement was verbal, nothing was written, but no difference of opinion as to what was said ever arose. That was as regards our personal and business association. In politics our views were sometimes widely divergent, but we agreed to differ and respected each other's opinions.

To-day in Western Australia the people do not realise how much they owe to Hackett. They give credit in full measure to Forrest, but Forrest could not have achieved all he did without the aid of Hackett in his newspaper and in his place in Parliament. For sixteen years he was a member of the Legislative Council. His influence there was all-powerful, and for years the Chamber was known as “The House of Hackett.” Forrest was a man of action, plain and blunt; Hackett was a keen classical scholar, the cultured product of Trinity College, Dublin, the university that produced Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, Henry Gratton, Tom Moore and Lord Carson.

Natural beauty and learning appealed to Hackett strongly. Perth's parks and gardens, the museum, the art gallery and the zoological gardens were the result of his enthusiasm.

From my first acquaintance with him he talked and worked to establish a
university. I shared his desire for a university, but living as I did, not in the
capital, but in a mining district, I had continually before my eyes the needs
of the men who were pioneering in the back-blocks. They wanted roads
and bridges, transport facilities, water supplies, hospitals and children's
schools. The various Governments found it impossible to provide money
for essential bread-and-butter requirements of the people who were
opening up the primary industries on which the prosperity of the state
relied.

Pioneers were pleading for the means to live—for the means to carry on
work of inestimable service to Western Australia. They had to be told that
there was no money available. How could any Government spend money
on higher education? Was not a university somewhat premature?

Even Hackett felt that the time had not yet come, but he went on making
his plans. He recognised the claims for urgently needed requirements
throughout Western Australia.

“We cannot afford a university,” was a remark I heard one man make to
him.

“The time is coming,” he said, “when we cannot afford to be without a
university. It is not only for the education of our young people but also for
research work. There are countless problems continually arising in our
back country. There are treatment troubles in connection with our ores.
Insect pests, poison weeds and stock diseases can only be effectively dealt
with when scientifically investigated. A university would be of inestimable
service in helping the development of our natural resources.”

Slowly but surely Hackett overcame opposition. In 1904 he persuaded
the Government to pass through Parliament an Act for the endowment of a
state university. This measure empowered the Government to set apart
Crown lands by way of permanent endowment of the university. It was not
until seven years later that legislation was passed to establish the present
university.

Most universities are named after the town or city in which they are
situated. I pointed out to Hackett that the people of the whole state would
contribute to the university, for his idea was that it should be a state
university maintained by the Government. People living on the eastern
goldfields between three hundred and four hundred miles away from Perth
or in the Kimberleys, one thousand miles distant, would object to
contributing towards what they might consider an institution merely for the
capital. If it were for Western Australia, why should it not be so named?
Hence it is to-day “The University of Western Australia.”

As the result of the insistence of Hackett I became a member of the first
Senate, which was appointed in 1912. I remained a member of the Senate
for more than twenty years, when pressure of other public duties compelled me to retire.

The first Senate was nominated by the Government. Its eighteen members included men from all classes, occupations, and political parties. Several of them had not been to universities. At the request of the then Government I proposed, and it was unanimously agreed, that Sir Winthrop Hackett be the first Chancellor.

Temporary buildings were secured by the Senate, applications for a staff were called for by advertisements in leading newspapers in Australia and England, professors and lecturers were ultimately appointed and the institution put generally in running order. There had been an understanding with the Government that brought the university into existence that it should be free. Consequently, no fees were charged to students, an arrangement that was so novel as to cause much adverse comment.

A swan just about to rise in flight from the water was chosen as the university's crest.

After much delay a motto was selected. “Therefore seek wisdom” was much favoured. A suggestion to shorten it was adopted. “Seek wisdom” was the motto finally adopted.

There was considerable controversy over the selection of a site. Hackett strongly favoured Crawley, the picturesque peninsula that juts out between two lake-like expanses of the Swan river, a site that was ultimately agreed to after considerable opposition. Long before the Bill was passed to establish the university he visualised it as it stands to-day—a picture of architectural triumph amidst beautiful surroundings. That splendid building, as well as the university itself, are due entirely to his foresight, his energy and his generosity. In all, he left when he died more than £500,000 to the university. Of this, £200,000 was spent in erecting the present buildings. The balance of the money has been mainly devoted towards providing studentships, bursaries and other financial help for deserving students.

Hackett's monument is the university. Magnificent monument as it is to his memory, it is no more than he deserves. Western Australia has had no one whose zeal was keener in public service.

II

In August, 1914, came the news of the outbreak of war in Europe. Far removed as Australians were from Europe, and having but little knowledge of international complications, they scarcely realised the full extent of the disaster. There was considerable excitement, and patriotic enthusiasm was
aroused, but the general feeling was that the war would be of short duration. Little was known in Australia about the relative strength of countries. The fact that Germany and Austria had arrayed against them Britain, France, Russia, and Servia caused the belief to be general that the two central Powers of Europe would be speedily crushed.

Within a few weeks of the outbreak of hostilities, the Governor of Western Australia, Major-General Sir Harry Barron, in a public speech, expressed himself as firmly convinced that before Christmas the armies of Britain, France and Russia would be in Berlin.

Meanwhile, recruiting began, training camps were formed and arrangements were made for sending Australian troops to Europe. When saying good-bye to early contingents of soldiers leaving Australia, I found some of them afraid that the war would be over before they reached the front and so would see nothing of the fighting. Alas! Only too many of them never returned. There were none that did not see more of the war than they wanted.

* * * * *

Men returning from Gallipoli told many strange unpublished stories. One was that a gunner who came from Australia was discovered to cut short fuses, with the result that the shells exploded short amongst Australians rather than amongst the Turks. It was discovered that he was a man of German descent and with German sympathies. There was no court-martial. He was shot by his own comrades.

Another was of two kangaroo shooters who were found to be wonderfully good shots. They accordingly became snipers, and operated at a considerable distance from each other with much success. Lord Kitchener when on the Peninsula heard of them and said he would like to meet them. They had to take up their position at night, and one of them when coming off duty was told that General Kitchener wished to speak to him. When brought before the General he drew himself up and saluted in proper military style.

The General spoke to him nicely and asked him what luck he had had that day.

“I did well, sir; I got ten Turks.”

“You shot ten Turks?” said Kitchener.

“Yes, sir,” was the answer.

“That's not bad,” remarked the General, “but you did not do as well as your mate. He got twenty-two.”

“Did Bill say that?” answered the sniper indignantly. “Then tell him from
me he's a bloody liar.”

Some Turks had good boots which Australians were keen to possess. Men were in the habit of raiding enemy trenches to get a pair. One Australian who disappeared into the Turk’s trenches was an inordinately long time away. He eventually turned up with the much prized boots. “We thought you were not coming back. What delayed you?” he was asked. “Oh,” he answered, “I had to kill six before I got a pair to fit.”

An officer when going his rounds thought he heard a call from a partially collapsed dug-out. He told his batman to investigate. Subsequently he said to the batman, “Well, did you find anyone?” “Yes, sir,” came the reply. The officer asked, “Did you get him out?” “No,” was the answer. “And why not?” “Well, sir,” said the batman, “he was the parson, and we won't want him until Sunday.”

I met a Victoria Cross winner who had come back with a great reputation as a courageous fighter, having killed single-handed more than half a dozen of the enemy. I congratulated him. When I knew him better he told me the truth of what actually happened to him. “They were coming to kill me,” said he. “I was terribly frightened. I never felt so terrified in my life. Suddenly a wave of rage came over me and I rushed at them. I must have become stark mad with frenzy, for I remember no more until it was all over and I was safe with my mates. Had I not killed them, they would have killed me. I wanted to live, and so I won the Victoria Cross. If people knew how terrified I was they would not call me a hero.”

General Sir John Monash, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Australian troops towards the close of the war, was a most impressive personality. My first meeting with him was in unusual circumstances. It was several years after peace had been declared. I was travelling in a crowded special train from Melbourne to Canberra. There was not a vacant sleeping berth and my compartment was shared by a total stranger, a man with powerful jaws, well-defined features and a decidedly strong face. He was friendly and communicative. We talked for hours and hours about numerous subjects, but, curiously enough, we never once touched on defence affairs or the war. I knew he must be someone of importance and wondered who he was. It was not until next day when at the Canberra Hotel, where we both stayed and had meals beside each other, that I discovered that my travelling companion was Sir John Monash. That was but the beginning of numerous other meetings between us. The more I knew him, the more impressed I became with his marked qualities for leadership. He was a born leader of men.

A friend of mine, a member of the Federal Parliament, had an interesting experience with Lord Kitchener when he visited Australia in 1909 to report
and advise on Commonwealth military defence. Kitchener went to great pains to learn the views of leading men. He not only consulted Ministers of the Crown, but also arranged to meet Opposition leaders privately. Evidently he clearly realised that Governments are but the creatures of a day and that those on the left of the Speaker usually in time are entrusted with the responsibilities of office. A meeting between Kitchener and the member was arranged by an Australian state Governor. Kitchener said to my friend, “I hear that if there be a change of Government you are likely to be Minister for Defence again, and so I will tell you what I have told the present Minister for Defence but what I will not include in my report.” He then gave him information that was confidential and asked my friend if he had any questions to ask him. The member asked four questions, and the Field-Marshal replied to them. Some time later there was a change of Government, and the member became Minister for Defence. The Minister had to go to London, and whilst there he met Kitchener at a private dinner. After dinner Kitchener asked him to come with him to a room where there was but the two of them. “Now that you are Minister for Defence,” said Kitchener, “what have you done regarding the four questions you put to me in Australia?” The Minister had to admit that he had forgotten what the questions were. Kitchener reminded him of them. The Minister told him what he had done regarding each of them, and apparently the Field-Marshal was pleased, but what astonished my friend was Kitchener's amazing memory for even matters of small detail.

III

Andrew Fisher and I were good friends in the House of Representatives, though we differed in politics. He was deputy leader of the Labour Party and I a supporter of Sir George Reid. He had not the brilliancy nor sense of humour of Hughes, but he had great caution and exceptional shrewdness. Born in Scotland, he was decidedly “canny,” also upright and strongly patriotic. A coal miner, he had worked in collieries from the time he was ten years of age, and when twenty-three years old he migrated to Australia, where he worked for years in Queensland as a miner. In 1893 he was returned to the Legislative Assembly. He was a member of the Dawson Ministry, the first Labour Ministry to hold office in Australia, a Ministry that lasted only six days.

Fisher was three times Prime Minister, and during his second term the Government of which he was the head established the Commonwealth Bank, effected the transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth, began the construction of the east-west railway,
established an interstate commission, strengthened the Australian navy and instituted compulsory military training. When war was declared his Party was in Opposition, and as Leader he announced that the Australian Labour Party was with the Motherland “to the last man and the last shilling.” In October, 1915, he resigned the Prime Ministership and accepted the position of High Commissioner in London.

The Trans-Australian Railway was then in course of construction. Work had been begun at Port Augusta, the eastern end, and at Kalgoorlie, the western end. Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie are over a thousand miles apart. Mr. Fisher decided that on his way to England he would travel overland to Western Australia, where he would board the mail steamer. There was about six hundred miles of the line yet to be completed, and he had to
cover that gap, part of it with camels and the remainder in motor-cars. The country he had to traverse was then unknown except to the men who had a few years previously surveyed the route of the railway. It was arid, inhospitable and without people except on its edges, where there were a few wandering tribes of wild half-starved aborigines.

I was at Kalgoorlie and was invited to join a small party to meet Fisher at Ooldea, which is six hundred and twenty-six miles east of Kalgoorlie and four hundred and twenty-seven miles west of Port Augusta.

We travelled in motor-cars along the track made by the surveyors. Our course lay over the Nullarbor Plain, that curious flat limestone country covered with a low growth of blue bush and salt bush. The leaves of these bushes retain moisture from rain and dew, and salt bush especially is a valuable fodder plant, especially for sheep.

The Nullarbor Plain was well named No-Tree Plain. There is but a foot or so of red soil to cover the limestone. To all appearance it is a dead level, but we are told that it is not exactly so. Our journey traversed the full length of the Plain, some four hundred miles.

To the person on the Plain the impression created is of the immensity of space. As at sea, the horizon makes a perfect circle in the far distance.

Ooldea is at the eastern edge of the Nullarbor Plain. When we reached it there was no sign of Mr. Fisher or his party. We camped to await his arrival. East of us was a sandhill belt through which he had to travel on his way from Port Augusta. It would be impossible for our motor-cars to proceed further. A couple of days passed. Fortunately, we had abundance of food. Water was procurable a few miles away.

We began to be concerned about the non-arrival of the Fisher party. They were overdue, and we had a consultation. Wireless was not available. A mishap may have occurred.

An aboriginal with a couple of camels had just arrived at our camp from Fowler's Bay, about one hundred and thirty miles south of Ooldea. He had a message for Mr. Fisher's party, and we had become so tired of waiting that early one morning another member of our party, the black fellow, and I mounted the camels. Saying au revoir to our friends we left the Ooldea camp and travelled directly eastward. Up and down interminable sandhills, covered fairly thickly with small trees, bushes and scrub, there was a faint track.

My knowledge of camels was limited, but I knew some of their peculiarities. Mild in appearance and demeanour, they can at times become wildly and dangerously savage. The camel I was riding was not making much pace. After a couple of miles and there was no improvement, I asked the black whether the beast ever woke up.
“My word he does, boss,” was the reply. “No one in Fowler's Bay will ride him. That camel's savage.”

“He doesn't seem savage now,” I remarked.

“He can be awful savage, boss. He killed one man and bit the leg off the last man who rode him. He's an outlaw.”

I had noticed that when I struck the camel with a stick the head and long neck came ominously round. I had heard of camels chewing people's legs. I decided to treat the beast with more respect, allow him to choose his own pace and watch for his head coming round.

After a couple of hours steady travelling the aboriginal suddenly remarked, “I hear them, boss.”

The camels were pulled up. We remained still and listened. Neither my friend nor I could hear a sound. The black was convinced he was right.

The journey was resumed. To the aboriginal it was plain we were getting near the party.

After we had covered a couple of miles my friend and I heard them also. Both of us prided ourselves on our acute hearing, but no European has hearing as acute as the average aboriginal. Generations of training have sharpened natives' hearing and sight. It was by their ears and eyes that they outwitted their enemies and got the food by which they lived. Both senses had to be keen to survive.

From the top of a sandhill I looked down and saw a man with a long stick that he used as an alpenstock to help him through the heavy sand. He was tall and thin and wearing a motor-coat that was once white, but was now soiled. He looked up—it was Fisher.

I was on a tall camel, towering above him. He was astonished, almost startled.

“Hello, Fisher,” I remarked. “How are things?”

“Good heavens, Kirwan!” he answered. “Where did you come from?”

“Another case of Dr. Livingstone and Mr. Stanley, I presume?” I remarked.

* * * * *

When I said “hoosta” the camel appeared well pleased to get down, but not more pleased than I was to get off.

“You look tired, you must take the camel,” I said to Fisher, and I added, “Take my stick and hit him with it hard on the nose if he turns his head and neck. He has a nasty habit of biting people's legs off. Come, you get up.”

“I'm not going on that camel,” said Fisher; “I'd rather walk.”

The Fisher party had a couple of buggies drawn by camels. They also had
some riding camels, but their progress through the sandhills was much slower than was expected. Fisher walked many miles.

I was interested to notice that no one rode the outlaw camel on the way back to Ooldea.

We lunched with the Fisher party.

As Fisher and I walked together to Ooldea most of our talk was of the war. Hostilities had been then in progress more than fifteen months. Most of the Australian ships had been transferred to the British Navy; German possessions in the Pacific had been seized by Australian expeditionary forces; the *Emden* had been destroyed by the *Sydney* at the Cocos Islands; British and Australian troops had landed at Gallipoli and were gallantly endeavouring to wrest the peninsula from the Turks.

All these events we discussed, and felt confident that the Gallipoli expedition would soon result in victory.

Fisher had just resigned the office of Prime Minister of Australia, but so little did he know that he talked hopefully of the victorious end of the war in the spring of 1916, if not several months earlier.

Little did either of us realise the long-drawn-out struggle that was to follow. We did not expect the evacuation of Gallipoli; the surrender of Kut to the Turks; the drowning of Lord Kitchener; the Russian revolution with the withdrawal of Russia from the war; the collapse of Serbia and Roumania; the menace of German submarines and Zeppelins; and the awful loss of life before the ultimate surrender of the German armies and the German fleet. Victory would be achieved, of that we were certain, but the price we had to pay was far beyond our wildest expectations. Neither of us thought of the aftermath—repudiation of national debts, demoralisation of youth, and trade depression creating world-wide unemployment.

When I said good-bye to Fisher at Kalgoorlie we were full of hope of the speedy and successful termination of the war. I met him in London not long after peace was declared, and he reminded me of our talk in the sandhills, and said, “How ignorant we both were of the terrific fighting strength of Germany.” He went on, “And yet we were not more ignorant than certain men in high positions who were close to the conflict.”

“I know,” he added, “there were a few who were convinced that the war would be spread over many years and that there was no certainty as to who the victors would be. In public they spoke differently in order not to dishearten the Allies, but the great majority of British leaders kept saying and believing all through the war years that victory was close at hand. It was perhaps that conviction that won the war. As Napoleon said, ‘The English never know when they are beaten.’ ”
My journey across the Nullarbor Plain and the few days I spent at Ooldea aroused my interest in that part of Australia. Subsequently opportunities arose to allow of my gaining further experience of the country. To those who know the Nullarbor Plain, notwithstanding its weird, almost forbidding appearance, it has somewhat of a fascination.

In the comfortable trains with a five-foot two-inch gauge that to-day pass between Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta, the passenger's view from the carriage windows of the Nullarbor Plain is novel but not attractive. It shows a flat expanse—one of the world's greatest flat expanses—extending all round as far as the eye can reach. It has a thin covering of bushes a couple of feet high. The official booklet gives an accurate description:

“For over three hundred miles the line runs without a curve. You look back and the shining rails run on towards infinity until they seem to meet in the dim distance. You look forward and see the same twin threads drawn out until they melt into one another. Elsewhere there is nothing but the plain and sky. The plain rolls away to a circular horizon. By day the sun shines in a heaven of cloudless blue or flecked at most by a few white clouds. Beneath it is the circle of earth unbroken by hill or valley, by tree or house, or by any of the things we look for in an ordinary landscape. By night the moon and stars come forth with a brightness not seen in moist climates. Under the moonlight the bluish-white and grey-green of the blue bush and salt bush are unearthly and ghostlike.”

During daytime occasionally overhead may be seen circling in wide sweeps that largest bird of the eagle family, known generally as the eagle hawk. It is the wedge-tailed eagle, and specimens of immense size are common on the Nullarbor Plain. Some have measured twelve feet from tip to tip of the wings. The bird, graceful and beautiful as it floats aloft, suddenly swoops down. One wonders what it has seen. The plain is devoid of life, or, rather, so it seems to the passenger, who, rushing by in the train, does not know of the wild life, lizards, bandicoots, mice, rabbits, foxes and dingoes that scurry out of sight at the roar of the steam monster.

Neither does the passenger know that the ground beneath the flat surface is honeycombed with caves—a vast dark underground world. They are approached by “blow-holes” through which wind comes with varying forces, sometimes with a hissing sound, sometimes like a whistle and sometimes with a roar. These “blow-holes” range from a few inches to yards in diameter. Usually the descent is not easy. One investigator had to use 100 feet of rope before the cave bottom was reached. A huge cavern with a ceiling 180 feet high was 600 yards from the entrance. Lengthy galleries abound, also deep pools of water, mostly salt. There are several
extensive underground lakes. Comparatively little exploration work has been done in the caves, and there is ample scope for the energies of enterprising spirits eager to venture into the depths of the unknown. The Rev. Mr. G. C. Woolf, describing his experiences when in one of the caves, writes:

“I must confess that a strange fear gripped me as I stood gazing into the unexplored depths below. The dim light of our lamp, our shadows thrown so grotesquely against the rough walls and ceiling of the cave, the clink, clink of the hard, flinty limestone as we warily made our way downwards, and the otherwise sepulchral silence, all combined to give a most eerie effect. Down, down we climbed over great heaps of fallen limestone, until we beheld before us a ledge, over which appeared to be a drop into nothingness. Not a word passed between us. Each kept his own thoughts—and fears—to himself. Suddenly we were almost startled out of our wits as one of the party uttered a cry and threw up his arms. He had stepped on to a piece of loose stone, which gave way under him, and down he went, but, fortunately, only a short distance. This incident was quickly erased from our minds as we gazed over the ledge before us, for there, spread out for our view, was a large chamber, the floor of which was studded with beautiful stalagmites, while innumerable stalactites were suspended from the ceiling. In the dim light of our hurricane lamp the whole scene suggested an old English churchyard with the tombstones bathed in moonlight. There and then we gave the name “The Churchyard” to this wonderful cave, which is unique amongst all that I have ever seen on the Nullarbor. It was with an awe almost reverent that we moved amongst Nature's monuments.”

A couple of men on a raft explored an underground waterway for hundreds of yards, when, fearing they might lose their way, they returned.

The caves are not devoid of life. Spiders and beetles are found in many of them. Most remarkable are the immense cave owls that make their homes and nest in the darkness. They leave the caves only at night. They are big birds with white feathers; the face is ringed with brown feathers and there is brown on the wings.

Mr. Woolf mentions caves near the edge of the plain that are open to the daylight, have flat roofs and, in his opinion, were used in times past by the blacks for sacred purposes. He thinks they were storing places for sacred objects and instruments used in their ceremonies. Possibly the initiation of youths into manhood may have been carried out in the caves, as these ceremonies always took place in secret and far removed from women. There is a cavern known by the native equivalent of “The Cave of the Bloody Hands.” The sides of the entrance are marked by hands traced in red ochre.

“Just what is the significance of hands remains a mystery,” writes Mr. Woolf, “for it is a matter of regret to record that the tribe responsible for them has passed completely out of existence.” Some have thought that they
are the work of idle moments, but he does not think so.

Symbolic hands appear on the walls of certain caves from the north to the south of Western Australia. Various theories have been advanced regarding them, but their real meaning remains obscure.

To the natives the Nullarbor Plain, devoid as it was of fresh water, was viewed as uncanny and mysterious, desolate and forsaken. To them death from thirst lurked on it. Their superstitious fears of it were aroused by the legend that it was the home of a huge snake that was ever ready to destroy any native who ventured far beyond its edge.

* * * * * *

Wild turkeys are in abundance on the plain at certain seasons, feeding on grasshoppers, caterpillars and other insects. Their walk is stately; their flight slow and heavy. Emus roam near the edges of the plain, also that wonderful bird the mallee hen, the eggs of which are laid in huge mounds and covered with vegetation. The heat of the sun and the heat of the decaying vegetation hatches the eggs and the young birds emerge. Great varieties of other birds visit the plain. Mr. Bolam, a railway official who for years was stationed at Ooldea, in a little booklet on “The Trans-Australian Wonderland” relates how on one occasion a flock of several hundred travelling cockatoos settled on the telegraph wire and engaged in gymnastics, turning somersaults with the wire gripped in their beaks. Suddenly, amid a fearful screeching, the line snapped. The birds transferred their attention to another wire, but, as another “fault” would have resulted, they had to be dispersed. The sharp beaks of the birds had partly cut the wire, and the weight of so many on it had caused it to break. Quail, curlew and plover can be found in great numbers on the plain in
good seasons, also parrots and numerous small birds. Rabbits and dingoes abound. I often came across meadows of that most beautiful of desert flowers, the brilliant scarlet flower with a jet-black spot in its centre known as the Sturt pea.

I picked up on the plain curious jet-black stones, varying from an inch to a quarter of an inch in diameter. They are somewhat circular in shape and hard enough to scratch glass. Scientists differ as to their origin. Many who believe they are meteorites call them sky stones. Some authorities consider they are a kind of natural glass. To the blacks they are “magic stones.”

At Ooldea I failed to see specimens of that pretty animal the kangaroo mouse. It is a marsupial and no bigger than an ordinary mouse. It is a miniature kangaroo, can hop three feet at each bound, travel faster than a dog and lives in burrows.

I also missed seeing the marsupial mole or blind sand burrower of which Mr. Bolam writes. It carries its young in a pouch, is about six inches long, has a beautiful, soft, fine fur of a creamy colour, and, what is most remarkable, it has neither eyes nor ears, and so is blind and deaf. It is also dumb and will never emit a sound of any kind, but has an acute sense of smell and is exceptionally active in its movements. It can burrow vertically and so quickly that it will disappear into the ground in a few seconds. It lives on insects.

The permanent fresh-water supply at Ooldea I found specially worthy of examination. The extremely heavy fall of rain that sometimes occurs in the interior of the continent quickly disappears, and is mostly carried to the sea in underground rivers; it comes to the surface in places in the form of springs. At Ooldea the supply was called “The Soak,” and in an area where fresh water was rare and precious it was greatly prized. As Mr. Bolam writes:

“For century upon century it has been the gathering ground of blacks from north, east, south and west. They went there to perform their sacred ceremonies, their corroborees and their tribal customs. They congregated to barter their spears, boomerangs, wommerahs, shields and clay for goods or weapons of other tribes. The sick and the injured made a pilgrimage to Ooldea to bathe in its wonderful waters. The armourers of the tribes for hundreds, probably thousands of years, brought their flints, grinding stones and other materials to the Soak to employ the intervals between the ceremonies. Each wind that blows uncovers their relics, but covers others. In the days before the arrival of Europeans two soaks only were known, one being fresh water and the other bitter. It was the water from the latter that had the reputation as the great cure-all for skin diseases, internal complaints and wounds. The bitter well is only two chains away in a north-easterly direction from the fresh water. The two waters are separated by a slight rise, and the bitter water is surrounded by a green weed that grows thickly to a height of about five feet. The
fresh water is situated in the middle of a hollow. It is overlooked by a barren sandhill. It is in the centre of salt and bitter water country and in a spot where one would least expect to find fresh water. The Great Architect in His infinite wisdom so ordained that a permanent water supply should be located in the midst of desolation and barrenness.

* * * * *

It was at Ooldea that Mrs. Daisy Bates, O.B.E., a charming, cultured Irish lady, camped for sixteen years amongst the blacks, not as a religious missionary, but rather as a sympathiser with a race she regarded as dying and towards whom she felt Europeans owed an obligation. She tended the sick, did all in her power to help those of the race she came in contact with, prepared written vocabularies of their various languages and made a collection of their legends. The aborigines almost worshipped her. She also earned and has received the respect and admiration of all who knew her life of self-sacrifice.

Relating her experiences, she said, “For eight months at one camp I had sole charge of three blind natives, one of whom was demented, and one diseased. The demented man ran away at night, and I tracked him for six days before finding him. He was on the verge of starvation and unable to walk back to camp. I had no conveyance and no messenger to send to the settlement, so I had to carry him on my back. At times I had to rest, and meantime amuse the demented man. In the course of my journey I thought of the effect on my city friends were they to see me in the bush with the naked native on my back. I stand in the relation of grandmother to these tribes, and I talked to this man as if he were my grandson, making him tell me of his adventures. I carried him about a mile and a half at the outside, but it took me five or six hours to get back to the camp, and one result of the strain was that I suffered from haemorrhage of the lungs.”

A grave-digger's work was later done by Mrs. Bates, following the death of the native in her charge. For the man she carried in from the bush she had to dig a grave seven feet long.

“Being a woman,” she continued, “makes me doubly welcome to the native women, and the reason will be understood when it is known that the native man only looks upon the white man as a source of income, no matter what his position. The women are absolutely subject to their husbands. As for religion, I act it in feeding and nursing them when they are sick, never offending their sensibilities nor having my own offended. I dress as the women of towns dress, and the natives see me as you see me now except that I work with my coat off. On the hottest day in summer I wear my
collar and tie in the bush; it brings respect from the native. They bring their sick and their blind to me. I am known among them all as ‘kabbarli’ (grandmother). They believe that I am the reincarnation of some wise native of long ago, and it is only in that way that all the tribes can account for my familiarity with their secret and sacred ceremonies.”

Natives' views on morality in many localities are extraordinary from the European viewpoint. Tragedies result from white men's ignorance of them. Mrs. Bates has explained that a European man may take a native woman and live with her without incurring the natives' hostility, but if he then took a woman bearing relationship other than that of sister to her he would risk death. “A native,” she added, “when he took a woman might beg, borrow or steal the woman's sisters, but if he tried to take a woman of any other relationship he would be killed. In certain tribes the children of a brother and the children of a sister could intermarry, and of the tribal brothers and sisters in all tribes, but the children of brother and brother or of sister and sister could not intermarry in any tribe.” Native marriage laws are most complicated, and dire punishment awaits any who offend against them.

* * * * *

Once after the completion of the Trans-Australian Railway I sent word to Mrs. Bates to meet me at Ooldea, where the train I was travelling in made a stay of about ten minutes. I invited her to come into my compartment, where we talked. When she got out of the train, a minute or so before it left, I too got out. A hideous old black man with only one eye, his face and body covered with scars, came to us and, addressing me, said:

“Me your uncle.”

I was surprised to hear that, and evidently looked it. The native then, in an insistent voice, said, “You my nephew.”

Meanwhile Mrs. Bates made a strategic movement to the blind side of the native. The poor lady looked at me in an appealing way.

“Yes, quite right,” I said.

Mrs. Bates's face looked as if she were relieved.

The elderly ruffian at once took advantage of the relationship, and, in a mandatory voice, demanded:

“Gib me a bob.”

I handed him a shilling, and he disappeared.

I must have looked as if I wanted an explanation, for Mrs. Bates remarked, “Poor Bob. He thinks you are his nephew. You see, this is what happened. I was admitted a member of his tribe. According to tribal law he became my uncle. When I heard you would be at Ooldea, I knew you
would ask me to come into your compartment. It is contrary to the natives' code of ideas for any woman to be under the same roof as a man unless he be a relative, so I told a white lie. As Christians we are all brothers and sisters under the fatherhood of God, and so I said you were my brother. Hence, Bob thought that as I am his tribal niece, so you must be his nephew. Thanks for not repudiating the relationship. I was frightened you would, and thus lose caste amongst them. That would never do.”

* * * * * *

According to Mrs. Bates, all the Australian tribes that practise circumcision are cannibals of a most revolting kind. In her opinion there is a distinct connection between cannibalism and circumcision. The drinking of human blood after the operation, and at other periods during boys' initiation, is most significant. Boys are told that blood is meat and that human blood is human meat. Mrs. Bates relates the following about an aboriginal gin at Ooldea:

“In spite of the closest attention, abundance of ‘white’ food and water, and every encouragement to induce her to rear her baby, she ran away into the bush, doubled on her tracks and gave birth to a little baby girl, which she choked and cooked and ate, sharing the meat with her little two-year-old child. Guided to the fire by the brother, father, and mother's brother (uncle) of the baby, I myself dug up the few charred bones of the baby from beneath the ashes. The skull had been broken into several pieces, and of the soft bones only a few cinders remained. It was not hunger but custom which incited the deed, coupled with the over-whelming desire for soft flesh and fat of the little baby. Just before, and for some time after, giving birth to a child a woman has to be kept aloof from her husband, for, according to native law, she is unclean at the time; and when she has given birth to her baby it rests entirely with herself whether she eats the baby or allows it to live, her husband having no voice whatever in the matter. The sharers of the meat may be a brother or sister of the baby's mother, but no other man appears to partake of the food of the new-born
baby, as, the mother being then ‘unclean,’ the same stigma attaches to the baby. Among the tribes whose remnants roam round the edge of the Nullarbor Plain nowadays there is scarcely one who has not at one time partaken of the flesh of a baby sister or brother, several amongst them having eaten of four or more of their own tribal mothers' newborn babies. In every circumcised tribe between these two places—Kimberley and Eucla areas—and along the edge of the great plain, infant cannibalism is the ordinary custom; yet when the babies are allowed to live the mothers are most devoted to them, and nurse and tend them unceasingly; husband and father also taking a delight in the little ones.”
Chapter XIII The First Imperial Press Conference


I

THE story of the two newspapers that I edited and partly owned, the Kalgoorlie Miner and its weekly, the Western Argus, may well be described as a romance of journalism. The story is associated with the sensational rise and progress of Western Australia during the closing decade of the last century, when an uninhabited and apparently worthless wilderness became in a few years dotted with thriving, prosperous towns, replete with the conveniences, comforts and luxuries of civilisation.

It was in September, 1892, that Arthur Bayley applied for a reward claim for discovering a payable reef at Coolgardie, and it was in June, 1893, that Paddy Hannan reported the discovery of gold near the site of the present town of Kalgoorlie. These and other sensational finds brought to the locality tens of thousands of enterprising spirits, and also caused capital to flow from London, Adelaide and elsewhere.

Newspapers were quickly started at Coolgardie. Later, many of the outback centres had their own journals to supply their readers with the world's news.

Messrs. Mott Bros., printers, thought that Kalgoorlie ought to be able to support a paper. On November 24, 1894, they published the first issue of the Western Argus as a weekly. Pessimists predicted its early demise. The first issue had a leading article which stated: “We have been told that the paper won't pay or last. Our reply is that we are quite prepared to risk it, and that we have come to stay.”

For some months the new weekly did well. Then it began to struggle for existence. The alluvial was getting worked out. Mines from which much had been expected were not maintaining values at depth. The Great Boulder and adjoining shows were suspected of being merely wild cats.

At this time Coolgardie possessed a couple of daily papers. Amongst the journalists there was Mr. Sid Hocking, who, with his brother Percy, was the chief owner of one of the dailies and also a weekly journal. Sid Hocking had extensive experience as a journalist in South Australia and at Broken Hill. He went to Kalgoorlie to report for his papers on the mining
prospects. A keen judge of mines, he readily recognised, after an underground inspection, the immense wealth of the Boulder group. Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie were but twenty-four miles apart, but in the days before the two were joined by a railway and before motor-cars or aeroplanes were known, that was a much greater distance than it is thought to be to-day. When he returned to Coolgardie he said to his brother, “Let us sell everything we have in Coolgardie and shift to Hannan's.” This was arranged. Those who knew them were unanimous in saying they were making the mistake of their lives.

Mott Bros. eagerly agreed to sell to the Hocking brothers the *Western Argus*, together with the building, land and plant—the plant, consisting of a small hand press and old type, for £350. The sellers felt they had made a good deal. When the deal was completed they returned to the eastern states, happy at having got clear of a goldfield that they were convinced was rapidly petering out.

It was not long before the consistent and rich crushings from the Boulder mines convinced the world that an El Dorado had been found. The *Western Argus* grew in size, circulation and prosperity. In September, 1895, it became the proud parent of a daily—the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. The leading article in its first issue was prophetic. It stated: “Within a short time Kalgoorlie will have a population numbering many tens of thousands, and this paper will equal any daily published in the western part of the continent.” When that was written Kalgoorlie was a collection of hessian humpies and bag shanties, with trees growing in its roadways, which were ankle deep in dust. Yet in a few years the twin cities of Kalgoorlie and Boulder were centres of a population of some 80,000 people, and were probably more up to date than any other cities of their size in the world. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* had progressed with its environment. Mr. Sid Hocking went to London and purchased the best linotypes and printing machines on the market, brought mechanics from London, and on the arrival of the new plant it was installed in commodious three-story stone and brick premises.

The newspaper property that had changed hands for £350 had grown in a couple of years into a concern that the purchasers would not have sold for £100,000. Our success prompted the starting of an opposition paper, the *Daily Standard*, a venture that had plenty of capital behind it. After a vigorous life of about twelve months it died a natural death, and the promoters are reputed to have lost heavily. Mr. Edward Irving had been brought from Melbourne to edit the new paper, and soon after its decease I was fortunate in securing his services as my second in command at the *Kalgoorlie Miner* office. A Balliol man, he was erudite, sound in his
judgment, a wide reader and a student of literature, tolerant in his views and something of a Bohemian. His grandfather was the celebrated preacher, Edward Irving, first lover of Jane Welsh, afterwards Mrs. Thomas Carlyle. It was Irving who introduced Jane Welsh to Carlyle, and thereby hangs a romantic tale. It has been variously told, but it is certain that had they never met it would have been better for three people—Irving, Jane Welsh and Carlyle.

Irving was the founder, some speak of him as The Apostle, of the “Irvingite,” or Holy Catholic Apostolic, Church in 1832.

His passionate religious convictions and fervour so wore him out that in 1834 he died with all the external symptoms of old age, though only in his forty-second year.

The grandson and namesake did not take life so seriously. Pleasant, even-tempered, cultured and beloved by all who knew him, a true friend and loyal colleague, he was for more than a quarter of a century on our editorial staff, and died in harness when well over the allotted span.

One after the other newspaper rivals of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* disappeared, and it eventually became the only morning daily paper of the goldfields.

When in the summer of 1909 the idea came to fruition of bringing together newspaper men of the Empire to confer in London on matters of common interest, Dr. (afterwards Sir) Winthrop Hackett, editor and part proprietor of the *West Australian*, Perth, and I were selected as delegates from Western Australia.

II

There is really not very much that newspaper men throughout the Empire have in common as newspaper men. The distribution of news by cablegram and wireless is certainly of universal concern to them, also the question of paper supply; but it is surprising the comparatively few subjects to be discussed affecting newspapers of the Empire generally when Empire newspaper men get together. Still, from other viewpoints, the first Imperial Press Conference was a wonderful success, as were also the second Conference held in Ottawa in 1920, the third in Melbourne in 1926, and other later Conferences. They were Empire gatherings of considerable Empire significance.

They were representative of the people who do much to create public opinion in every part of the Empire. In these democratic days Governments and Parliaments are but the creatures of public opinion, and those who form and guide public opinion are doing work of the greatest importance.
At the first Conference there were fifty-six overseas delegates in all, including men from Canada, India, the West Indies, Straits Settlements, Burma, Ceylon, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. Most pressmen avoid public notoriety. They are of retiring dispositions and the overseas delegates were overwhelmed with the attentions they received, and the public and private hospitality extended to them. At their first meeting at the Waldorf Hotel, which was their headquarters, one of their duties was to draft a telegram to the late King Edward expressive of fervent loyalty and good wishes towards himself and his family. Promptly in reply came a telegram of thanks from the King, hoping that the delegates would enjoy their stay in England. Subsequently, at a garden party given to them at Marlborough House by the Prince and Princess of Wales, King Edward and the Queen asked to meet the delegates personally, and all of them with their wives were individually presented. Later the delegates were the guests of King Edward and the Queen at Windsor Castle.

The overseas delegates were shown all phases of English life. The Government gave them a banquet; the Lord Mayor entertained them at luncheon at the Mansion House. The Labour members of the Commons had afternoon tea for them on the terrace. There was a brilliant reception by the Marquis and Marchioness of Salisbury. A garden party was arranged by the Duke and Duchess of Wellington at Apsley House, where they had an opportunity of inspecting Waterloo relics. The Duchess of Sutherland received them at Stafford House, with its famous staircase and priceless works of art.

They visited numbers of country houses, including Hall Barn, the historic country mansion of Lord Burnham; Taplow Court, from whence Lord Desborough took them for a trip on the Thames; Sutton Place, Lord Northcliffe's beautiful Elizabethan country house, and Chatsworth.

They were invited to a military review at Aldershot and a naval review at Spithead.

They were taken for a motoring tour with visits to Coventry, Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon, Manchester, the Ship Canal and Sheffield.

A short stay in Scotland comprised visits to Glasgow, the Trossachs and Edinburgh.

A day was spent at Oxford University, where they had luncheon with the Chancellor, Lord Curzon.

The originator and organiser of the Conference, Mr. (now Sir) Harry Brittain, made certain that the delegates saw English life as it was in King Edward's time. Social gatherings, politics, industries and commerce were all included.

Perhaps the most impressive sight that the delegates witnessed was the
naval review at Portsmouth. There were eighteen miles of battleships, cruisers, destroyers, scouts and submarines. They were the guests of the Admiralty, and were entertained on board the *Dread-nought*. Admiral Sir John Fisher was then the First Sea Lord.

When the special train that took the delegates from London reached Portsmouth, the s.s. *Volcano* was waiting to take them along the lines of the fleet. A quietly, almost shabbily, dressed elderly gentleman in civilian clothes, unnoticed by any of the delegates, unostentatiously boarded the steamer. As the *Volcano* went along the lines the delegates consulted copies of a plan that had been supplied to them showing the position of each vessel of the fleet and giving particulars of the names, tonnage, guns, etc. A member of the overseas party, the youthful daughter of one of the delegates, was reading aloud, and, for the benefit of those near, giving particulars of the ships she pointed out.

“Excuse me,” said the old gentleman, “you are reading the plan wrongly.”

He then gave the names of the ships passed, mentioned many details about them, referred to the careers of some of the vessels, and answered various questions about them.

“You seem to know a lot about the ships,” remarked the young lady.

“Oh,” he replied, “not so very much.”

“Indeed you do,” was the response.

“Well,” he answered with a strange smile, “I don't know as much about them as I'd like to, but I'm always trying to learn more.”

“And what have you to do with the ships?”

“I? Well—I happen to have charge of them. My name is Fisher.”

* * * * *

Opportunities were provided the delegates for meeting at private houses the leading statesmen and most of the notable people of England. Mr. Lloyd George was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. I was one of a party of three or four delegates invited to breakfast with him and his wife and family at his official residence in Downing Street opposite the Foreign Office, where the Conference was held. He explained that he wanted to meet some of the delegates, that he was so busy that he could find no other time than the morning, pointed out that they had only to cross the road to attend the Conference, and remarked that as he had so few chances of cultivating his family's acquaintance he made it a rule that at breakfast they should be always present, no matter what other guests attended.

It was a pleasant gathering, and the host was particularly desirous of
knowing the feeling existing in the Dominions towards the Mother Country.

He was then the subject of fierce denunciations because of his taxation proposals. The quiet homeliness of himself and his family made the visitors feel as if they had known them all their lives.

At a small dinner at Lord Rosebery's London house half a dozen of us met the Duke of Argyll and Lord Northcliffe. Lord Rosebery showed some of his treasures. One that he specially prized was the original of Tenniel's great *Punch* cartoon “Dropping the Pilot.”

An interesting document in a frame was hanging on a wall. It was the round robin signed by the mutineers of the Nore in 1797. It was faded, stained and blotted. Most of the signatures were of uneducated men evidently unaccustomed to writing. Some signed by a cross as their mark. Several were those of sailors who were subsequently executed, including that of the ringleader, Richard Parker, who assumed the position of Rear-Admiral.

At one end of the dining-room was a large painting of George Washington—a painting for which he sat. Opposite to that portrait, at the other end of the room, was a life-sized portrait of the Lord North who was Prime Minister of England during the American War, so that the leaders of the American and British people during a period of peculiar difficulty and danger to both countries faced each other whilst men who came from all parts of the Empire enjoyed an excellent dinner. Lord Rosebery told us that when he was a Minister he was curious enough to look up some of the despatches sent from the American colonies prior to the revolution, and he found that several of them had never been opened. They were full of warnings of the impending trouble.

*   *   *   *   *

Most of the great political leaders addressed the Conference, which lasted some days. The one thing that struck us was that the Conservatives especially were impressed with the danger of a great European war caused by Germany's scheme for aggrandisement. Though not in so many words, yet the message that the Homeland gave to us to take back was, “Keep your eye on Germany.”

At the banquet given by the British Press to the Overseas delegates at White City, a feature of the evening was Lord Rosebery's great “Welcome Home” speech. It was perhaps his best effort as an orator.

A strange story went the rounds of London regarding the speech. It was said that the promoters of the Conference were specially desirous of getting
the finest orator of the Empire to deliver a welcome address to the delegates. He complied, but later, as he thought over what he should say, he changed his mind and told them that on reconsideration he would rather not do it. They endeavoured to get him to again change his mind, but without avail. They were much concerned. Finally, the first Lord Burnham approached King Edward, and His Majesty was sufficiently interested to speak to Lord Rosebery on the matter. Lord Rosebery, feeling that it was a Royal command, tried to excel all his previous efforts. And he did. None who heard him can forget the attractive diction, the touches of humour, the charm and foresight of his utterances. Speaking of the tour arranged for the delegates he said:

“... throughout the country you will see those old manor houses where the squirearchy of Great Britain have lived for centuries, almost all of them inhabited long before the discovery of Australia and some even before the discovery of America—a civilisation, a country life, which I advise you to see on your present visit, because when you next come it may not be here for you to see it.”

How many of these old homes have disappeared since 1909 the English people well know!

Lord Rosebery put the ominous international position as it existed in 1909 in the plainest language. “There is a hush in Europe, a hush in which one might almost hear a leaf fall to the ground,” and yet, he added, “There never was in the history of the world so threatening and overpowering a preparation for war.” He went on to issue this significant warning:

“Take back to your young Dominions across the seas this message and this impression: that some personal duty and responsibility for national defence rests on every man and every citizen of this Empire. Yes, gentlemen, take that message back with you. Tell your people—if they can believe it—the deplorable way in which Europe is relapsing into militarism and the pressure that is put upon this little England to defend itself, its liberties and yours.”

* * * * *

Lord Roberts, then seventy-seven years old, was even more prophetic when addressing the Conference. I can see now the old warrior—short in stature but an erect, soldierly, well-proportioned and commanding figure. With his face keen and his eyes sharp and alert, he was the embodiment of mental and physical energy despite his wrinkled face and grey hairs. He stood up to address us, looking as if he had something definite and highly important to tell us. And he had. “A shot fired in the Balkan peninsula,” said he, “might produce an explosion which would change the fortunes of
every remotest corner of the Empire.” These words were uttered five years before “a shot fired in the Balkan peninsula,” at Sarajevo, precipitated a war in which “every remotest corner of the Empire” was engaged for several anxious years in a life or death struggle to maintain their freedom. Unfortunately, whilst Lord Roberts had many admirers in those days, there were thousands who viewed him as a garrulous old nuisance. His constant urgings, “Be Prepared,” did not always fall on sympathetic ears.

* * * * *

A notable utterance made at the Conference was that of Mr. Amery, then one of the British delegates, but afterwards Secretary of State for the Dominions. The discussion was on the question of Empire defence. Mr. W. T. Stead and others had ably put forward the case for those who were inclined to oppose heavy expenditure on defence on the ground that it tended to provoke war. Mr. Amery, in a short speech of wonderful power, rebutted these arguments. He referred to various conflicts of interest between the Empire and foreign countries, and went on to say, “Each time the clouds passed away, and they passed away because the statesmen of those countries, when they were brought face to face with the alternative of war, counted their ships and counted our ships—and they decided in favour of peace. During the years 1894 and 1904 we won half a dozen bloodless Trafalgars.”

There was no one who seemed to have a better conception of Germany's designs and Germany's strength than Mr. Amery. Some weeks after the Conference, at a dinner he gave to some of the visitors, he asked me what I thought of all I saw during my visit to England.

“It seems to many of us,” I replied, “that Britain is unnecessarily alarmed. After seeing the stupendous power of the fleet at Spithead it gave us the impression that it is invincible. Then we saw everywhere evidences of Britain's wonderful wealth and her marvellous industrial activity and the extent of her commerce. How can she really fear the result of a conflict with Germany? Britain evidently minimises her own strength and exaggerates Germany's in order to make assurance doubly sure by representing that a grave danger exists when really there is no danger.”

Mr. Amery pointed out that the truth was that the danger was far greater than represented. He went into details of Germany's military and naval strength, and expressed grave doubts as to the result of a conflict between the Empire and Germany. “If we do win,” he said, “then it will only be after a long, bitter and costly struggle.”
I was particularly impressed by Viscount Grey of Fallodon, then Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. My first meeting with him was accidental.

We were the guests at luncheon of the literary and journalistic members of the two Houses of the Imperial Parliament, and were received in Westminster Hall, that old, spacious and lofty chamber which is crowded with so many historical associations. It was where Warren Hastings was tried, and it was to it that Macaulay referred as “the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which resounded with acclamation at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles the First confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame.”

Care was taken that only members of both Houses who were associated with literature or journalism should be permitted to be hosts. Mr. Foster Fraser, referring to the luncheon, wrote:

“The writers of mere law books had to be excluded—there was no room for them. The Prime Minister was there, not as Prime Minister, but because, in his briefless barrister days, Mr. Asquith earned welcome guineas by writing newspaper articles on economics. And it was pleasant to look round the room and see the distinguished politicians who had served their apprenticeship to public life as writers of the Press—Lord Curzon, a prince among hard-working, go-anywhere-and-do-anything special correspondents; Lord Milner, once a writer for an evening journal; sitting in a corner, Winston Churchill, who had done his share of dramatic war correspondence; Sir Charles Dilke, busy editor; Sir Henry Norman; Mr. T. P. O'Connor; whilst amongst those who had written books were Sir Edward Grey, Lord Cromer, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Birrell, Mr. A. E. W. Mason. No lord or commoner had the privilege of being a host unless he could legitimately lay claim to being a writer.”

The luncheon was held, not in Westminster Hall, but in another part of the parliamentary buildings. It took place in the Harcourt Room, which is bright and overlooks the Thames. No seats were allotted. There were a number of small tables. The guests were asked to seat themselves where they wished, provided no two guests sat together. When I took my seat, I was joined by a member of the House of Commons, who, like myself, came from County Galway, Ireland—Mr. T. P. O'Connor. A few nights previously I had met him at a cheery evening at the Savage Club. Presently a gentleman, clean-shaven and sharp-featured, quietly sat down beside me.
“T. P.,” who was known to everyone, and everyone liked him, promptly presented me to my neighbour—Sir Edward Grey—telling him that I was from Australia, and that I had been a member of the Commonwealth Parliament, and was then a member of the Western Australian Parliament.

Sir Edward treated me with old-time courtesy. He said he was glad to be sitting beside a delegate from Australia, a country about which he would like to know more than he did. We then talked about Australia. After the conversation had proceeded some time, he said: “Would you mind telling me what you think Australia would do if Britain were in death grips with a foreign power, or a combination of foreign powers?”

I told him that the casual visitor to Australia was liable to form an altogether wrong opinion of Australians, whose general attitude towards the world, including Britain and Britishers, was inclined to be somewhat critical. To know Australians' attitude towards the Old Country, it was necessary to be in Australia in war time. It was evidenced during the Sudan War, also whilst the Boer War lasted. There were fewer pro-Boers in Australia in proportion to the population than in England itself. The reverses sustained at the outset of the Boer War only made Australians more determined than ever to help to restore the Empire's prestige. I added that I felt certain that the greater the British difficulties in a war against foreigners, the more ready Australia would be to help.

Sir Edward looked pleased. Some people had told him that Australia was so far away that she would not trouble about European wars in any circumstances.

Then I ventured to mention how several practical, common-sense men, some of them members of Parliament, in Australia viewed the imperial policy. They wished to know why Britain went on at huge expenditure engaging in a warship-building competition with Germany. Why did Britain allow it to continue? They considered that the action of Germany in constructing an immense fleet was as provocative of war as the massing of troops on a land frontier in order to menace a neighbouring country. Britain could smash the German fleet, and Germany could not land troops in British territory. It was therefore felt that Britain was unwise to wait until Germany got stronger and had completed her war arrangements. People who took that view wondered why Britain did not say to Germany, “If you go on warship-building, and thus menace us, we will regard it as a hostile act, and take extreme measures.”

Sir Edward appeared interested. He listened patiently, and said that that viewpoint had not been overlooked. There were many who supported it, but he was strongly against it. In fact, it had been brought before the Cabinet, and the Cabinet favoured his opposition to it. Nothing could be
done, in his opinion, in the way indicated to force Germany to limit her
ship-building programme. The gist of what he said was as follows:

“Germany has as much right as we have to build a fleet, and when war does come,
if it comes, then we must be certain that Britain is in the right. Britain would not be
right in saying that no other country ought to build a fleet as strong as her own. The
next war will be decided by public opinion, and many nations will be drawn into it;
and we do not want to antagonise the rest of the world. It is true that Germany's
army would be helpless against Britain whilst Britain had command of the sea; but
she would probably invade France, and a European conflagration would ensue, for
which Britain would be blamed. When war comes, it will probably be world-wide,
and, unless we be in the right, we cannot have the world on our side.”

How wise and far-seeing these words were was proved by subsequent
events. When war did come five years later, and Germany having invaded
and attacked, in violation of treaty obligations, a small, inoffensive country
anxious to remain neutral, Sir Edward Grey, in his wonderful speech in the
House of Commons immediately after the declaration of war, clearly
showed that Britain came into it to maintain treaty obligations to Belgium
and oppose a national outrage. He conclusively showed Britain to be in the
right and Germany in the wrong.

It had been arranged that one of the New Zealand delegates, Mr. Gresley
Lukin, was to respond at the luncheon to the toast of “The Guests.” At the
last moment he sent word that he was too ill to attend. The committee
appointed to select speakers came to me, and asked me to reply. I
suggested Dr. Hackett, but he told us his health did not permit his
speaking—he was in poor health at the time. In the course of my reply, the
official report of the proceedings (page 44) represents me as saying,
amongst other things:

“There was a change coming over the self-governing dominions and the spirit of
Empire. They felt that they were slowly but surely tending towards a period of
nations in alliance, and that the Empire of the future would be something grander
and greater than it had been in the past, inasmuch as it would consist of something
different from what it consisted of now; it would consist of a family of new nations
that would be a strength and pride to the Motherland.”

Since then the Statute of Westminster has been passed. When I sat down,
Sir Edward was good enough to say that he quite agreed with the remarks I
had made. The following day, when he addressed the Press Conference, he
indicated his views on various imperial problems, including naval
expenditure and the relationship between Great Britain and the self-
governing Dominions. He is reported (page 157 of “A Parliament of the
Press”) as saying:
“You should know to-day how conscious we are at home that we have far too much at stake to allow our naval expenditure to fall behind, however great the burden, and you from beyond the seas have made it clear to us how great the resources of the Empire are. In upholding the Empire we are going more and more towards the ideal to which Mr. Kirwan referred in his speech yesterday—of a union of allies—of self-governing Dominions. If you could only have been present at the last Imperial Conference when the Prime Ministers of the self-governing Dominions were collected here in London, I think you would have realised how much the relation between self-governing Dominions and the Government at home approaches to that of allies already. If there be a difference I would say it is most noticeable in this—that the freedom of speech which takes place is greater than that which is ever permissible between allies. (Cheers.) That freedom of speech is not resented because we take it as evidence that the Prime Ministers of the self-governing Dominions, when they come to London, feel themselves to be at home.”

Viscount Grey of Fallodon was too shrewd a statesman not to recognise that hard-and-fast constitutional bonds are not the best means to keep the Empire together. He saw that unity is best promoted by fostering sentiment and common interests and—more than all—by freedom.

IV

One of the most attractive men who addressed the Conference was Signor Marconi. He dealt with the more extended use of wireless for newspaper purposes. In appearance he was boyish. As a fact, he was over thirty years of age, but he looked little more than twenty. We viewed him as what he is—a genius. We knew that when a youth, or little more, he had established wireless communication between England and France, and that in 1901 the first Marconi message was sent across the Atlantic from Cornwall to Newfoundland. Two years later the President of the United States sent a message by wireless to King Edward, and soon after The Times published the first radio news message. No wonder we were deeply interested in the handsome young man who talked with us rather than to us. Though an Italian, yet, thanks no doubt to his Irish mother, Marconi spoke English perfectly and with quiet confidence. A hard-headed English journalist, since dead, was far from being convinced of the practical use of wireless. He asked Marconi:

“Is not transmission by wireless unreliable? Is not your very praiseworthy enthusiasm carrying you rather far? When you talk as you do about its popular use all over the world, is wireless really to be in the future anything but an interesting plaything?”

Marconi was not annoyed. He smiled as he quietly answered:
“I am certain that the day will come when people will sit in their homes and hear the world's most famous musicians from hundreds of miles distant. The most remote homesteads and the most lonely of islands will be kept by wireless in touch with world affairs.”

The journalist, who was a man of importance, remarked: “Then this world will be a fairyland.” Marconi made no reply, but the fairyland he predicted has come.

One of the delegates, the Hon. Surendrenath Banerjee, who represented the Bengalee, was a most picturesque figure. He was a man of great learning, and a charming and effective speaker, proving himself an orator of a high order. He was supposed to have arrived in London with several private secretaries and a retinue of servants, but if these existed we saw none of them. Millions in Bengal worshipped him.

Warwick Castle was visited. The gardens, the lawns, the fine old castle itself looked glorious in the wonderful light of an English summer's day. We had luncheon in the historic hall where old armour, weapons and flags hung round. The earl made a delightfully appropriate speech.

Lady Warwick also welcomed the delegates, saying that there was no more suitable place for a common meeting ground than under the shadow of those old grey walls which had seen nearly every phase of the evolution of English history. In that hall, she reminded them, the barons held council in the early civil wars; there Warwick the Kingmaker developed his one-man policy; from the dungeons below, Piers Gaveston, the favourite of Edward the Second, was brought to trial by the barons and taken out to summary execution; and in later time Cromwell's Roundheads roamed the surrounding corridors.

* * * * *

The Glasgow University conferred the honorary degree of LL.D. on six of the overseas delegates when the delegates visited Glasgow. At the ceremony, after the degrees were conferred, the Lord Provost, Mr. McInnes Shaw, was evidently in doubt as to which of the six he should call on to respond, so he remarked that as the time was short he must call on the six doctors of laws to respond, not individually, but collectively.

The new LL.D.s promptly rose and began all to speak at once. They could be seen gesticulating violently, their lips were moving, each tried to shout down the others, and there was a babel of six voices, to the great amusement of everyone present, especially the undergraduates.
Some of the English pressmen did not love each other in 1909. I remember finding myself at a large public banquet sitting between two distinguished journalists, both now dead. The neighbour on my left whispered, “It is most unfortunate that you should have to sit beside that terrible bounder on your right. He is an appallingly conceited individual who never lets anyone talk but himself. I haven't spoken to him for years.”

Later, my right-hand neighbour, who was a knight, remarked in a low voice, “What a shame to put you beside such an awful old bore as that fellow on your left. Thank heaven we don't speak!”

Both were extremely talkative, so much so that the reason of their animosity was that neither evidently was prepared to hear the other talk.

The last gathering of the delegates' tour was a dinner at the Marine Gardens, Portobello, Edinburgh. After the toast of the delegates was honoured, I, as honorary secretary of the overseas delegates, was asked to reply. The speech as reported in the official account indicated the value of the Conference. Having said that this was the last occasion on which the delegates would be officially entertained, I am reported to have said:

“The results of the Imperial Press Conference would be far greater and more far-reaching than were anticipated by those who originated the Conference. The real results of the Conference would not be found in the minute books of the Conference. They would be greater in an indirect sense than they would be directly. The influence brought to bear on the overseas delegates could not fail to have great effects upon their writings in the future. Coming as they did from isolated parts of the Empire, it was an agreeable surprise to find that they had all been thinking imperially and thinking in much the same way. Whilst the spirit of nationalism was growing up very strongly in the Dominions, that spirit was not out of harmony with the true spirit of imperialism, an imperialism that was not associated with aggrandisement, but with the promotion of peace and the betterment of humanity.”
Chapter XIV Second and Third Press Conferences

Two Lord Northcliffes—Interesting voyagers—Sir Wilfrid Laurier—George Ham—Mr. Meighan—McKenzie King—“Imperial” or “British”—Stephen Leacock—Among Red Indians—The Australian Conference—Old acquaintances—Lord Apsley—Anthony Eden, M.P.—A. P. Herbert's humour.

I

FIVE years after the first Imperial Press Conference there was the outbreak of war. The designs of Germany were revealed, and what was prophesied by Lord Roberts and others actually happened. “Distances between nations,” according to Ruskin, “are measured not by seas but by ignorance.” The late Viscount Burnham, speaking of the work of the first Imperial Press Conference, said:

“It helped more than any other conference to dissipate and dispel the fog of peace within the Empire, so that when the appointed hour came the fog of war was so thick that our enemies never saw through it and realised the essential unity of the Empire.”

Mr. Amery, M.P., put the position clearly when he said:

“The danger to pressmen as to politicians is to get absorbed in the little issues and forget the big one. The Conference of 1909 discussed the big problems that lay ahead with seriousness and in a practical spirit, such as was never seen in Parliament, and the result was that when they separated they knew what were the big issues with which the Empire might be faced any day. Though that was five years before the storm actually burst, there was not a village from one end of the Empire to the other which had not a true view of the cause and meaning of the recent war. No explanations were required; no long articles; all the people knew what the sacrifice would be.”

The second Imperial Press Conference was delayed by the war. It was not held until eleven years after the first Conference. At a meeting of the Australian section of the Empire Press Union held in Sydney I was appointed one of the Australian delegates to represent the Commonwealth. The number of delegates from Australia was fourteen.

When in London on their way to Canada, where the second Conference was held, many delegates again met Lord Northcliffe. The Lord Northcliffe of 1909 was different from the Lord Northcliffe of 1920. I was one of two delegates appointed at the first Conference by the Australian delegates to represent them on a subcommittee to form the constitution and rules of the
Empire Press Union, an organisation that the first Conference decided to establish. The more we saw of him at that time the more we were charmed. Somewhat careless in his dress, at times almost shabby, but boyish in appearance and handsome, he talked little and was a good listener, always anxious to hear the views of others. With his firmly closed lips and Napoleonic face he gave the impression that he possessed an immense store of reserve power. The sub-committee, which numbered about fourteen or fifteen members, had several meetings in the Savoy Hotel. Lord Northcliffe was a most regular attendant. Though an extremely busy man he never missed a meeting, and he always arrived punctually. Controlling as he did so many newspapers he should be more concerned in the new organisation than anyone present, but he had the least to say of those present. In fact he only spoke once. It was when Mr. (afterwards Sir) Arthur Pearson attended and took the chair as chairman of the Executive Committee. Mr. Pearson and Lord Northcliffe were old newspaper rivals, but Mr. Pearson had been very ill—looked it—and was getting blind. Immediately the proceedings began Lord Northcliffe rose and, in a delightfully happy speech, expressed his pleasure at seeing Mr. Pearson well enough to attend. The genuine warmth and friendly feeling that was displayed by the two towards each other caused surprise amongst some of the journalists who only knew them as keen antagonists.

The Lord Northcliffe of 1909 was quiet and seemingly shy and retiring, but the Lord Northcliffe of 1920 appeared to us to be a different man altogether. He invited some of the overseas journalists who were on their way to Canada to visit The Times office, where they were shown round the literary, mechanical and other departments, and entertained. In appearance he had grown coarse and bulky, whilst in manner he was talkative, self-assertive, impatient and almost aggressive. He did not want to listen to others, but to talk himself. What interested him most was a wireless plant installed at the top of The Times office. He kept us there for a considerable time explaining its workings, and apparently he knew as much about it as the operators.

Mr. Moberly Bell, of The Times, told us that every morning between six and seven o'clock there was a ring on the telephone beside his bed. It was Lord Northcliffe, who had by that time read that morning's paper, and he there and then discussed with him its contents and its make-up. Invariably before breakfast Lord Northcliffe rang up the heads of the various newspapers he controlled and talked with them about features in that morning's issue of which he approved or disapproved.
Most of the British delegates to the Imperial Press Conference, as well as many of the overseas delegates, voyaged together on the C.P.O.S. Victorian from Liverpool across the Atlantic. There were a number of notable newspaper people on board, and they got to know each other intimately. There were several of the veterans of the first Conference, including the genial Sir Harry Brittain, as energetic and bright as ever. Sir Gilbert Parker, novelist, journalist, traveller and parliamentarian was with us. A Canadian by birth, Sir Gilbert produced his first play in Australia. The Times was represented by a Canadian, Sir Campbell Stuart, whose youthful, cheerful personality made him a general favourite. Sir Roderick Jones, of Reuters, with his newly married wife were also of the party. Perhaps the most attractive of the delegates was Colonel Sir Arthur Holbrook, M.P. Though seventy years of age yet in his ways he was the youngest of the travellers. He was the instigator of all the dances amongst the delegates, and he danced every dance. No matter how late the hour he always wanted the dancing to be continued so that he should have still more dances. The family record was remarkable. He had had six sons on active service. One of them got the Victoria Cross and others got various decorations, but all of them came back unscathed.

II

It was my third visit to Canada. The first time I was there in 1909, when, as a member of a party of Australian and New Zealand delegates to the Imperial Press Conference of 1909, we travelled through Canada on our way to London. During the couple of weeks we then spent in Canada we were the guests of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. A special railway car was our home except when we occasionally spent a night at some of the beautiful hotels of the company. Luncheons and banquets were tendered to us wherever we went. Each of the provincial Governments and also the Dominion Government entertained us, and we were the guests of the then Governor-General, Earl Grey, and Lady Grey, at Rideau Hall, the historic home of Canadian Viceroyalty. We saw most of the wonders of Canada—vast prairies, where a few years previously buffaloes had wandered, converted into waving wheat fields, the immense pine forests, freshwater lakes that are great inland seas, the Niagara and Montmorency Falls, the stupendous grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, the far-famed Heights of Abraham and the walls and forts of quaint old Quebec, the majestic St. Lawrence river and the wonderful bridge over it at Quebec, as well as the Dominion's many activities in the fields of industry and commerce.

When in Canada in 1909 I was fortunate in meeting Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then Prime Minister of Canada. It was when we were the guests of the Governor-General. His charm and brilliancy were striking; he was handsome; he had a fine figure, his features well defined, his hair white; he
had grace, courtesy and scholarly eloquence. At the first gathering of Empire statesmen in London he put in a few words the idea of Empire unity when he said, “If you want our aid call us to your councils.” At a dinner given by the Governor-General to the Australian and New Zealand journalists, Sir Wilfrid, when proposing “The Sister Dominions,” made a remarkable speech. He said:

“In connection with your reception in Toronto I was impressed by the statement made by one of you that you had come here as cousins and we received you as brothers. Truly as brothers we receive you—we are bound together by an even stronger tie than blood, a tie that is manifold in its embraces, not only binding together men of the same blood, but men of many origins, and connecting all in the common bond of citizenship. In a former period it was a proud boast in Asia Minor and Greece to proclaim, ‘I am a Roman citizen.’ In these days it is not ‘I am a Roman citizen,’ but ‘I am a British subject.’ It is in this quality that our guests are going to England at the present time.”

* * * * *

We met in Canada in 1909 an exceptionally remarkable man, Mr. George Ham. He was a sort of super-courier of the C.P.R. and was our cicerone through the Dominion. Before we landed at Victoria, British Columbia, from the steamer that brought us from Australia, he had come on board, and from then until we left he was our guide, philosopher and friend. All of us, especially the ladies, of whom there were several, got to love him for his kindliness and his wit. He was one of the best-known men in Canada, and wherever he went he seemed to exude his gospel of cheer. His fund of humorous stories was inexhaustible and his laughter infectious. Here are a few of his original sayings:

“Talk is cheap; that is why it is so prevalent.”

“Young man, when you think you know more than the boss does, it's time to quit.”

“Never offer an anchor to a drowning man.”

“Ours is a show world, but behind us all there is a Beneficent Showman.”

Once when he came round after an operation in a hospital he found himself in a darkened room. He asked the nurse the reason. “Well,” she explained, “there is a big fire across the street and we were afraid if you awoke and saw the flames you might think the operation hadn't been successful.”

One of his stories was about a judge during the Caribou gold rush who fined a miner two hundred dollars.

“That's dead easy, for I've got it here,” said the culprit, “in my hip pocket.”

“And six months in jail. Have you,” continued the judge, “that in your
Another of his stories was about the same judge, who sentenced a wicked old man guilty of a heinous crime to ten years' hard labour. “Your honour,” said the prisoner, “I'll never live to do as much as that.” “Well,” answered the judge, “you do as much of it as you can.”

When we parted with George Ham at Quebec we made him a presentation. Tears ran down his cheeks, and there were few of us whose eyes were not dim. The last time I saw him was in a hospital in Montreal in 1920. He was not wealthy, but he had what he told us he valued more than millions—the affection of thousands of friends. He died in Montreal in 1926 in his seventy-ninth year.

III

The Conference of 1920 was held at the Parliament Buildings, Ottawa. A month or so before it met, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, had retired through ill-health. His successor, Mr. Meighan, welcomed the delegates. A quiet, spare-looking man between forty and fifty years of age, the new Prime Minister spoke deliberately and almost hesitatingly. His words were brief and to the point. It was true when he said: “As you pass through Canada you will find no disappointment in all you have been led to expect of the resources and hospitality of the people. You will find the bone and sinew very sound, the blood red and pure. You won't locate anything unhealthy in the body commercial.”

The leader of the Opposition, Mr. William Lyon McKenzie King, was also present. Like the Premier, he is a lawyer, and was then in the prime of middle age. We were interested to learn, as a striking example of Canada's changed attitude towards Britain, that his maternal grandfather, William Lyon McKenzie, in 1837 took up arms with the idea of establishing a republic, and led an armed revolt against the domination of a clique of ruling officials called “The Family Compact.” The revolt quickly collapsed and the leader fled to the United States. Later he was amnestied, and, having been cured of his love for republican institutions, he re-entered public life, in which before the revolt he had been a member of Parliament and a prominent figure. He was again elected to the Legislature. History describes him as turbulent and ungovernable, often the dupe of schemers, but he could neither be bribed, bullied nor cajoled. Though a poor man, he refused from Lord Goderick an offer of a position of influence with a salary of £1,500. The evils against which he struggled were real and grave, and he hastened their reform. It is a curious reflection that the grandson of a rebel leader, for whose head a price was offered, should be later the
Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. McKenzie King suggested an alteration in the title of the Conference from “Imperial” to “British.” He admitted there may be reasons for preferring the word “imperial,” but added: “With the struggles of the recent past, the word ‘imperial’ has come to denote a kind of centralisation in all matters of organisation and in method, autocracy rather than democracy, and as such is not adequately expressive of the spirit of the several democracies that comprise the nations of the British Commonwealth. The word ‘British,’ on the other hand, is suggestive of spirit rather than form. It speaks of an attitude that is synonymous with freedom, justice and liberty, fair play and right, and as such it tends to give a larger and finer meaning and significance to everything with which it is associated. Moreover, it is all-embracing and world-encircling, and it is, above all else, distinctive.”

With the approval of the Conference, Lord Burnham declared that, in spite of what Mr. McKenzie King had said, they would stick to their name. “We are proud of Britain,” said he, “but not ashamed of the Empire. It stands for liberty and equality, and has nothing in common with ramshackle empires of the past. The reason we have adopted our name is because we include in our membership nations that are not British. There are representatives in this Conference from the Empire of India and the colony of Malta.”

To many delegates the word “British” could scarcely be as acceptable as “imperial.” The term “British” and the talk of a “blood bond” could not be a strong reason for imperial unity to delegates such as Dr. Bartolo of Malta, Mr. de Lisser of Jamaica, Mr. Levi, a South African Dutchman, and Mr. Ollemans of Bloemfontein. In addition, there were representatives of more than two million French-speaking Canadians.

IV

Lord Athelstan was the principal Canadian host. He was at the first Conference as Sir Hugh Graham. He then struck everyone as remarkably retiring and unassuming. When the Glasgow University included him amongst the delegates on whom the honorary degree of LL.D. was conferred, he confided to me that he had doubts about accepting it, as he thought his educational attainments did not justify his carrying the designation of “doctor.” He feared he would feel that he was sailing under false colours. However, he was persuaded by his friends to take it. Few self-made men are troubled with excessive modesty, but he is essentially self-made. At fifteen years of age he was an office boy in the office of a newspaper, of which two years later he was manager. He was half owner of
the Montreal Star when he was nineteen years old and full owner at twenty-one. He was Chairman of the Canadian Press Committee.

He entertained the delegates at a brilliant banquet at Montreal. Many Canadian notabilities were there. Professor Leacock made a characteristically humorous speech. He was head of the Department of Political Economy at the McGill University, and he told the visitors what was before them:

“You are to be given dinners and luncheons all the way from here to Vancouver, to be shown waterfalls, factories and works of all kinds, and in the spirit of true British brotherhood you are going to stand for it. I form something of a mental picture of you delegates when you get to a town at the end of the trip and they say, ‘This is the principal factory of our town, we want you to see it.’ Some men break down in hysteria and say in a quavering voice, ‘Is that your principal factory really?’ Others go off in a flying rage and say, ‘By heaven, don't show me that!’ But you are come to eat these luncheons and look at these factories because that is the way we bind our British Empire together.”

The visitors certainly had hospitality showered on them during their stay of more than six weeks in Canada. Their headquarters were two luxurious trains, in which they travelled from place to place. Their thoughtful hosts arranged that the monotony of the journey was broken by numerous motor trips and days and nights spent in the wonderful hotels of the Dominion. They saw Canada from east to west, travelling back by a different route to the one they went.

On arrival in Canada, when contemplating the lengthy programme of hospitality and travelling, one of the delegates, with a sardonic sense of humour, remarked, “I wonder who amongst us will die in Canada from all the travelling and feasting prepared for us.”

The reply promptly came in a shocked voice, “No one.”

He quietly answered, “Surely it is contrary to the law of average, especially when so many of the delegates are old and some of them sickly, that they should all survive such lavish feasting.”

A doctor and nurse accompanied the delegates wherever they went to provide medical attention for them during the whole of their stay in Canada.

The delegate who made the gloomy prediction was much surprised when the tour ended and no one died. When asked to account for it, he replied that that was “the most phenomenal thing about a trip crowded with phenomena.”

* * * * *
At Grand Pré, in Acadia, Nova Scotia, Lady Burnham unveiled a statue to the heroine of Longfellow's poem “Evangeline,” a story founded on a painful occurrence. When early in the eighteenth century Nova Scotia was ceded to Britain by the French, and later when war again broke out between France and Britain, the Acadians were rightly or wrongly accused of assisting the French with provisions and ammunition. The British authorities banished them from their homes and dispersed them amongst British American Colonies far from their much-loved, beautiful land.

When the Blackfoot Indians were visited at their reservation near Gleichon, the head of the party, Lord Burnham, was invested with the honour of chieftainship, and received the name of “Old Sun.” He was solemnly garbed in Indian fashion, squaws danced, and there was an Indian and cowboy exhibition in which wild cattle were lassoed, infuriated steers ridden and bucking horses mounted. The Indians made a splendid showing—mounted, painted and in full war costumes—as they swept across the prairie.

At hotels we met a good many Americans who did not hesitate to claim that they had won the war. At Lord Athelstan's Montreal banquet also there were United States journalists who expressed this view in somewhat aggressive terms. Sir John Willison, The Times representative in Canada, interpreted the delegates' views accurately when in the course of a speech he referred to what Canada had done in the war, and said:

“We sent our best and some 60,000 of them are still over there. We acted as we did because there was nothing else to do. Nor have we ever claimed that we won the war. If a Canadian may say it, we received the world's respect and kept our own, and that is enough for a decent individual or a decent nation.”

The speech was lost probably on those for whom it was meant, but it gave Britishers satisfaction!

The Duke of Devonshire was Governor-General of Canada. The delegates to the first Conference had been his guests at luncheon at Chatsworth, and the members of the Canadian Conference were his guests at Rideau Hall.

V

It was in September and October, 1925, that the third Imperial Press Conference was held, and the venue was Melbourne. There were six of the delegates who had attended all three Conferences—namely, Lord Burnham, Sir Harry Brittain and Sir Emsley Carr from England, Mr. J. W. Dafoe from Canada, and Mr. Theodore Fink and myself from Australia.
Quite a number of the delegates had attended two of the Conferences. Lord Burnham, as Mr. Harry Lawson, was an active participant in the first Conference. His father, the first Lord Burnham, was President of the Committee that made the arrangements for the initial Conference, and on his death his son succeeded him in the Presidency of the Empire Press Union. The second Lord Burnham was the leader of the delegates who visited Canada, as he was also of the delegates who visited Australia, and in that capacity he was ideal, ever ready to say the right thing, and to the delegates courteous, considerate and affable. His charming wife, Lady Burnham, was as imbued as her husband with the desire to be of service to others, and was of great help to him in his work.

Amongst other delegates whose acquaintance it was a pleasure to renew were Sir Frank Newnes, son of the founder of *Tit-Bits*, Messrs. J. W. Dafoe of Winnipeg, C. F. Crandall of Montreal, J. R. Woods of Calgary, and Professor Bartolo of Malta.

* * * * *

Captain Anthony Eden, M.P., represented the *Yorkshire Post*, and he was accompanied by Mrs. Eden. It was but a year or two before that he had won the House of Commons seat for Warwick and Leamington. One of the Opposition candidates was a close relative, the socialist Countess of Warwick. Her son had married Eden's sister, but political differences did not interfere with family relationships, and the rival candidates were good friends even during the heat of the contest. When the poll was declared, Eden secured 16,337 votes, the Liberal, Mr. George Nichols, 11,134, and the Countess was at the bottom of the poll with only 4,015.

When the British Press delegates were passing through New Zealand they were taken to the heights of Mount Eden, and at Auckland Captain Eden appropriately responded to the toast of the visitors, and recalled the connection between his family name and the city. About three miles from his own home is the small town of West Auckland, from which Lord Auckland, from whom he is descended, took his name. The name had been bestowed on the city, but it is a case of the child having outgrown the parent.

In Melbourne Captain Eden, representing as he did a Yorkshire paper, pointed out that Yorkshire has a specially close connection with Australia. He added, “Captain Cook was a Yorkshireman; it was his genius and courage explored your shores. Herbert Sutcliffe, a Yorkshireman, it was whose batting explored your bowling. A connection based on such a dual foundation must endure.”
Captain Eden's speeches were marked by his keen desire to further imperial unity and Empire preferential trade. In his last speech in Australia he wisely said: “A population of 6,000,000 is surely no corollary of a White Australia policy. There must be a considerable and more rapid increase of population if Australia is to be permanently safe for democracy.”

When he returned to England Captain Eden published his delightful book about the tour, “Places in the Sun,” a copy of which he sent me. There is an introduction by Mr. Stanley Baldwin, and in it Captain Eden freely and frankly, but shrewdly, discusses Empire problems, including the plethora of Australian Parliaments, second chambers, centralisation, governors from England, the aborigines, markets, compulsory voting, American competition, railway gauges, and tropical Australia.

* * * * *

One of the brightest memories of the Conference was Mr. A. P. Herbert of *Punch*. He described himself as “representing one of the more serious weekly papers.” The essence of humour is surprise, and he thought that was why people laughed when they saw a joke in *Punch*.

Whenever he sought enlightenment on some bird or beast or flower he was invariably told, “Oh! that is a pest; it comes from England.”

The visitors were taken round Canberra, then in course of erection. Mr. Herbert remarked that at Carthage visitors were shown the ruins of the historic buildings of a city which existed in remote times, but at Canberra they had the unique experience of going round a series of historic buildings that never had existed.

Tattersall's sweep in Tasmania he regarded as encouraging the three cardinal virtues—faith, hope and, in many cases, charity.

Matrimony is said to be a gamble, but in his opinion it is not; the gambler always has a chance.

Mr. Herbert's estimate of news values he indicated by the remark, “There is more joy in Fleet Street over one lover who cuts his sweetheart's throat than over nine hundred and ninety-nine just men who live happily ever after.”

He added, “The Psalmist said: ‘Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.’ In Fleet Street they knew very well that joy might last a night, but a murder would last a fortnight. The best news story was bad news.”
The experience of the delegates to the third Conference in Australia was somewhat similar to that of the delegates to the second Conference in Canada. A couple of months were spent travelling from north to south of the continent, and from the far-famed Sydney Harbour in the East to the picturesque blue reaches of the Swan river in Western Australia. They were brought through the pastoral areas to view the extent of the wool and stock raising industries, to the agricultural districts to learn about wheat production; to see silver-mining at Broken Hill, coal-mining at Newcastle and gold production at Kalgoorlie; to inspect dairy farms and apple orchards, vineyards and vast city factories. They could view for themselves the wonderful resources of the continent and its immense empty spaces crying aloud for population. But what was even more useful from the Empire viewpoint was the close contact of the delegates with each other and the mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas of the Empire with its multifarious problems.
Chapter XV Empire Parliaments and World Parliaments

An International Parliamentary Conference—Thirty countries represented—Czecho-Slovakia—Prague's past—A language strike—Reception by President Masaryk—Dr. Benes—World's most famous shoemaker.

I

THE Empire Press Union, the chief outcome of the first Imperial Press Conference, has assisted newspapers of the Empire in the matter of cable and wireless services and in other direct advantages. But the Union has done more. It has tended towards a better understanding amongst those who do much to create and guide public opinion and thus further Empire union.

A similar end has been attained by the Empire Parliamentary Association, which has brought into closer touch the numerous legislative bodies that govern throughout the Empire. Parliament Houses all over the world possess many of the amenities of clubs, and the Association brought about reciprocity amongst those of the Empire, so that all members of Parliaments of the Empire have the *entrée* to certain privileges in the various Empire Parliament Houses. The parent branch has offices and club rooms in Westminster Hall, where Sir Howard d'Egville and his courteous and efficient staff are ever ready to greet and entertain visiting Empire parliamentarians and afford them opportunities for meeting leading British statesmen. Some thirty Empire Houses of Parliament are thus united in a non-party organisation. The Association is also the medium through which representatives of Empire Parliaments assemble at Conferences and discuss questions of common concern. These Conferences are not official, but for the exchange of ideas on such matters as migration, defence and preferential trade. There have been several Empire Parliamentary Conferences in various Empire centres. One of their advantages is that they include not only representatives of Governments, but also of the Opposition.

As a member of the Western Australian Parliament I was specially interested in the Association, and helped to form the Western Australian branch. When in 1926 I became president of the Legislative Council I automatically became senior president of the branch. A few months after I was appointed it was my duty to preside in the Parliament House of
Western Australia over a Conference of representatives of Empire Parliamentary Association branches. No less than sixteen Empire Legislative Chambers were represented. The British delegation was particularly strong. It included Lord Salisbury, the late Arthur Henderson, A. V. Alexander, J. I. Macpherson, Sir Evelyn Cecil and Dr. Drummond Shields.

The impression that was made throughout Australia by Lord Salisbury, the leader of the Empire delegates, was decidedly favourable. He was patient, tolerant towards the views of others, avoided making long speeches, and knew when to intervene in debates and to say the right thing in the right way.

The subjects discussed were chiefly land settlement and migration. These subjects are associated with many complex problems, but on their solution largely depends Australia's future, for the peopling of our vacant spaces is all-important. If the White Australia policy is to be preserved, if the great empty spaces of the continent are to be kept for Europeans, it is inevitable that the present garrison must be strengthened. This was fully recognised at the Conference.

Since then the world depression created severe unemployment in Australia. Immigration was stopped. Sooner or later it must be resumed in the interests of national safety—and the sooner the better.

*         *         *         *         *

The Empire Parliamentary Association does not confine its activities to Empire Conferences. It goes further, and, through the medium of the parent branch in London, helps towards linking up the parliaments of the world in a better understanding of world problems.

In 1931, whilst visiting London, I was appointed by cablegram from Australia to represent both the Commonwealth and Western Australian branches at the seventeenth plenary session of the International Parliamentary Commercial Conference, which has its headquarters at Brussels, but holds sessions at different European capitals. The seventeenth session was held at Prague. The only other Australian representative was Mr. E. L. Kiernan, M.L.C., Assistant Chief Secretary and Minister of Sustenance, specially charged with the relief of the unemployed in the Labour Cabinet of Victoria.

Some thirty countries were represented, including such remote nations as Japan, Afghanistan and various South American Republics. France, Germany and Poland sent exceptionally able and prominent statesmen. Great Britain had as delegates about a dozen members of the House of
Commons, who were specially interested in commercial affairs. Their leader was the late Sir John Sandeman Allen, who was connected closely with a variety of large industrial concerns.

It was a parliament of parliaments; a gathering of influential men in the world's parliaments meeting together for the exchange of ideas, especially on economic and commercial subjects. These gatherings are viewed, especially in foreign countries, as most important and possessed of far-reaching influence. The idea originated in Belgium, and the first Conference was held in June, 1914, at Brussels under the patronage of the King and Government of Belgium. Delegates were present at that Conference from all the Great Powers. Since then sessions have been held in almost every European country.

The seventeenth session was held whilst the world's depression was at its worst. The main subjects discussed were: (a) The economic crisis, its cause and possible remedies; (b) the circulation of capital and distribution of gold; (c) the improvement of transport facilities; (d) international broadcasting; (e) the agricultural crisis. These matters were discussed at length. The resolutions that were passed were the result of compromise. They were often vague and sometimes almost meaningless, but the principal value of the Conference was that it helped towards a better understanding of national viewpoints. This was specially noticeable as discussions on delicate subjects now and again became quite frank. As Sir Sandeman Allen said at the close, “The most striking impression the British delegates carried away was the increasing desire of the nations represented to work together and appreciate one another's aims.”

II

When I was asked to go to the Conference I confess that my knowledge of Czecho-Slovakia was limited. I was aware that it was one of the Republics that came into existence after the Great War and that it was carved out of the old Austrian-Hungarian Empire. I knew it on the map as a long, narrow country running east and west for some six hundred and fifty miles in Central Europe. At its widest part the breadth is one hundred and eighty miles, whilst it narrows in places to no more than forty miles. It has Germany and Poland on its northern boundaries, and Austria, Hungary and Roumania on its southern. Reference books that I consulted told me that the population was 14,750,000, of whom 8,760,000 were Czechs and Slovaks, representing, as both peoples do, a Western migration of the Slavonic race. Amongst the rest of the population there were 3,100,000 Germans and 750,000 Magyars.
After I had spent some weeks in May and June in Czecho-Slovakia and meeting many of the residents, including most of its leading men, it did not follow that I knew much about the country, but I got some vivid impressions. These impressions are of a fertile, picturesque country; a country of hospitable people; a country with extensive supplies of coal and iron, of valuable mineral wealth and thermal springs; a country thirty-three per cent. forest and possessed of enormous timber resources; a country of factories and hydro-electric stations; a country of considerable industrial activity and hard-working inhabitants. Furthermore, my impressions are associated with many fine cities, historic buildings, wonderful churches, splendid palaces and picturesque castles. The impressions also include rural scenery of great beauty—primeval woods, pine-clad and snow-topped mountains, romantic-looking valleys, noble rivers and a healthy-looking, robust peasantry wearing brilliantly coloured native costumes. Yet a visitor hears much that is disturbing, much that indicates that racial animosities, though slumbering, are still alive, that there is powder about, and any day the flames of war may break out despite the League of Nations.

I travelled with the delegation from the Imperial Parliament, and the route followed was via Dover to Ostend and so through Brussels to Prague. No one can travel by rail or road through Belgium, Germany and Central Europe and not be impressed by the numerous evidences of intense cultivation in the agricultural areas and by the patient industry of the people. No land is wasted by fences, walls or ditches; stock is herded, and even each flock of geese is watched carefully, usually by a girl. Men and women with bent backs toiling in the fields are notable features of the landscape. A discussion arose amidst our party as to whether the women working in the open air with their husbands and brothers were not better off and happier than girls working in the factories of crowded cities.

Prague, the capital of Czecho-Slovakia, is truly beautiful. Like Rome, it is built on seven hills. Passing through it is a wide and noble river, the Moldau. There are several wooded islands in the river. It is spanned by handsome bridges. The city has numerous historic and, in an architectural sense, highly attractive buildings. The skyline is crowded with spires, domes and turrets, whilst towering above all is the royal palace and the cathedral.

A resident of Prague intensely interested in antiquarian lore showed me round the city. He told me that it was founded in 754 by a semi-mythical duchess, Libusa, who took a peasant, Premysl, for her husband. They established the first ruling dynasty of Bohemia. There was also much that he had to say about the good King Wenceslas, who ruled about one thousand years ago. He is to Bohemian history what King Alfred is to
English. The good king was ill-rewarded in this life, for I was shown the door of a chapel with a great sanctuary knocker to which he clung when he was murdered by his wicked brother. The murderer succeeded to the throne, and, though he earned the title of Boleslav the Cruel, reigned for nearly forty years.

The famous Charles Bridge, which was built some six hundred years ago, is guarded at the ends by magnificent towers. More than once the structure has been the scene of bloody contests. We were told that the waters below were red with blood in the fierce fighting for its possession in 1744, when the Prussians were driven out of the city.

The buttresses of the bridge are adorned with thirty statues and groups, chiefly of saints. Prominence is given to the patron saint of Bohemia, John of Neponic, who in 1383 was flung into the Moldau below the bridge. My guide asserted that until his body was taken out of the water five brilliant stars shone above where it lay.

One statue was pointed out of a man who in his day was popular, but a generation or so after it was erected a party opposed to his views coming into power, the figure was converted into a representation of Saint John of Neponic by means of a few alterations and the addition of the saint's characteristic halo of five stars.

All visitors are attracted by a beautiful, graceful group of statuary about the centre of the bridge. The leading figure is that of Christ on the Cross. On it are inscriptions in Hebrew which we were informed testify to the truth of Christianity. It is known as “The Jew's Calvary,” and it was erected in 1606 out of a fine levied on a Jew for reviling the cross. He was sentenced to death, but he was a wealthy man and was offered his life if he paid a fine sufficient to erect a group of statuary representative of the death of our Lord. Subsequently, when the statue was completed out of the fine that was paid, the unfortunate man was so distressed at the sight of it that he threw himself over the bridge and was drowned.

In 1618 ministers who gave unpopular advice to the king were dealt with in a drastic way. To-day they would be thrown out of office. Then they were thrown out of a window of their office. A window a considerable height from the ground from which two imperial chancellors were thrown that year was pointed out to me. The event was of far-reaching importance to Europe. It occasioned the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War.

I was also shown a curious feature of Prague. It is a picturesque fifteenth-century tower which has a huge clock that strikes the hours, one to twenty-four. There are several quaint figures, including the Twelve Apostles. All of these figures move when the clock strikes, and one of them, the gruesome figure of a skeleton, pulls a rope for each strike.
We were told with pride that the University of Prague, founded in 1348, is one of the oldest in Europe. The city itself is famous for its sieges and battles. It was taken by the Austrians in 1620, by the Swedes in 1648, by the French in 1741, by the Prussians in 1744 and by the French in 1806. It was the scene of an insurrection in 1848, and it was there in 1879 a treaty of peace was signed between Austria and Prussia. All these and numbers of other events have left their marks on Prague.

* * * * *

We were not long in Prague before we discovered that there was something like a language strike on. Most of the Czechs can speak German, but they refuse to speak it. It seems that in pre-war days endeavours were made to Germanise the country. The German language was encouraged, and with success. Now that the German power has been broken and the country is a republic, the Government does what it can to restore the Czech language and discourage the use of German. Hence many Czechs when addressed in German pretend they cannot speak it. To them their own language is the symbol of nationality. Unfortunately, the Czech language is one of the most difficult of European tongues to understand.

It may be mentioned that when it was to the advantage of the Czechs to speak German—for example, when members of our party were shopping and spoke in German—it was amazing how readily a knowledge of the language came to those who were behind the counter.

Whilst the country has great advantages it has one disadvantage. It has no seaport, though it has rivers that give access to the sea. Shakespeare, in “The Winter's Tale,” gives Bohemia a seaport, and Ben Jonson severely criticises him for the incorrectness of his geography. When we mentioned this to Prague residents they said that during the thirteenth century the kingdom of Bohemia included provinces on the coast of the Adriatic Sea.

Since its establishment as a republic, the country has advanced in industrial activity and in prosperity as well as in population. It is not surprising that that should occur. The Peace Treaty gave to Czecho-Slovakia about eighty per cent. of the industry of the former Austrian Empire. In addition, the indebtedness of Czecho-Slovakia is not great. Though in foodstuffs the country is not self-supporting, it is well farmed. It has extensive engineering and iron works. The manufacture of chemicals is a big industry. Pilsner beer goes to every part of the world. Both in machinery and modern equipment, the factories are as efficient as any in Europe. Radium, gold, silver, iron and graphite are all mined, and there are valuable deposits of clay, kaolin and sand. Bohemian glass was known
throughout the world in the seventeenth century, and it is still an important industrial art. Next best known are the ceramic products, both fine porcelain and decorated folk pottery. Illiteracy is almost unknown; in fact the people have a passion for education, and workmen are industrious and highly skilled.

It is difficult to feel that the boundaries are other than artificial of a country containing several races speaking different languages, a country that was carved out of the ruins of a great empire. There must be generations of work ahead to bring the jarring elements together and build a homogeneous nation. Still, the impression conveyed to most of us was that in the short time the republic has been in existence wonders have been effected by those who have had charge of its affairs. We met most of the members of the Government, including the then President, Dr. Masaryk. He received us at the Palace of Prague, which was one of the homes of the Hapsburgs, and there was about the reception not less state and dignity than there would have been about a reception by King George at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle.

III

Dr. Masaryk is often spoken of as the actual creator of the Czecho-Slovakian Republic. One of the most remarkable men in the world to-day, his career may be described as truly dramatic, a career of striving and adventure. His father was a Slovak serf whose work was a combination of ostler and coachman; his wife was a cook. The father was quite uneducated, and when the boy was a few years old his mother taught him and her husband the rudiments of letters. At an early age young Masaryk conceived an intense desire for learning. He yearned to be a teacher, and loved books. He was apprenticed to a locksmith and then to a blacksmith, but through abject poverty and frequent hunger he struggled on, hoping that some day he would attain his ambition. Finally he broke away from his employment, was able to get to school, found his way into the University of Vienna, and later became a professor at the University of Prague. He entered Parliament, was leader of the Opposition, and endeavoured to unite hostile forces in opposition to German dominance. When war broke out he saw in it an opportunity to secure the political freedom of his country, and urged his followers not to fight for Germany and Austria, but against them. He had, of course, to quit the country, as the authorities regarded him as a traitor, and in his flight to Switzerland he narrowly escaped capture. He sought refuge in England, where he was appointed by the University of London to a professorship in the then new Slavonic Department of King's
College. He worked with Britain and her Allies during the war.

An army of over a hundred thousand Czechs fought with the Russians in the early part of the war, and later Czech armies fought on the Western Front against the Germans. When Czech prisoners were taken by the Allies an organisation controlled by Masaryk endeavoured to get them to fight with the French army. When Czecho-Slovakia was made a republic in 1918 he became its first President, and was later re-elected more than once. The constitution provides that no President who has been elected twice in succession can be elected for a third time, but this provision did not apply to the first President.

When we were presented to President Masaryk in the magnificent gold and white reception chamber known as the Spanish Hall at the Palace of Prague, we found him alert of mind and body. He is tall and graceful, was dressed in a perfectly fitting morning suit of the latest London fashion, and although over eighty years of age, yet he walked with the firm, springing step of a young man. He speaks half a dozen languages perfectly, and in the course of conversation with the two Australian delegates he said: “I have read much about your wonderful country. Just now you have your financial troubles; you are about to make efforts to honestly pay all you owe. You will, of course, be successful. Your difficulties are but inevitable incidents in the development of a new country.”

Dr. Masaryk married an American lady, who died some years ago, and English has been the language of his home.

He has an impressive and dignified personality. He is trusted and respected by all parties. The work he did in the formation of the new republic has been almost equalled by the wisdom with which he guided its infant steps. The question often arose: Who was to succeed him?

IV

A name commonly mentioned as that of his possible successor was Dr. Edward Benes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom the members of the Conference were brought into fairly close contact. He was born in Bohemia, and in pre-war days Benes, like Masaryk, was opposed to Austrian control. When war was declared he escaped into Switzerland, and from there he proceeded to Paris, where he worked in collaboration with Masaryk and the late General Stefanik for the victory of the Entente and the establishment of an independent Czecho-Slovak state. He was secretary of the central revolutionary group known as the Czecho-Slovak National Council, of which Masaryk was president. The two became close friends, and Benes, in his war memories, describes how they and those associated
with them carried on a surreptitious campaign of organisation and incitement by means of a secret society with underground correspondence, cipher words and fictitious names. Microscopic messages were carried in hollow teeth and the stems of pipes; in balls of yarn, knotted in dots and dashes; and by innocent-looking but actually deep-meaning advertisements in newspapers. Benes, like Masaryk, was a teacher. Benes was a professor at the Prague University, and when we met him in 1931 he was still a comparatively young man, being but forty-seven. He is low-sized, rapid in thought, and possessed of a keen sense of humour. His wife is a charming, handsome lady, who, we were told, spent most of the war years in prison. He was Minister for Foreign Affairs for many years after the formation of the republic, and was for a time Premier.

We also heard much whilst in Czecho-Slovakia about Bata, the shoemaker, who was described as having stitched mass production on to the uppers of feudalism. Since then he has been killed in an aeroplane accident, but no reference to Czecho-Slovakia, however short, should omit mention of him. He was called the “Wizard of the shoe industry,” the “Henry Ford of Europe,” and the “most glamorous figure in all post-war Europe.” This wonderful organiser and truly great man created a curious feudal community with an amazingly modern setting for his twelve thousand factory workers in the town, Zlin, where he was born and where his father and father's fathers for generations made shoes by hand. He was born in poverty of a long line of shoemakers. He made thousands of pairs of shoes with his own hands. One day, when he was sixteen years old, he persuaded his father to let him go to Prague, where he had never been, and take shoes with him to sell and get orders for others. He walked along the railway, sold all the shoes he had and got orders for others. Such was the beginning of the huge business he later controlled. He cut down the price of boots all over Europe, and in doing so succeeded in getting millions of people to wear a better class of boots than the home-made coverings formerly used. The conveyor system is used generally in his factory—that is, an endless horizontal belt or platform, moving ceaselessly and carrying a series of baskets containing a dozen pairs of shoes on which each worker in turn must perform his operation. When he was compelled to reduce wages he turned his great resources of credit to reduce the cost of living in Zlin by establishing a big department store adjoining the factory, where his employees can purchase anything they want from salt fish to perambulators. On upper floors are lunch rooms, cafeteria, kitchens and a movie talkie theatre, whilst outside, during lunch hour, a band is kept playing.

Bata's competitors in the shoe industry viewed him as a menace, but the
fact remains that he enabled millions in Central Europe to be better shod than ever they were before.
Chapter XVI International Parliamentary Conference at Rome

A brilliant opening—Mussolini—Goering—A touch of British humour—Speeches by Japanese—Fascism—Milan—The King of Italy—Reception by the Pope.

I

IN April, 1933, I was one of two delegates from Australia to attend the Conférence Parlementaire Internationale du Commerce which sat in Rome. It was the eighteenth conference. My Australian colleague was Senator Grant, a representative of Tasmania in the Federal Parliament.

The delegates to the Rome Conference numbered two hundred. A month before the meeting a difficulty arose. The eastern European States were annoyed at certain happenings in Rome, especially the suggested Four-Power Conference. Blame was placed on Italy, and they decided not to come to Rome. Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Yugo-Slavia were particularly offended. It required all the tact of M. Baie, the Secretary-General, assisted by the Belgian Ambassador and others at Rome, to bring about a conciliatory view. Ultimately, Yugo-Slavia and Rumania were mollified. They sent large delegations. Czecho-Slovakia also sent a delegation, but Poland reduced her delegation from fourteen to three. Once all the delegates met together this hostile spirit disappeared, for the time being at all events. The great tact and hospitality of the Italian hosts and the general spirit of friendliness, if not of confidence, had its effect. Yugo-Slavs and Rumanians showed special sympathy towards the Empire delegates.

The Imperial Parliament delegation consisted of twenty-two members of the British House of Commons. Two of them were lady members—namely, Mrs. Ida Copeland and Miss Irene Ward. Amongst the others were: Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, Mr. P. J. Hannon, Sir Percy Hurd, Sir Philip Dawson, Sir Kenyon Vaughan-Morgan, Mr. I. J. Albery, Mr. C. E. R. Brocklebank, Sir William Davison, Mr. H. W. Kerr, Mr. O. Lewis, Mr. A. T. Lennox-Boyd, Major Llewellyn, Mr. Geoffrey Nicholson, Sir Douglas Newton, Sir Assheton Pownall, Sir Samuel Roberts, Mr. J. Roland Robinson, and Major Sir Isidore Salmon. All the delegates from the British Empire paid their own travelling and hotel expenses. Colonel Crookshank was honorary secretary and Sir Stanley Johnson honorary treasurer. The chairman of the British delegation was the late Sir John Sandeman Allen.
He could speak French and German fluently, and was well acquainted with international European politics. It was a high tribute to his urbanity and ability that before the close of the Rome Conference he was unanimously elected president of the conseil général for the following two years in place of the late Baron Deschamps, who had held the office since the inception of the Conference in 1914.

The delegates came from the legislative bodies of twenty-seven countries. Japan sent two delegates, the Argentine three, Germany seven, Australia two, Austria four, Belgium eight, Spain four, Hungary eighteen, Turkey seven, and Venezuela three. France sent what was perhaps the strongest delegation. There were twenty-seven French delegates, most of them men of high repute as parliamentarians. The delegates from Italy were also numerous, and included many of Italy's best-known statesmen.

There was a brilliant scene on the occasion of the opening of the Conference on Wednesday, April 19. It was held at the Capitol, with Signor Mussolini presiding as honorary president of the Conference. The King of Italy was present, and all the Diplomatic Corps in gorgeous costumes. The British Ambassador sat on the right hand of His Majesty. There was a remarkable gathering of distinguished Italians, mostly in military and naval uniforms ablaze with decorations. Flags hung from the walls. The hall was furnished in red and gold, and the attendants were clothed to match—red coats, old gold knee-breeches, pink silk stockings, buckled shoes, powdered wigs, and lace for neck and wrists.

Special instructions as to dress were issued to the delegates before they left their homes. They were expected to wear tall hats and morning clothes. Mussolini, stern of face, was in morning dress. As president, he sat on a chair raised above the audience, whom he faced. The King sat in a lower position, facing Mussolini and with his back to the audience. His Majesty, with his entourage, arrived with Mussolini. The speeches were addressed to the King and the Duce—“Your Majesty and Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen.”

The proceedings were opened by a short speech by the Governor of Rome formally welcoming the delegates. Then Count Martino, president of the Italian Conference Committee and one of Italy's elder statesmen, spoke of the Conference as being preparatory to the World Economic Conference in London, and emphasised the necessity to settle political issues at the same time as economic issues.

* * * * *

Mussolini was the most arresting figure at the Conference. Behind him
stood a colossal statue of Caesar. Mussolini’s head, shoulders and body, both large and massive, are indicative of great strength. His high forehead, large nose and powerful jaws gave him the distinctive look of the old Roman of the times of the Caesars. His hair was growing grey, and though but fifty years of age, yet war sufferings and heavy responsibilities told their tale in his face, and he looked much older. The most remarkable thing about him was his eyes; they were round, and glared with most piercing penetration. They never lost that strange look.

When he arose he received a tremendous ovation from the Italians present. Not a glimmer of pleasure or satisfaction appeared in his face. On the contrary, he tried to suppress it, and seemed displeased at being delayed by the prolonged cheering from getting on with his speech. Clearly he wanted to go on with the work, but he had to resign himself to the inevitable and suppress his impatience.

The cheering had not stopped when he began reading his speech. He spoke rapidly and with no declamation.

I remembered a remark he had made years previously, “We have tamed parliamentarism.” He did more; he destroyed it.

I wondered what he would have to say to representatives of parliaments from all parts of the world.

He was diplomatic and carefully avoided jarring references.

He recalled the fact that it was the third International Parliamentary Conference held in Rome, and asserted that, in the course of the twenty years of the organisation's existence, it had shown its vitality and the efficiency of its functions by rendering real services in the field of international commerce.

Mussolini then plunged into the subjects on the agenda, briefly dealing with each in turn, pointing out difficulties and hinting rather than suggesting solutions. “The solution of the economic problems under discussion,” he said, “is conditioned by the achievement of a better political atmosphere, towards which all statesmen in every part of the world are now turning, and by the reaching of a profound comprehension of the problems and difficulties of others on the part of those men who guide the economic destinies of the various countries.” He concluded by declaring the Conference open “in the name of His Majesty the King.”

The chairman of each of five delegations—namely, Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan and Rumania —then spoke, in alphabetical order. French was the language of the Conference.
Hitler had just come into power in Germany. The sensational doings of his party filled the newspapers. Captain Goering, President of the Reichstag and Premier of Prussia, was the leader of the German delegation. His reputation was that he was the extremist of the Hitler party, a party that in the eyes of the world was itself far too extreme. Captain Goering was supposed to be more Hitler than Hitler himself. It was generally understood that a friendly understanding had been brought about between the Hitlerites and the Fascists and that Germany and Italy had come closer together in consequence.

There was a hush when Captain Goering rose.

He looked the youngest of the speakers—a soldierly man, erect with square shoulders, a set determined face, fair, with hair brushed upwards, and a decidedly German appearance. He spoke in German. The previous speeches were in Italian and had been read. Captain Goering spoke extempore and forcefully and as though he had something definite and important to say.

He made it clear that in his opinion the depression could not be dealt with properly until party politics as generally understood had been got rid of. He said that in the presence of great changes, and in view of threats by subversive forces in Europe, he was glad the Conference was meeting in the capital of such a well-disciplined nation. The forces of evil should first be suppressed, and therefore political action should precede economic action.
There was no doubt about the definiteness of Captain Goering's speech. There were no platitudes in it. Whatever else it was, it was bold, and it was unquestionably the most remarkable utterance of the whole Conference proceedings.

* * * * *

Sir John Sandeman Allen spoke in English. He was the only one who introduced a touch of humour into his remarks. He mentioned the problems of the Conference and the way their solution should be approached, adding, with a bright twinkle in his eyes, and turning to Mussolini and Goering, “on these lines even members of parliament may prove useful.”

A Japanese viscount delivered an address in Japanese. It occupied about half an hour. Everyone sat and wondered what it was all about. The King was a picture of patient resignation. Mussolini wore a look of amazement. Goering had an indignant frown. Finally the speaker finished. A sigh of relief went up, but another Japanese got up, and for twenty minutes gave us a translation in French of what the viscount had said.

It then appeared that the worthy Japanese had been all the time endeavouring to impress on us how strenuously Japan was striving to maintain peace in the Orient, especially in China and Manchuria.

* * * * *

Of the many banquets and other entertainments provided for the delegates in Rome, the most attractive was the dinner given to them and their ladies by Signor Mussolini at the Palazzo Venetizia, erected in 1455 for Pope Paul II., who was a Venetian. It was an immense gathering of men and women, most of them people of distinction.

The Duce was a perfect host—gracious and affable to all. His wife does not live in Rome, but prefers a quiet life in the country with her children, and is never seen at public functions. Mussolini sat between two charming ladies, one the wife of the British Ambassador and the other the wife of the Belgian Ambassador. They evidently interested him, and he looked pleased. Happily there were no speeches. When the host and his guests went to another room he went freely among them, and seemed desirous of meeting personally visitors from distant countries. His knowledge of English was extraordinarily good, considering that he had begun to learn it only two years previously. The delegates from Australia were presented to him. He talked freely with us. He asked me if it were my first visit to Italy. I told him that some forty years previously I had been there and that I had
visited it many times later. He inquired if I had seen many changes in it. I replied that there were many signs of improvement. Everything was altered for the better, and the Italy of to-day was a new Italy as compared with Italy as it was before the war. When I added that even in far-away Australia the people knew who was responsible for the improvement, his eyes sparkled, and he looked pleased.

Mussolini, as host, was a brighter Mussolini than the Mussolini of the Conference.

II

It was not the attitude of the élite of Italy towards Mussolini that impressed me most. It was the almost frantic enthusiasm of the crowds in the streets that was most significant. I saw thousands of men and women waiting in pouring rain outside a building where they knew him to be. They waited for hours. They must have been drenched, but still they waited. Finally, when he came to the balcony and saluted, there was a storm of cheers. There was a manifest desire amongst the crowd to show him how they admired and trusted him.

Several attempts have been made to murder him. Autocrats are ever in danger of assassination. I have heard it said that his life is constantly menaced, and that there are scores of men ready and eager to kill him. That may be, but, judging by what I saw, I would not give two pins for the life of any man in the crowded streets of Rome who attempted to take the life of the Duce.

I was singularly fortunate on my visit to Italy in renewing my acquaintance with Sir Philip Dawson, who represents West Lewisham in the House of Commons. I had travelled with him previously in Central Europe and was much impressed by his facility in conversing in various European languages. He can speak German, French and Italian as fluently as English, is well acquainted with many Continental statesman, and has a profound knowledge of the inside of European politics. He spent five years at school as a youth in Italy. Subsequently he practised as an electrical engineer in Milan. He is at present the leading member of a well-known firm of consulting engineers in London, and during recent years has been a constant visitor to Italy.

Sir Philip and I were close companions during our stay in Italy, for we were keen on seeing, not the Italy of official functions, but Italy as it is known to the people of Italy. We went about together over a great deal of the country. We frequented restaurants and cafés; we went to places rarely visited by foreigners; we travelled in popular conveyances and talked to all
kinds of people. We ate the food and drank the wine of the country. I realised that Italy is indeed the home of pasta, and nowhere else is it so well prepared. The countless strange but interesting dishes and insidious wines were not to me so impressive as the numberless reminders wherever one went in public or private of Mussolini.

It is not the statues and busts of him, it is not pictures of him in shop windows and private houses, it is not references to him in the Press, but it is the recently completed public works and those in progress, the industry of the people and the cleanliness of the cities, all of which are attributed to him. As one passes beautiful ancient buildings that are being freed of the shambles that choked them for centuries, the Italian tells you, “It is done by Mussolini.” Where old, insanitary dwellings have been taken down and roomy, well-ventilated, handsome workmen's homes have been erected in their place, an inquirer learns that it is the work of the Duce. When driving along the Appian Way, across the Campagna, skirting the Alban Hills and continuing parallel with the coast or along other ancient Roman roads, we are told that the reconstruction work and other improvements to be noticed have been the result of Mussolini's instructions.

We visited the ruins of the Colosseum built over 1,800 years ago, saw the circular tiers of seats rising to 160 feet to accommodate 50,000 spectators, inspected the arena where gladiators and wild beasts fought and where, when it was flooded, mimic, but not bloodless, naval battles were fought, and we were reminded of the ancient prophecy:

“While stands the Colosseum Rome shall stand,  
When falls the Colosseum Rome shall fall,  
And when Rome falls with it shall fall the world.”

Many years ago the building was preserved from falling into utter ruin by buttresses built against the sides, but it remained for Mussolini to complete the work of preservation and restoration. He had done much in that direction, and further work was in progress. The arena is sanctified by the blood of the early Christian martyrs. For centuries a large and beautiful cross erected in their memory stood in the middle of the arena, but it was removed in modern times. It was replaced by him in 1926.

For twenty centuries two ships of the Roman Emperor, Caligula, lay at the bottom of the lake of Nemi. The draining of the lake and the uncovering of the vessels was a difficult and stupendous work, but it was accomplished. Italians speak of the feat with pride, and tell visitors that it was Mussolini's idea and that it was he who saw that it was realised.

For generations mysterious, corrupt terrorist secret societies existed in
Italy. There was the notorious Mala Vita with its various grades and extensive ramifications. The Camorra, who held sway in Naples, were plunderers and batters exacting money from shopkeepers. Perhaps the worst of these organisations was the Mafia in Sicily, with its members pledged to protect each other when charged with crime and to exact vengeance for any punishment inflicted. The Mafia even extended its operations to America, with serious consequences. About the end of the last century the society murdered the chief of police at New Orleans. This so angered the public that a mob broke into the jail and shot or hanged several Italians who were accused of committing the crime. Diplomatic relations between Italy and the United States were broken off, and not restored until the United States paid 25,000 dollars for the benefit of the heirs of the lynched Italians. When Mussolini came into power the Mafia still created fear and insecurity in Sicily. Despite threats against him, he took severe measures. Men were executed, but he effectually stamped out the evil. There is no longer any dread of the Mafia. I was told the society has ceased to exist.

Vast areas that were allowed to become mere useless swamps, but are now smiling farms, were pointed out as the reclamation work of Mussolini. Since he came into power 6,000,000 acres of land had been drained. For 250 days of the year 50,000 Italian workmen were employed on drainage works. Statistics say that in 1922 the production of wheat was just under 44,000,000 quintals, but in a few years the production amounted to 73,150,000 quintals. Italians asserted that the large reduction in the quantity of cereals imported into Italy during the previous ten years was due to the encouragement and assistance given by Mussolini to agriculturists.

On entering Italy by train I could not but notice the brilliant uniforms of men at railway stations. There were Carabinieri, a kind of police wearing blue swallow-tailed coats, blue trousers with a red strip down each leg, three-cornered hats and armed with swords and revolvers. They were invariably to be seen in pairs. The railway officials also wore smart well-fitting uniforms. On each railway station there were two or more members of the Fascist organisation. Dressed in serviceable black shirts, they looked almost drab beside the gorgeousness of the other uniformed men, but it was clear to anyone that it was the Fascists who were of real importance. They saw that the railway officials did their work promptly and efficiently. They stood on one side. They only interfered when some difficulty arose.

A widely circulated official Fascist publication, *L’Italia Fascista in Cammino*, states: “Under the Fascist régime, the railway staff works 50 per cent. harder, the expenses for damages, etc., of goods have decreased from
7.31 per cent. to 0.12 per cent.”

It may be mentioned that hydro-electric power development has taken place on an immense scale, and the electric locomotive operates on the whole railway system of Middle and Northern Italy. The hydro-electric power of the Italian electric stations in 1922 was 1,300,000 kw., and ten years later it was 4,300,000 kw.

Mussolini, referring to the work of the last ten years, says: “Achievements have been attained not only in the field of material activities, but also, much deeper, in that of spiritual activities. A great transformation brought about in things is useful and interesting, but the supreme object of the Fascist revolution is the change in the temperament, in the character, in the intellectual outlook of the Italian people.”

That the people of Italy have been raised in their own self-respect and have become more industrious is commonly commented on by those acquainted with the Italy of ten or twelve years ago and the Italy of to-day. But the Italian citizens of the future are also of deep concern. There is an organisation similar to our Boy Scouts known as the Balilla. They wear black shirts with trimmings of white and greenish-grey breeches. In it boys between the ages of eight and fourteen are enrolled with the approbation of their parents. There is a senior body called Advance Guards into which they pass to continue their physical and moral training between the ages of from fourteen to eighteen, when they go into the Fascist militia. When in Italy I saw at the Forum Mussolini a wonderful display of this organisation of Italian youth. We quite understood that, as Lord Rennell, who is an authority on present-day Italy, has said, this organisation “is producing a new type of youth, smart in appearance, eager for instruction and inspired by ideals of manliness, comradeship and duty.”
When in Rome I often passed the doors of what purported to be an exhibition showing the cause, beginning, growth and achievements of the Fascist movement. There was all day a stream of people passing in and out. That aroused my curiosity. One morning I paid a lira, the entrance money, and pushed my way in. The exhibition was packed almost to suffocation. It was in many ways a most remarkable exhibition. The story of the various phases of Fascism was shown in a variety of rooms that were numbered in proper order. In the first there was the murder of the Archduke in Serajevo in 1914, then came the Great War, next Italy's entrance into it, afterwards features of Italy's share in the struggle; next the Armistice and Treaty of Versailles. After that a state of chaos in Italy due to strikes and other troubles was represented; factories were shown as seized and taken over by workers in 1920; flourishing industries were ruined; next Mussolini and some comrades were illustrated as founding the Fascisti movement to
counteract Bolshevism and also against the inactivity of post-war Italian statesmen. The growth of Fascism was shown and the historic march of the Fascists on Rome on October 24, 1922, and a fortnight later the Assembly of Fascists at Naples to salute the King of Italy.

In one of the rooms of the exhibition there was a map of the world showing that wherever Italians lived in any numbers branches of the Fascist organisation existed.

Attractive as the Fascist exhibition was, the most impressive of all was the last hall to be entered—the Chamber of the Martyrs, the Fascists who died in the cause. As it was approached silence was requested. The chamber was circular, very dark; the only light was from a few shaded lamps. The plaintive music of “The Fascists' Hymn” could be faintly heard. It seemed to come from the unknown. A single blackshirt stood to attention in the centre. From the wall could be dimly seen the flags of the various Fascist regiments. There was a huge black cross with the words across the arms, “Per la patria, Immortale!” Most impressive of all, against the black of the sides of the building, were the words in several rows round the hall standing out in white and repeated hundreds of times, “Presente! Presente! Presente!” indicating that the dead were announcing their presence there. It was difficult to be in the chamber and not to feel the presence of the dead.

Fascists boast that in the Fascist revolution the death-roll amongst supporters and opponents was small in comparison with other great revolutions. This is confirmed by Mr. James Strachey Barnes, an Englishman, who lives in Rome and has spent much of his life in Italy. In his book, “The Universal Aspects of Fascism,” he says the total death-roll of the revolution is little more than 4,000, and of these 2,000 were incurred by the revolutionaries themselves. Compare these figures with those of the Russian and French Revolutions! According to official figures issued by the Moscow Government, there were over 1,800,000 persons executed between 1918 and 1923.

Several times I went to St. Peter's, that colossal church which, as has been truly said, cannot be entered without a feeling of awe. The church is the work of many men of genius, the greatest of whom, Michael Angelo, then in his seventy-second year, when asked by Pope Paul the Third to complete it, replied he would do it for the love of God, the Blessed Virgin and St. Peter. The last time I was there I was admiring the Stuart monuments. There is one of Maria Sobieski, wife of Prince James Edward. Opposite it there is a truly beautiful memorial by Canova, erected at the expense of George the Fourth to the memory of James the Third, as he is called, and to his sons Prince Charles Edward and Prince Henry, Cardinal York. I was accompanied by an Italian priest, a gentleman of infinite
charm and great historical lore, who spoke English excellently and whose invitation to go round St. Peter's with him I had readily accepted, for each visit to the church reveals new beauties and wonders. A stranger who was standing near, evidently not an Italian, remarked to the priest by way of an almost irreverent jest, “I don't see a memorial to Mussolini here.” “Perhaps even that may come in time?” was the quiet and, to me, surprising answer of the priest.

Many declare that the greatest of all the achievements of the Duce was the Treaty of the Lateran, which he signed with the representatives of His Holiness. The signing was followed by a visit of the King of Italy to the Pontiff. It definitely settled the Roman question, which had been a disturbing factor in Italian politics for some sixty years. It meant that the Pope was no longer the prisoner of the Vatican. By it he was recognised as an independent sovereign, and the Vatican over which he rules as an independent state. Religious and financial differences were also reconciled. Canon law, so far as it applies to marriage, was put into force throughout the whole of Italy. The Vatican received over £8,000,000 in cash and nearly £11,000,000 in five per cent. bonds as compensation for the losses sustained in 1870.

Perhaps the priest was right. A monument may be seen yet even in St. Peter's to the man who restored sovereign rights to the Pope.

Under the reforms of the Fascists an entirely new form of government has been built up. The Senate was retained and the Chamber of Deputies reformed. The national councils and certain other bodies which are nominated, not elected, choose about a thousand names. The Fascist Grand Council selects four hundred from these, or, if it wishes, goes outside for other names. The four hundred thus selected are submitted to the electors en bloc for acceptance or rejection as a whole. The electors can say “Yes” or “No.” If they say “Yes” they are elected, but if they say “No,” another list will be presented to them. The list roughly consists of equal representation of capital and labour. Parliament is supposed to be a gathering of technical advisers or, in other words, experts on industrial and financial matters and, indeed, all the problems of legislation and administration. The idea is “government by the fit.”

IV

So far as I am aware none of the twenty-three members of the British House of Commons who represented the Imperial Parliament at the International Parliamentary Conference in Rome believe that Fascism is needed or, if tried, would succeed in Great Britain or in any British
community. Mussolini himself has declared that it is only justifiable in special circumstances. He has said that it thrives best “in the atmosphere where the need for its development is most urgent.” Most of the visiting parliamentarians knew Italy well both before and since the establishment of Fascism. There was not one of them whom I spoke to who was not enthusiastic about the improvement that had been effected in the conditions existing generally in Italy.

Soon after the return of the British parliamentary delegates to London, a letter was published in *The Times* signed by Sir Philip Dawson and Mr. P. J. Hannan, an Irishman born in Castlebar, who represents a division of Birmingham in the House of Commons. The letter described the transformation in the social and economic conditions of Italy during the ten years of Fascism. They both have known Italy before and since Fascism was established. They wrote of their visit:

“We found evidence of triumphant prosperity everywhere. The miserable mendicant who invaded town and country in pre-Fascist days has completely disappeared. Orderly cleanliness is the outstanding quality of town and country alike. The homes of the peasant population, scattered over intensely cultivated areas with their uniformity of colour and design, indicate the development of homely comfort and steadily advancing prosperity. Every patch of available land we saw was in process of cultivation or crop raising, and the industry of the rural population was apparent everywhere. New roads and old roads reconstructed will compare favourably with the finest highway of any country in Europe. . . . The physical and intellectual improvement of the mass of the people is phenomenal. It is part of the national policy to afford facilities for physical and educational training for the workers, which is extending its beneficial influence upon the character of the people from day to day. The organisation of youth is truly remarkable, and we witnessed at the great demonstration to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of Rome an array of organised boyhood and early manhood which could not be presented by any other country in the world. Italy affords an amazing example of the genius of constructive statesmanship.”

Many books—mostly biassed exaggerations of fact—have been written for and against Fascism in Italy. Professor Salvemini's “The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy” goes to as absurd an extreme in one direction as “Mostra Della Rivoluzione Fascista” does in the other. Reforms can rarely be brought about, even simple reforms in legislation, without some individuals being inconvenienced and frequently suffering hardship. During the early years of Fascism deeds were done by its supporters and its opponents that must be condemned. Excesses were undoubtedly committed and reprisals followed. Literally, thousands of Fascists in the early years of Fascism were imprisoned by the Fascist authorities for committing excesses. Following on two successive attempts on Mussolini's life in
1926, excesses occurred that resulted in the imprisonment of hundreds of Fascists, and hundreds of others were expelled from the ranks of the party. In fact, Mussolini himself took over the control of the Ministry of the Interior in order that his prestige and authority might be exercised to preserve order and enforce discipline.

Opponents of Fascism declare that Fascists destroyed liberty. The Fascists declare that they prevented the abuse of liberty, that they put an end to corruption, and that all they have done has been in the interests of the people. Prominent Fascists consider that it was the state of political affairs existing in Italy after the war that produced Fascism. No such conditions exist or have existed in Britain. Such is the opinion also of Mr. Winston Churchill, who said to the Fascists: “If I had been an Italian I am sure I should have been with you from the beginning to the end of your victorious struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism.”

In Italy Fascists thought the motto of revolutionary France, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” was not producing satisfactory results, so they substituted “Responsibility, Hierarchy, and Discipline.” Fascism is about a dozen years in power in Italy. Some say it is a mere temporary form of government created to deal with a great national crisis. Fascists believe that it will endure and be permanent. Time alone will prove which prediction is correct.

V

The delegates were invited to Milan. At a luncheon at Cernobbis on the banks of Lake Como, the British delegations invited me to respond on their behalf. My friend, Sir Philip Dawson, suggested that I should address the gathering in Italian. Other delegates spoke in the language of their own countries, and he thought it would be interesting for a delegate from Australia to reply in Italian. I pointed out that, as he well knew, there was a slight difficulty about it—I had no knowledge of Italian. He then suggested that I could conclude my remarks in it and that he would give me half a dozen sentences which I could read. He wrote them out, dividing them into syllables to ensure correct pronunciation.

Having spoken about Australia and the relationship between different parts of the Empire, I added: “The Empire Parliaments carry on their work under the sheltering folds of one flag. Under that flag we have grown from tottering infancy to what we are to-day. Britain has built up a Commonwealth of nations bound together by feelings of mutual trust and for purposes of mutual advantage and mutual protection. The objective of international parliamentary conferences should be to build up a similar
understanding amongst the countries of the world in furtherance of peace and civilisation.” I then went on to say I would conclude in “their own beautiful language.” I then read in Italian clearly and carefully so that everyone could hear distinctly an expression of the thanks of the British delegates to various people and institutions. I added that we had greatly enjoyed our visit to Italy, spoke of the Conference and its work, and on behalf of the British delegates “wished prosperity and happiness to the great and glorious people of Italy.” My remarks in English had been received in respectful silence. They were not understood, but what I said in Italian was evidently appreciated. It was punctuated by many rounds of loud applause.

After the luncheon the chairman sought me out and spoke to me volubly in Italian, congratulating me on my excellent command of the language of his country, the choiceness of my diction and my correct accent! Fortunately my friend, Sir Philip Dawson, was with me to tell me what he was talking about.

VI

The Conference delegates were received by the King of Italy with great formality in the Quirinal Palace, the residence of the Kings of Italy since 1870. In the piazza, in front, are a couple of magnificent groups of statues—two youths leading a restive horse—attributed to Phidias and Praxiteles. A fountain plays into a basin of Egyptian granite. The Quirinal Palace is many centuries old, and at one time the Popes spent some part of the year in it. On the grand staircase there is a fresco representing Christ the Redeemer, remarkable for the singularly poignant expression of Christ as the Man of Sorrows.

The reception took place in a vast hall beautifully coloured in pink, gold and grey, with a wonderful painted ceiling; the attendants were arrayed in the royal colours, whilst the corridors and ante-chambers were lined with soldiers in gorgeous uniforms.

The King was probably the shortest man present, but he was affable, and when he spoke he was impressive. His conversation indicated mental alertness. He also showed himself to be very well informed, highly intellectual, interested in what he was told and anxious to exchange ideas. He was dressed in the grey-blue military uniform of an Italian general. The delegations were presented in alphabetical order, and the King spent some time with each delegation, speaking to most of them in their own language. The first on the list was Afghanistan, represented by two young men, well groomed and in perfectly fitting morning dress, with whom the King
conversed in French.

His Majesty spent quite a time with the British Empire delegation, talking English freely. When he met the two lady members of the House of Commons he was evidently much interested, and inquired how many women were members of the House of Commons and the other Parliaments of the Empire.

* * * * *

Before leaving London all the British delegates had met in the House of Commons to discuss the Conference agenda and other matters. A unanimous desire was expressed that they should, if possible, secure an audience with the Pope. Various difficulties were experienced. Hopes of success had been abandoned almost, when one morning in Rome a message was received that His Holiness had complied with the request of the British delegates and their wives, and would receive them at six o'clock that afternoon. The matter had been arranged through the influence of Sir Robert Clive, British Minister to the Vatican. The party presented, including ladies, numbered thirty-five, and but two of them were Roman Catholics. The men were required to wear full evening dress with white ties and white waistcoats, whilst the ladies were in black from their necks to their ankles, with black mantillas covering their heads.

At the Vatican we were met by picturesque Swiss guards, with halberts and bright red and gold uniforms. Then we were brought up a wide imposing staircase, through lofty rooms, with decorated ceilings, and finally we reached a small audience chamber, round which the delegates were ranged. Presently His Holiness entered, a simple figure in white—white hair, white cape and white soutane. A crucifix was hanging by a chain from his neck, and his shoes were red. His face was kind and benevolent. His whole appearance suggested calm, unconscious dignity. There was a complete absence of ostentation. He bore his age well, and it was difficult to believe that he was seventy-six.

His Holiness went round the group, gave his hand to each of them and then spoke to them collectively in French, saying that he welcomed them, and was pleased that they had expressed a wish to come and see him. He hoped their efforts would always be directed towards the promotion of the peace and well-being of the peoples of the world, and gave them all his blessing, blessing their countries, their homes, their families and all whom they held dear. Then, bidding them farewell, His Holiness slowly withdrew.
Chapter XVII In London for the Jubilee

The St. Paul's and Westminster Hall ceremonies—His Majesty King George—Speeches and impressions—Migration to Australia—An immigrant's chances—Evils of Government aid.

I

DURING 1933, 1934 and 1935 I visited Europe. I spent in England four or five months of spring and early summer of each of those years. The Western Australian Parliament ordinarily sits from the end of July until a week or two before Christmas. My absence did not interfere with my work as President of the Legislative Council, and I was able whilst in Europe to render public service to Australia in a variety of ways, including attendance in a representative capacity at two International Parliamentary Conferences.

The hospitality of English people is unbounded, more especially towards visitors from the Dominions. Each of the three visits was in a private and not an official capacity, but notwithstanding I was overwhelmed with invitations to public and semi-public luncheons, banquets, receptions and such-like gatherings. As a member of the Empire Parliamentary Association I made much use of my entrée to the Imperial Parliament and had opportunities of hearing numerous debates in both Houses. I got into touch and formed friendships with various political leaders.

Hospitality was not merely public. The Englishman is perhaps at his best in his own home. There were invitations to town houses and for week-end visits to the country houses. English hosts and hostesses are simple and unostentatious. In a subtle, perhaps unconscious, way they create the impression in the minds of their guests that they are to make themselves at home and do just what they like, and that by doing so they are giving pleasure to those whose guests they are.

* * * * *

The jubilee celebrations of 1935 could not fail to produce an indelible impression on anyone in London at that time. I was able to attend the State functions. I greatly appreciated the privileges extended to me, but, remarkable and imposing as they were, what to me was even far more significant was the frantic enthusiasm of the crowds in the streets. Rich and poor, old and young, strove with genuine earnestness to show by every
means in their power their devotion and loyalty to the Royal Family. No ruler in the world could have a greater popular demonstration in his favour than the late King as he drove through the streets, not on one day alone, but whilst the celebrations lasted.

The variety and brilliancy of the uniforms at the thanksgiving service in St. Paul's produced a gorgeous effect, especially where here and there shafts of brilliant sunlight illumined the scene. King George and Queen Mary and the Royal Family, foreign potentates, Indian princes and ambassadors all brilliantly garbed, the bishops and judges in their robes, together with the political, naval, military and official leaders of the Empire, constituted a truly wonderful gathering of notabilities. But splendid as was the scene at St. Paul's on Monday, even still more impressive was the simple dignity of Thursday's ceremony when Parliament presented addresses to the King in Westminster Hall, where as His Majesty said, “Beneath these rafters of mediaeval oak, the silent witnesses of historic tragedies and pageants, we celebrate the present under the spell of the past.”

There was an absence of uniforms, except those of the spiritual and law lords and the Speaker and his attendants. King George, the Princes, the members of both Houses of Parliament and the visitors were in morning dress.

The startling changes of the previous twenty-five years, with their struggles and anxieties, were aptly spoken of by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey. “Elsewhere,” said he, “thrones and constitutions have failed to outlast the strain. Yet in this realm the development of public rights and liberties has not been arrested, but has been made wider and more sure. More truly than any of your illustrious ancestors your Majesty rules over a nation of free citizens. Yet in spite of, nay, rather because of, this wide extension of government by the people, the Throne stands more firmly than ever before as the centre of the national life.”

Still more apt was the reply of His Majesty. In the course of it he spoke some home truths when he said:

“It is to me a source of pride and thankfulness that the perfect harmony of our Parliamentary system with our Constitutional Monarchy has survived the shocks that have in recent years destroyed other Empires and other liberties. Our ancient Constitution, ever adaptable to change, has during my reign faced and conquered perils of warfare never conceived in earlier days, and has met and satisfied new democratic demands both at home and overseas.

“The system bequeathed to us by our ancestors, again modified for the needs of a new age, has been found once more, as of old, the best way to secure government by the people, freedom for the individual, the ordered strength of the State, and the rule
of law over governors and governed alike.

“The complex forms and balanced spirit of our Constitution were not the discovery of a single era, still less of a single party or of a single person. They are the slow accretion of centuries, the outcome of patience, tradition and experience, constantly finding channels, old and new, for the impulse towards liberty, justice and social improvement inherent in our people down the ages.”

After the ceremony King George and Queen Mary walked slowly down the centre of the hall along the narrow passage between the seats. I occupied an end seat next to the passage. As His Majesty passed within a couple of feet of me, there was in his face a most wonderful expression of kindness, benevolence and thankfulness, the expression of a man who was genuinely anxious to do his best for the good of others. I thought how truly the then leader of the Labour Party, Mr. George Lansbury, had described him as “a very human person.” Even better than that simple phrase were the words of General Smuts:

“With King George one never has the sense of position or pose or pomp. The centre of the mightiest and most successful group that has ever existed in history, he himself is simplicity itself. He requires no adventitious aids or props, and is content to be simply himself. And that simple self is compact of sheer humanness, which gives him a tact, a sympathy, and intuitive understanding of others which are his real sources of strength. His humanness, his simple integrity, sincerity and goodness inspire you with respect, devotion and— I must add—affection as nothing else could.”

General Smuts goes on to describe the King as “a simple human being—natural, sincere, truthful—whose life is spent for his people and who has no thought of self.”

All this was shown in the face of His Majesty as he walked down, and when, on reaching the entrance, he turned round and gazed for several seconds at the wonderful old hall and the crowd that looked towards him. Then he quietly walked out.

II

A happy memory of my stay in London during the jubilee year was a day spent at Chequers, the beautiful mansion that was provided by the munificence of Lord Lee of Fareham, to be used as an official country home for British Prime Ministers. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Geoffrey McIntyre, had been also invited. It was a Sunday near the end of March, 1935, as we motored from London, a lovely spring morning with the sun shining brightly, a bracing refreshing atmosphere and a sense of nature's awakening. Trees and bushes were in bud; early flowers, daffodils, violets
and primroses, were in bloom. Travelling eastward, passing through quaint and picturesque villages and towns, finally we reached Chequers, found the gates open and drove up the long drive through the attractive park grounds with wide stretches of green grasslands studded with trees, amidst which sheep grazed. The suggestion was of quietness, peacefulness and rest. Chequers is at the end of the Chiltern Hills, far removed from the busy hum of people. It is just the retreat needed by the ever-harassed occupant of the highest ministerial office as an occasional relief from worry.

Though the house is in Elizabethan style yet it seems older than the sixteenth century, and the visitor is not surprised when he learns that parts of it date from a much earlier period. Spacious and with numerous gables, it looks a fitting home for Prime Ministers.

It was a simple family gathering. Ramsay MacDonald was transparently genuine in his kindly greeting. His daughter, Ishbel, was there, also a friend. His son, Malcolm, received us with happy friendliness. They made us immediately feel as much at home as if we had been members of this little homely group for years. Conversation at luncheon was mainly about Australia. The Prime Minister had toured it in 1906 and hoped soon to go there again. His son had paid it two visits.

After luncheon we strolled over the grounds. The Prime Minister showed deep interest in the surroundings, remarking on the difficulty of keeping the fine lawn in front of the house clear of weeds; then he talked of the flowers, trees and birds. It was evident he was a true nature-lover. We climbed a high and steep hill and admired the view, an immense and diversified expanse of typical English country. On the top of a hill not so high as where we were, were the remains of what he told me was an old fort of the Ancient Britons. It was where Cymbeline was born, an ancient stronghold from which the Roman invasion met with the stoutest resistance. It was part of the property attached to Chequers. Not far distant is the home and burial-place of John Hampden, who died of wounds received in the Civil War and was a cousin of Oliver Cromwell. These and other such historical memories were appropriate associations for the country residence of the head of the Government of the Empire. We were taken to the rose garden, inspected the terraces and parapets, box hedges and old sundials.

At afternoon tea the Prime Minister talked freely. I remarked that his work was so heavy and his responsibilities so great that the strain on him must be terrific. He said he was feeling it after so many years of public life and his various terms as Prime Minister and he hoped to be able to retire soon.

“Unfortunately,” he added, “Baldwin tells me that he, too, finds the strain
more than he can bear. He does not want to lead.”

The visit was made some days after Hitler had delivered the famous announcement of Germany's return to conscription. The Prime Minister referred to it with a sadness in his voice. He felt it gave the policy of international peace and disarmament a severe shock. It might now be essential for Britain to strengthen her defences.

I expressed the opinion that when the history of the last few years came to be written, his Government would get credit for all they had done to preserve peace.

“We did our best,” said he, “we risked even the national safety.” His tone of voice was that of a tired and disappointed man.

We spoke of the growth of the work of governments due to the ever-increasing scope of governmental activities. He mentioned that the questions to be dealt with to-day are complicated and countless. Decisions had to be made continually on important issues and made quickly.

“When I read biographies of my predecessors,” he said, “I envy them the comparatively little work they had to do and the time at their disposal.”

Then he went on to say that his eyes nowadays could not stand too much reading. He had had an operation for glaucoma and had to be careful.

“Come,” said he, “I love going round this house. Let me take you.”

It was clear he enjoyed showing the different rooms with their priceless treasures.

“The atmosphere is kindly,” said he, “and the ghosts are friendly and make me feel it is the proper home for Prime Ministers.”

As we wandered round he pointed to pictures by famous painters of the past, showed us wonderful cabinets, a library of old-world books bound in a style to last for centuries, rare china, miniatures, armour and ancient weapons. There was the ring of Queen Elizabeth that was brought to James the Sixth of Scotland to announce her death. On a mantelpiece was the sword worn by Cromwell at the Battle of Marsden Moor. Near it and framed with glass on both sides was a long letter written by him on the battlefield to his brother and whilst the loyalists were in flight.

The house had many relics of Cromwell, one of whose relatives married a former owner. There were portraits of his two daughters and both his sons. The Prime Minister also showed us a wonderful life mask of Cromwell.

At the end of a long room there was a lofty stained-glass window showing the coats of arms of the numerous residents of Chequers since the eleventh century. Under each were the names in full, also the length of residence done in old lettering. A window close by gave the coats of arms, names and dates of residence of the Prime Ministers who have lived at
Chequers since it was given to the nation.

I remarked that it was fortunate that the house was owned by the country as it would thus be preserved for all time. The Prime Minister said it was specially fortunate as when it was handed over it was in a bad state of repair. The woodwork was in a terrible state. Few private individuals could have afforded the great expense of restoring it, and had it not been restored it would have become a ruin.

Up by small rickety winding stairs we came to apartments in which Lady Mary Grey, the sister of Lady Jane Grey, had been imprisoned for a couple of years. The poor lady's offence was that she had married her coachman, which was a serious crime in the eyes of Queen Elizabeth. In frames round the walls were letters sent by Lady Mary to Lord Burleigh pleading for her release. They were without avail, and Lady Mary evidently lost patience. On the white wall there are drawn by her caricatures of a vixen-faced disagreeable lady evidently meant to be Elizabeth.

Our hosts insisted on our staying until late in the afternoon so that it was quite dark when we got back to London. Our memories of Chequers are of a homely, hospitable family in picturesque surroundings and a Prime Minister weary and worn out with the cares and worries of office. Soon afterwards he retired in favour of Mr. Baldwin.

III

In looking back over a life not many years short of three score and ten, it is remarkable that the most readily remembered is what is bright and pleasant. Disappointments, hard toil, sufferings and struggles are mostly forgotten. What I have written relates to experiences since I first went to Australia some forty-five years ago. There are many who may want to know whether I am pleased I went, also whether I would advise young people of to-day who so desire to do likewise. My reply to both questions is an emphatic “Yes.”

There is no country with a brighter future than Australia. It is capable of supporting in reasonable comfort a European population at least ten times as large as it has at present, it is a country with vast tracts of fertile land and rich inexhaustible mineral resources. Nowhere is there more scope for human energy, and to-day there are as good opportunities in it as ever.

The bad name that Australia has had as a field for immigrants is due to the spoon-fed Government-aided migrant whose independence has been sapped and who sinks until he becomes a mere grumbling loafer. The pioneers had to rely entirely on their own resources, and I would advise anyone to stay in England if he cannot come without Government aid. A
young man who comes to Australia should be ready and willing to work hard, be satisfied with small beginnings, not expect to make a fortune in a few years and then leave Australia for ever, but be prepared to throw in his lot and make his permanent home in the country.

True, a man may go to Australia, do his best and deserve to succeed and still may fail. That happens everywhere. There is always the element of chance in life. A turning one way may lead to fortune and a turning another way may lead to ruin, and there is no fingerpost or the slightest indication as to which turning should be taken. I do not say that a young man going to Australia will be successful, but I am convinced that his chance of success in Australia is better than anywhere else, and that his chance is better if he altogether ignores Government aid and, as the pioneers did in the past, relies on his own resources solely.

Frequently it is pointed out that there are to-day thousands of Australian unemployed. In all countries there have ever been unemployed and there ever will be unemployed. Amongst human beings, wherever they be, there is invariably a percentage of “unemployables” —men who constitutionally cannot or will not work and men, many of whom, whilst continually asking for work, do not want it when they get it, or if they take it do not retain it. In the early days of settlement in Western Australia, before the population numbered 4,000 people, there were those who pointed out that many of the settlers were unemployed and there was no work for new arrivals—a warning was issued to intending immigrants and the warning, issued as it was a hundred years ago, has to-day a strangely modern ring. If migration to Australia be discouraged until unemployment has quite disappeared from the Commonwealth then it will never be encouraged.

Despite the failure of numerous Government immigration schemes in Australia and the failure of numbers of individual migrants in Australia, the average man who is determined to work hard and succeed has an excellent chance of making a success of his life. The new arrival will experience setbacks. He must go there in the right spirit; he must be ready to settle permanently in Australia; he must not think only of the country's disadvantages and be hankering to get away from it; he must remember it is a new land; it is in the making and should not be compared with older and more settled parts of the world. To come to Australia as a migrant is a wonderful adventure, but to be richly successful is the work not of a few years but a lifetime. Suddenly won fortunes should not be expected. For a thrifty hard-working man who keeps on trying, a good competency for himself and his family is almost certain to come to him in time, and there is an excellent chance of getting even better results than a good competency. Men fail everywhere, but let me say again there are opportunities to-day in
Australia for any man who relies solely on himself and is endowed with patience, energy and industry and is anxious to win through.
Note

SOME newspaper and magazine articles written by the author immediately after the occurrence of the events related in this book have been drawn upon and in a few instances partly republished. For permission to do so he has to thank the *Nineteenth Century, The Times*, the *Empire Review*, the *West Australian* and the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. 