MOMENTOUS DECADE

Society and Thought, Australia, 1838-1848.

Certifying Statement

This is to certify that the following thesis is the original work of the undersigned carried out in the prescribed period under the supervision of Professor C.M.H. Clark, Department of History, School of General Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T. Signed,

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Abstract in the Way of Preface

In searching for the origins of the Australian ethos it is tempting to regard convicts and "old hands" as the seedbed of Australian political democracy as well as part of the humus that nourished mateship and egalitarianism. While, as Russel Ward documents in The Australian Legend, many Australian social attitudes date back to convict days, the origin of Australian political democracy followed urban English rather than American or Australian frontier patterns.

Before the Gold Rushes altered the tempo of change, able and ambitious Emancipists struggled to attain middle-class respectability rather than democratic egalitarianism. Economically-successful and politically articulate ex-convicts asserted on "Australianism" common to the convicted but their patriotism was essentially a demand for acceptance by the unconvicted. They claimed the "rights of Englishmen" not the "rights of man". Bush "mateship" rarely found expression in political action or organisation.

As in South Africa and other "colonies of settlement", the spearhead of economic and social change was forged among colonists described by James Stephen of the Colonial Office as "that adventurous class of Europeans who lead the way in penetrating the territory of uncivilized man". Conflict between the Colonial Office and colonists arose from the contradiction between the concept of Empire held by men at the centre and the expansionism of those on the perimeter.

In early and mid-Victorian times, British Imperialism was an Imperialism based on economy and restraint rather than an expression of rampant capitalism. Imperial authority attempted to control and hold back the economic expansionism of men on the spot — African Trekboers, Australian Squatters and New Zealand pakehas. Colonial Reformers shared with colonial Radicals an Arcadian vision of a revitalised yeomenry clustered about county towns complete with churches, circuit law courts and English gardens. This idyllic vision was alien to the realities of a harsh terrain more suited to the "big man's frontier" than to the Australian Arcady visualized by the English and colonial Romantics.
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An upsurge of emigration, encouraged by a combination of Malthusian pessimism and Romantic enthusiasm, added a new dimension to the Australian dream. Australian immigrants hardly represented what Louis Hartz, in *The Founding of New Societies* (New York, 1964), saw as a transfer of proletarian turmoil, stemming from the Industrial Revolution, to the Antipodes. By and large, immigrants sought greater opportunities for social and economic advancement, not a brave new Chartist world. They shared the climate of opinion of an England too cluttered by what Carlyle called "incredible uncredited traditions . . ."; the "boundless grinding collision of the New with the Old", to offer equal opportunities for all men.

Equal opportunity, "a fair go", became the substance of the Australian dream. It was a middle-class rather than a proletarian ambition, ameliorative rather than revolutionary, an illusion of classlessness rather than class war. An urban middle-class now became the spearhead of economic and political advance. The Australian version of English democracy was freer, less class-cluttered, than the contemporary English reality because there was no entrenched Upper Class to dilute the middle-class ideal and offer what Mark Twain, during his brief period of Anglomania, saw as government by a dedicated and responsible élite which stood for stability, continuity and cultural unity.

Although Australia adapted British institutions and ameliorative processes, Australians assimilated American democratic social patterns. Wealth, not accent and education, became the hallmark of social status. The foundations of Australia's derivative democracy were laid in the 1840's hence the title of this thesis, *Momentum Decade*. The Gold Rushes increased the pace of economic and political development but did not alter the direction. Australians continued to revere British institutions while they rapidly adopted American tools and technology suited to a large continental terrain with a looser social structure than that of the "Old Country" which continued until recently to represent the cultural and political ideal for most Australians.
ABBREVIATIONS

ADB Australian Dictionary of Biography
HRA Historical Records of Australia
HRNSW Historical Records of New South Wales
HS Historical Studies
JRAHS Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings
Chapter One

Visions of Arcady

The woods of Arcady are dead  
And over is their antique joy;  
Of old the world on dreaming fed;  
Grey Truth is now her painted toy.

W. B. Yeats, 1889.
Beyond the sandstone headlands of Port Jackson, above the white-washed cottages and stone storehouses of Sydney Town — most depraved place on the face of the earth an English Secretary of State once called it — flickered visions of Arcady. Above dissenting Adelaide and genteel pinchbeck Perth, over the rolling grassy plains of Australia Felix, similar mirages wavered. Always, somewhere beyond the drab realities of sand and sin and sorrow, lay the foot of the rainbow where waited the pot of gold for those lucky enough to find it. In later times men called it the Australian Dream. Out there where red earth and blue sky met along a bright horizon, different men had different visions and dreamed different dreams but the substance remained the same: some better place, whether smiling farms and church spires for a sturdy reformed peasantry, vast estates for a new landed gentry, money in bank notes, deeds and mortgages for traders and merchants, striking it rich on the goldfields, or a socialist commonwealth with fair shares for all.

The reality, even when wholly or partially attained, seldom matched the dream. Here, perhaps lies the true explanation of the Australian character, sardonic, self-contained, pragmatic, suspicious of all fine-spun theories, irreverent, down-to-earth. From the beginning, pipe dreams have been in order—"... the pleasant perfume of the pipe, the cheering pot of tea again and again repeated" as Alexander Harris put it — but among pure merinos and Currency Lads alike thin-lipped mocking ribaldry has never been far away. For the most part, although not always, Australian visions of Arcady have been evoked by alien or spiritually expatriate ideologues and literary men but they have provided
fine threads for the coarse weave of a practical people always too
ready to "substitute the arrogance of ignorant youth and the 'game
to fight' for all other qualifications".2

Most versions of the Australian Dream stem from what Vernon L. Parrington, in his introduction to the second volume of Main
Currents in American Thought,2 calls the most "fruitful source of
romantic hope ... a fluid economics that overflows all narrow pre-
'emptions and sweeps away the restrictions that hamper free endeav-
our." Parrington continues: "With fresh economic realms to con-
quer, the dullest plodder discovers a stimulus in anticipation
that sets him upon creating a Utopia. The breaking up of the sta-
tic, the bold adventuring upon new worlds, is the fertile soil
in which romance springs luxuriantly."

To many it may seem absurd to suggest that a continent which,
from 1788 to 1840 was primarily a prison, offered any sort of ro-
mantic opportunities to sweep away restrictions hampering free en-
deavour or to provide genuine humus for the cultivation of roman-
ticism in life or literature. Yet, the initial alienation of the
convicts was off-set by 'mateship', the quasi-solidarity of the
convicted poor against the rest of society, or by genuine oppor-
tunities for economic advancement offered by transportation for
astute 'ticket-of-leave men and emancipated convicts to break from
the social rigidity of the Old Country.

Russel Ward suggests that Australian egalitarianism and mate-
ship are rooted in our convict past,3 while, in the words of H. P.
Heseltine,4 Australian literature is not only an historically Rom-
antic phenomenon but owes much of its modern element to a fundamen-
tal concern, "marked by our national origins and given direction
by geographic necessity", with the terror of Nihilism and the ra-
tionalisation of cruelty that lie at the root of contemporary sensi-

1. R. Horne, Australian Facts and Prospects (London, 1859). Quot-
2. Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (2 vol.
 Twentieth Century Australian Literary Criticism, ed. Clem-

bility. Australian Romantics have none of the elan of Parrington's Americans but neither have contemporary American Romantics many of whom appear to have become increasingly alienated from all forms of rational community life.

The Arcadian concept began early. On 13 October, 1786, the London Public Advertiser commented glowingly on the Botany Bay project: "The banishment of convicts to Botany Bay is an instance of modern humanity: for it will be little else than freedom in a new country, and a plentiful store of implements to till the land, and labour for a sustenance. Absence from home will soon be yielded to without repining, as companions and a fertile soil will always produce a number of avocations and pursuits, not only superior to the slavery of plantation transportations, but even agreeable to the people; and this may soften their manners, and in time of reaping benefit from their labours, will effect the hope of civilising them to the social endearments and interests of human life." 4b

Nearly twenty years later Francois Peron, historian of France's Baudin expedition to the South Seas which visited Sydney in 1802, painted a Rousseauistic picture of the penal colony: "Under these rustic roofs, in the midst of these immense forests, brigands who not long since were the terror of Europe and who, grown accustomed, so to speak, to the necessity of crime, seem to have only to wait the outcome of their heinous offences - torture and death; there live those swindlers, those sharpers, those rogues of every description ... formerly the refuse and disgrace of their native land ... by the most inconceivable of transformation, hard-working farmers and peaceful contented citizens ..." 5

The realities of transportation were nowhere near as idyllic, despite Lord Ellenborough's description of the experience as "a summer's excursion, an easy migration to a happier and better climate..." 6

5. Peron and L. Freycinet, Voyage de decouvertes aux Terres Australes ... (Paris, 1807-16).
Never the less, until Bigge's reports changed New South Wales from a reformatory to a colony, it seems certain that for many convicts, other than the incorrigible, transportation was hardly worse than emigration to a place where they were better off than they had been at home. Those who wished could find regular and paid employment in their leisure hours and in the beginning there was the chance on emancipation of acquiring a home and a farm.

As M. H. Ellis points out, to be "one of Macarthur's men" was to be well fed and well cared for and almost free of physical punishment. A beneficiary of "Cox's Liberty" enjoyed almost equal felicity. Governor Macquarie customarily granted ticket-of-leave "to such Gentlemen Convicts as can by their industry or finances maintain themselves without being Burdensome to the Crown". As an incentive to good conduct and reform it was "considered as not inappropriate" to send a convict's wife and family to join him if he "should by industry be placed ... in such a situation ... as to leave little doubt" of his being able to maintain them.

However, when assigned convict labour became the mainstay of a new Australian vision, even the most humane masters were not untouched by the contemporary wisdom which saw the threat of physical punishment as the only effective curb on the perversities of human conduct. Even the convict author of Australia's first novel affected to lick the hand that smote him. "The stains that had marked him," he remarks of his convict hero, "were removed by the discipline he had been made to endure." Women convicts, about 25,000 of a total of 300,000, were almost universally condemned as disorderly, slatternly and licentious. The Transportation Committee reported in 1812 that "Female Convicts" had been "indiscriminately given to such of the inhabitants as demanded them, and were in general received...as prostitutes than as servants. ..." Even

10. A. G. L. Shaw, Convicts and the Colonies, p. 100
as late as 1837, James Macarthur told the Molesworth Commission that convict women were so much trouble and the gossip that attended their assignment so general that he and his brothers refused to have them as servants under any circumstances. Women convicts were not flogged but if they became pregnant or too troublesome in private service they were usually returned to the Female Factory at Parramatta, where work was hard and discipline harsh. There were similar barracks for female convicts near Hobart and Launceston.

Men were flogged for the most trifling offenses. According to A.L. Shaw, between 1833 and 1837, 32,075 convicts were flogged in New South Wales, or about one in four, receiving an average sentence of 45 lashes. In his evidence before the Transportation Commission in 1837, James Macarthur contended that it was in the interest of an assignee to make his convict servants as comfortable as possible. He said:

The principle on which we have conducted our establishment, is, where a man behaves well, to make him forget, if possible, that he is a convict ... The system of forcing labour on a private establishment ... could not be a very profitable one; at all events, it would be an exceedingly disagreeable one ... where men conduct themselves ill we put them under severe discipline, for the sake of example to others. But there are many ways of punishing them on a well-regulated establishment; by stopping their indulgences, in the first instance: that is the first sort of punishment we should resort to previously to bringing them before a magistrate ....

A master was not permitted to order a flogging but had to send an offender to a magistrate. As the magistrates were mostly masters they were not disposed to be lenient towards convicts referred to them for punishment. Between 1820 and 1840, 80,000 convicts arrived in Australia, more than half the total number sent, and most of them had been convicted for relatively serious offenses. As the number grew and the quality deteriorated Brit-


ish and colonial attitudes hardened. Writing from Shoalhaven in 1829, Alexander Derry told his partner, Wollstoncraft, "We must adopt other and more effectual modes of punishing our people than pinching their guts." Previously he had declared, "With quiet peaceable and humane measures, I will make the most refractory see that it is to their interest to behave well ...." By 1825, he was convinced that he had "utterly spoilt" these "rogues" by "pampering" them. "Strict discipline' alone could not do any good with a "set of miscreants .... unfit to live anywhere unless loaded with heavy, permanent irons ....""13

James Mudie, whom Governor Sir Richard Bourke had dismissed in 1836 with 33 others from the magistracy, never doubted that convicts were other than predestined for punishment. A government inquiry found complaints of excessive cruelty "for the most part unfounded" but on Mudie's own testimony it was clear that he ordered floggings for apparently little reason. He suffered mild reproof because he had allowed his overseer to act "imprudently and unjustifiably" in striking servants and for being "reprehensible" in allowing a man to be punished twice for the same offence...

"after I was removed from the commission of the peace," he told the Transportation Commission in London, "the opinion among the convicts and the people of that kind" was that "The bloody old tyrants are done for at last'. A convict has passed me in the street, and has said in passing, 'No more fifties: now, you bloody old tyrant.'... I never slept one night at Castle Forbes [his model property on the Hunter] after that; I went to Sydney ...."

The Colonial Establishment was divided as to whether mild treatment was better than coercion. Even the "Convicts' Friend", Governor Lieut-Colonel Lachlan Macquarie (1809-1822), believed that there was no better deterrent for disciplining hardened offen-

ders than a severe flogging. Nevertheless, Lieut-Governor George Arthur of Van Diemen's Land (1823-1837), who declared that he was employed "not to build up a free community but to hold in check the criminality of an Empire", believed that "the misconduct of convict servants proceeds generally from the faults of ill-treatment of their masters". While liberal-minded Bourke, Governor of New South Wales from 1831 to 1837, had Mudie and others removed from the magistracy for excessive cruelty in use of the lash. One of Bourke's "victims" was Ernest Augustus Slade, a former army officer, son of General Sir John Slade. Ernest Augustus Slade had been in charge of the prisoners' barracks at Sydney from December 1832 until dismissed at the end of 1833.

"I, being an independent officer, and being anxious to do my duty, was determined to see the law properly administered," he told the Transportation Committee in 1837, "the consequence was that 50 lashes under my superintendence was equal to 1,000 under any other man's ...." Asked why this was so, Slade, who ostensibly dismissed by Bourke for open concubinage with a convict girl, explained:

Because the lashes administered by others had been always conducted under the superintendence of parties who were liable to bribes, consequently the scourger, though you would not think it, by looking ... [saw to it] that ... hardly the skin was broken; and when I had the lash inflicted, I never saw a case where I did not break the skin in four lashes ... I had influence enough to have all the cats made at Hyde-park barracks, and distributed by that barrack to all the different benches ... The instruments before were exceedingly short, very short handles, and about three lashes, and the knots so trifling that I should say that the punishment inflicted ... was of no avail ... I ordered them to have a handle about two feet long. I had five lashes put on them of whipcord, and on each of these I had about six or seven knots. I stood by, and saw every punishment inflicted myself; and in cases where the scourger did not do his duty, I adopted the system, as had been the practice in His Majesty's army, of having the scourger brought up to account for his relaxation of duty ... when the scourger discovered that I was determined that punishment should be duly inflicted, I found that 25 lashes under my surveillance had the same effect as 1,000 under any other person's hand ...


14a Quoted Kylie Tennant, Australia; Her Story (London, 1953), p. 83.
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In Britain, during Australia's founding years, the industrial age was becoming a grim, if hopeful and inescapable fact; the age of machinery had begun to change the face of England and alter England's relationship with the Empire and the world outside. Self-confident Liberal bankers and manufacturers were in the political ascendancy. The uneasy traditional Whigs wriggled uncomfortably at the spectacle but respected reform — provided it did not go too far. Under Sir Robert Peel, the more astute Tories were moving towards the Tamworth Manifesto of 1834 which not only created the modern Conservative Party but attempted to grapple with the realities of a changing world. Laissez-faire was becoming the current conventional wisdom and a conservatism based on money — the cash-nexus — was replacing a conservatism based on land, although most respectable Englishmen continued to love a lord.

Meanwhile, from the sidelines, a chorus of Romantic Cassandras sat down, like Thomas Carlyle, beside the befouled waters of the Thames and wept for a lost medieval Jerusalem, or fled for sanctuary, like Robert Southey, to the lakes and mountains of Cumberland, with side glances at the possibilities of Pantisocracy in the virgin forests of America or a new Arcady in an Antipodean Australia Felix. In his Botany Bay Ecologues Southey, the friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, expressed grave doubts and considerable environmental ignorance about the character of New South Wales. His two "involuntary Boeotians" sit together beneath a tree and chant:

The felon's name, the felon's garb we wear,
Toil all the day, and all the night despair."

For Southey, as for many Englishmen, the felon's garb, the felon's name, stamped the broad arrow of degradation on the

Australian Arcady. This was the essential difference between colonial America and colonial Australia. Although something like 30,000 convicts were sent to the Americas during the eighteenth century, compared with 148,000 to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, they were sent to settled populous communities with stable standards of value. In Australia, on the other hand, convicts made up most of the population in the early years and as late as 1841, approximately one-fifth of the population of New South Wales was described as "bond". Van Diemen's Land was even more saturated with prisoners and ex-prisoners.

The 1841 census revealed that in addition to 46,374 convicts and ex-convicts there were 48,846 "native-born", most of them the children of convicts or emancipists. Thus, out of a total population of 135,000 more than half bore the "birth stain". In 1819, Judge J. H. Bent testified to a British Parliamentary Select Committee on the State of the Gaols that, "the native youths, as they call themselves .... claim the rights of the aboriginal inhabitants .... In short, with "the felonry" proper, they considered Australia "their country" and looked upon free immigrants as intruders on a prison farm where the rules and conventions were different from other places.

By contrast, America's founders belonged to close-knit communities with, as far as the Puritan colonies were concerned, a sense of destiny. John Winthrop, first Governor of Massachusetts, struck what Daniel J. Boorstin calls the keynote of American history, when he told his fellow-adventurers, "Wee shall be-as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; see that if wee shall deal with our god in the works we have undertaken and soe cause him to with-drawe his present help from us, wee shall be

18. Ibid, p.3.
made a story and a by—word through the world."[20]

No such sense of the presence of God at the founding of a new nation possessed those who in 1788 sailed to Botany Bay in the First Fleet nor those who came after. With some amazing and honourable exceptions they were mostly the scum of English cities, the detritus of the countryside, the cast-offs of society, with no respect for law and little for themselves. The First Fleet carried 200 copies of Exercises Against Lying, 50 of Caution to Swearers, 100 Exhortations to Chastity and Dissuasions from Stealing but there were no Puritan elders to enforce a stern morality on the dissolute as chief stewards in a theocracy whose magistrates represented the church as well as the state. In comparison, Australia's first colonial chaplain, Anglican Richard Johnson, was unimpressive even to the civil authorities and had small hope of instilling the fear of God or the hope of heaven in the hearts of his largely captive congregations.

The sermons of John Winthrop and the Elders of New England did not go thus unheeded. "Compared with Americans of the 18th or the 19th century," says Boorstin, "the Puritans surely were theology-minded. The doctrines of the Fall of Man, of Sin, of Salvation, Predestination, Election, and Conversion were their meat and drink. Yet what really distinguished them in their day was that they were less interested in theology itself, than in the application of theology to everyday life, and especially to society. From the 17th-century point of view their interest in theology was practical. They were less concerned with perfecting their formulation of the Truth than with making their society in America embody the Truth they already knew. Puritan New England was a noble experiment in applied theology."[20a]


20a Ibid, p. 17.
Penal New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, on the other hand, were ignoble examples of an attempt to soak up social blots and drop the sodden mess into receptacles for removal to garbage heaps as far away as possible from under respectable noses. True there were some aspirations towards rehabilitation and reformation but when Lachlan Macquarie tried to make these things a reality he was politely reprimanded and superseded by Major-General Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane, a soldier more interested in astronomy and the advancement of scientific knowledge than in sin and salvation or the possible destiny of a remote colony with odd animals, strange trees and superb skies for unobscured study of the stars. A humane sensitive man, with a dedicated interest in science, Brisbane was totally unsuited to cope with the greed and arrogance of the colonial gentry, the disloyalty and factiousness of officials or the social rift between Exclusives and Emancipists. Immersed in his scientific studies at Government House Parramatta, which he preferred to Government House Sydney, he was well aware of the duplicity and rapacity of many leading colonists but he did little to defend the weak from the strong and too often delegated his duties to officials who were sometimes untrustworthy. On his recall, his old Chief Lord Wellington commented, ".... there are many brave men not fit to be governors of colonies".21

From the beginning, convicts, ex-convicts and their children were not only excluded but felt themselves excluded. They expressed their feelings in the traditional way, through folk ballads, beginning in England with rhymed doggerel on the theme of Botany Bay:

Let us drink a good health to our schemers above,  
Who at length have contrived from this land to remove  
Thieves, robbers and villains, they'll send them away,  
To become a new people at Botany Bay.21a

A "new people" they felt themselves to be, as Judge J. H. Bent testified to a British Parliamentary Select Committee in 1819. To the question: "Is the opinion at all prevalent in the colony, that the colony is for the convicts and their descendants, and not for free settlers from the mother country?" Mr. Bent replied, "I have heard such opinions expressed." By 1819, whatever their feelings, convicts and their descendants had failed to establish a stake in the country they considered their own. Even at the best of times, when Emancipists and ex-soldiers were entitled by law to grants of land from 30 to 100 acres, few of the non-Exclusives were able to profit from the main source of colonial wealth, wool, although the more enterprising and ruthless among them found a new world to exploit by sly-grog selling and the accumulation of mortgages over land their fellows were too feckless or too unfortunate to farm.

The failure of small farmers (free or freed) to profit from their land grants was not entirely due, as was generally asserted, to their intemperance and lack of farming experience. The colony possessed neither a suitable natural environment nor adequate roads or transport for grain beyond the rural areas around Sydney and the Hawkesbury. The best land near Sydney, the only market, had been allocated early to wool-growing officials and officers of the New South Wales Corps except for farms on the Hawkesbury River flats that helped to feed Sydney.

As late as 1830, more than 50 percent of grain grown in New South Wales came from government-operated "plantations" under convict labour. Even so bread cost more than meat.

Thus the Mother Colony looked to Government and imports from Van Diemen's Land for food rather than to a growing number of independent family farms, as in the United States and Canada.

where soil and seasons were more favourable. In Australia, small men without capital soon found themselves reduced to landless labourers on semi-feudal estates or driven to join nomadic "bushmen" who preserved their independence by bushranging or by contract work as itinerant shearsers and bullockies, refusing to attach themselves permanently to any one pastoralist. The convict-derived code of "mateship" (often betrayed) gave them a sense of identity and they regarded Governor Lachlan Macquarie and the later Sir Richard Bourke, representatives of the Imperial Government, as their champions, rather than the Australian Patriotic Association or a Legislative Council dominated by pastoralists, merchants and landowners. "Frank the Poet", generally supposed to be Francis Macnamara, alias Frank Goddard, was their spokesman. Born in Dublin in 1758 and transported for uttering forged notes in 1819 he summed up the convict lot in these words:

The hardships we'd to undergo, are matters of record,
But who believes a convict, or who regards his word?
Starv'd and flogged and punish'd, depriv'd of all redress,
The Bush our only refuge, with death to end distress. 22a

In a word, the convicted majority was left as it began: alienated; a group of people without cohesion, and without anything in common except the "mateship" of lechery and drink; on the one hand, the squalid discipline of the "kangaroo court", on the other, fear of the knout; united only in a common fate and bitter detestation of any form of lawful authority, whether clothed in judicial wig and gown, braided uniform, or black coat and clerical collar. In those who were not too dulled by debauchery or ill-treatment, or both, to care where they were or what they did, the conviction persisted that somehow Australia was "their country", and theirs alone, even if no more than a handful had taken full advantage of the opportunity to become respectable,

even rich, offered in Governor Macquarie's open reformatory based on Anglican ascendancy and the Protestant virtues of industry and enterprise.

Many who were neither respectable nor rich came to identify themselves with the new country even if they preferred the old. In any case, they had little hope of returning from where they had come and they were hardly the sort to grieve because Australia was a utilitarian prison farm without ornamented chimneys, hawthorn hedges, banks of daffodils and snowdrops, hollyhocks in the cottage gardens, bee-hives in orchards, all the rural delights which, according to Robert Southey, were being displaced in England by "Mammon's temples", the big new rectangular factories of "the manufacturing system", and Coketowns where street after street of terraced houses stood back to back "all naked, and in a row". 23

Before long, "The Rocks" in Sydney was able to offer everything that Spitalfields and St. Giles had provided and the climate was better. "...St. Giles' and Wapping in one," wrote Alexander Harris, describing the Rocks as he saw it in the 1830's. "From the earliest times of the settlement there congregated on the steep ridge above the King's wharf all the worst characters of this penal colony — the felon, whose ill-directed punishment had only rendered .... more obdurate, cunning and slothful; the prostitute, who (if such a thing can be) had sunk yet lower; the fence, watching for a livelihood by plundering the plunderer; many who, without great positive vices, a sort of brutelike ignorance and uncouthness had rendered it impossible for more orderly and rational society to amalgamate with itself; and many drawn into the vortex of ruin through their mere want of direction, or energetic resolve for either good or evil." 24

Australian author Olaf Ruhen believes that the Rocks provided a focus for a national identity that persists to this day, the identity which expressed itself in the larrikin pushes of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Sydney and contributed its iota to the ethos of mateship and the Digger spirit. "The care­less raffish scrounger, resistant to authority and independent as a native porcupine, is much more typical of 'The Rocks' than of The Bush," he says. "There's no doubt that this tough little quarter did much to create the reputation in which Australians have self-consciously basked for a long time."\(^\text{25}\)

This be as it may, the identity the first white Australians succeeded in impressing on the sailors and travellers who stopped off at Sydney Cove was different in character and essence from the identity established by the English Puritans who, in mid—November, 1620, "fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean .... againe to set their feete on the firme and stable earth, their proper elemente ...." America's Puritan identity persisted in its proper element for a long time without real challenge, for the slave­owning states of the South were able to develop their own identity in isolation, with the Quakers of Pennsylvania in between. Thus, unlike the inhabitants of New South Wales and Van Die­men's Land, the first Americans had no initial problems of identity; they took their identities with them. Consequently, any study of the awakening of the American mind must be a study of how a new environment and changing circumstances modified originally non-American ideologies. Australia, on the other hand, had no original identity except the identity, imposed on them, of prisoners and warders in a goal and the gaol lacked walls or clear demarcation between official and non-official custodians, respec­


table and non-respectable inmates. Even the rules were indefinite and loosely applied so that some assigned convicts could gallop the countryside like gauchos or cowboys, demanding their drink and women like free men, while others were reduced to beastiality under sadistic psychopaths in the cells at Norfolk Island.

Gaolers as well as gaolled were victims of the "System" which was initially not so much a system as a garbage disposal scheme with officials to direct where best to dump the rubbish. When the New South Wales Corps replaced the Marines, the colony lost whatever positive identity could be associated with a military code of duty and service, not that the marines had been conspicuous for either; they considered that their duties were restricted to military matters and thought prison service discreditable to a fighting unit. Among the officers of the new specially-enlisted New South Wales Corps some had dubious social backgrounds in an era when officers were supposed to be gentlemen first and soundly professional if they had the inclination or the ability; while others joined to take advantage of what they hoped would be an opportunity to establish or rehabilitate family fortunes. Certainly, most of those who held rank in the Corps would not have volunteered for self-exile at the ends of the earth where no sense of Imperial mission existed, if they had possessed a sense of professional responsibility in the war against Napoleon or had been lodged securely enough in the social hierarchy to obtain commissions in a socially-recognised regiment. As for other ranks, they were mostly the sweepings of the military gaols, lazy, incorrigible, drunkards and trouble-makers, way below the standard usually demanded among the hard-used men of Wellington's armies whose Commander-in-Chief considered them the finest infantry in the world — provided they were led by gentlemen.

Nevertheless, in the Corps shrewd and able men like John Macarthur soon seized the unprecedented opportunities offered for acquiring power as well as wealth in a community where each individual was left more or less to steer his own way in an ocean beset with innumerable rocks and reefs. For Macarthur and his family New South Wales meant "plenty and affluence" compared with a life of "pinching penury" in England. Realizing this he quickly identified himself with the economic opportunities the colony offered and at the same time conscientiously set out to create a new aristocracy in a new country. Before long Macarthur was the acknowledged head of the free-born Exclusives who were as ready as any convict Emancipist to make money out of trade—which, as Governor Hunter (1795-1800) lamented, "I must ever consider in the manner it is carried on here, to be highly disgraceful to men who hold in their hand a commission signed by His Majesty"—but who were almost equally anxious to establish their respectability on the firm foundation of landed estates, the only recognised hallmark of upper class authenticity in eighteenth century England.

The Exclusives' idea of an Australian identity differed so radically from Macquarie's vision of peasant proprietorship for Emancipists and ex-soldiers alike, that Macarthur and his friends were soon intriguing for his recall. Finally, the British Government sent Commissioner J.T. Bigge to investigate whether transportation to New South Wales under the benevolent autocracy of Governor Macquarie remained an object of "real terror" to evil-doers. Bigge was sufficiently a man of his time to see how the colony could fit neatly into the changing economy of expanding Britain.

Macarthur had earlier convinced British woollen manufactur-
ers that the existence of "a Breed of Spanish sheep in the Colony of New South Wales .... was highly important to the manufacturing interest" of Great Britain.\textsuperscript{27b} He now found little difficulty in persuading His Majesty's Commissioner to promote the substance of his dream of New South Wales as an exclusive Antipodean Arcady for a race of rich gentlemen farmers with large estates on which socially excluded helots cut the wood and drew the water and sheperded the sheep. It was a vision akin to the plantation economy of Virginia except that black slaves were valuable property whereas convicted felons were disposable chattels the responsibility for whose sin and salvation lay with themselves or with Government and had nothing to do with the master class. It was a vision too, which provided a focus for an Australian identity different both from the colonial identity Macquarie had so carefully nurtured and from the rank growth that had taken root in the Rocks among involuntary exiles who contemptuously dismissed "new chums", with capital or without, as intruders in hell, where good men with clear consciences had no business.

The original attempt to provide an identity for Britain's exported waste, crystallised in Macquarie's planned colony of emancipist peasantry, was civilised and Arcadian, despite the tawdry material and tatty edges which never became fully incorporated into a general pattern. Macarthur's new Australian identity was Whiggish, utilitarian, and more practically suited to Australian circumstances, although its upholders looked over their shoulders at the eighteenth century rather than forward to the twentieth. Furthermore, they denied the fundamental rights of men, which derived from the French Enlightenment and formed part of the compost that fed English Liberalism and the growth of the middle class.

\textsuperscript{27b} Margaret Steven, \textit{John Macarthur} (Melbourne, 1968), p. 11.
The Enlightenment called upon man to free himself from all historical bonds in the State and in religion, in morals and in economics. The Australian gentry were ready enough to loosen the bonds of the State, wherever it chafed the sensitive skins of the newly rich; and they had no trouble in accepting the conventional wisdom of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* as a guide to colonial political economy. However, they could not subscribe to Rousseauistic romanticism and the doctrine that man's nature was essentially good but suppressed and distorted by civilization and society: there were too many examples of original sin in the Rocks, on the sheepwalks and ranging the Bush. Indeed, the "Felonry of New South Wales", as Calvinistic James Mudie termed the convict and emancipist population, could be pointed at as examples of what happened to men and women when they acknowledged none of the traditional bonds in morals and religion. Mudie forgot that Calvin involved all men, not only convicts, in original sin.

(iii)

By the late 1820's, when the Report of Mr. Commissioner Bigge began to take effect, a new element appeared in the "New Gentry". The many recommendations made by Bigge included a suggestion that "proprietors in ... distant stations" should receive grants of land "... in proportion to the number of convicts... they engaged to employ and... to the numbers of sheep and cattle [they] take with them ..." Taking up this suggestion, the British Government virtually abolished free grants of land to small settlers and to favoured officials and instead offered estates in return for capital investment in extensive sheep farms. The offer attracted a steady flow of ex-army and naval officers (who were given special concessions), younger sons, the off-

springs of rectory and manse, yeomen farmers faced with rising rents and others unsettled by post-Napoleonic War conditions in a changing Britain. In addition to individual adventurers the offer stimulated the formation of companies including the Australian Agricultural Company, the South Australian Company, and the Swan River Syndicate. This innovation changed the whole tempo and direction of Australian development: the reformatory became a colony; big-scale capitalised farming replaced largely sustenance agriculture bolstered by a market provided by government requirements. Meanwhile, British Colonial Reformers began to consider how best to enhance the prestige and usefulness of the Empire. In particular, they sought to provide a solution for the pressing "Condition of England" problem posed by the Reverend Thomas Malthus in his thesis that population must inevitably outpace the production of food and that economic fact as well as divine dispensation decreed that the poor must remain for ever poor.

In New South Wales, rich Emancipists, the aspiring Native-born and open-minded Whigs had come together in a loose political interest the newspapers were beginning to call "the Australian's". The amalgam, which solidified into the Australian Patriotic Association (1835), consisted of men like Dr. William Bland, ex-naval surgeon transported for killing a fellow-officer in a duel; Samuel Terry, "the Botany Bay Rothschild", an ex-convict who made a substantial fortune through the liquor trade and money-lending; George Robert Nichols, barrister and solicitor, son of a successful ex-convict; and Sir John Jamison, sportsman, naturalist, banker, whose lavish hospitality at his model property on the Nepean earned him the accolade, "the hospitable Knight of Regentsville".

Despite Sir John Jamison's widespread popularity the real leader of the "Australians" was William Charles Wentworth, Australian-born son of Australia's first remittance man and a convict woman, who grew up to become the most eloquent and authoritative, if not the most representative "Patriot". Wentworth's prize-winning poem Australasia, placed second in the 1823 annual competition for the Chancellor's Medal at Cambridge University; his book A Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of New South Wales (1819); and his out-spoken, hard-hitting newspaper, the Australian, made him the unchallenged tribune of Australians excluded from the "new gentry" created by Bigge's reforms and from what Mudie sarcastically and enviously dismissed as the "Ancient Nobility", some of whom, like James Macarthur and his brothers, were also "Native-born". As P.R. Stephensen points out Wentworth's poem said all that Native Youth liked to think of themselves, even if the reality did not always measure up to the romantic vision — the poet, sitting nostalgically in exile "by Cam's old classic stream", conjured up:

Land of my birth! Tho' now, alas! no more,
Musing I wander on thy seagirt shore ....

Where Sydney's infant turrets proudly rise,
The newborn glory of the southern skies:
Dear Australasia, can I e'er forget
Thee, Mother Earth? Ah no, my heart e'en yet
With filial fondness loves to call to view
Scenes which, though oft remembered, still are new ...

The spacious harbour, with its hundred coves
And fairy islets — seats of savage loves ...

After relating how De Quiros, "first of Europe's roving train" reached Australia, and painting a Rousseauistic Arcadian


picture of the aborigines, "swift-footed hunters of the pathless plain,/ Unshackled wanderers, enthusiasts free,/ Pure native sons of savage liberty", the poet depicted the further discovery and settlement of the continent, and continued:

Lo! thickly planted o'er the glassy bay,
Where Sydney loves her beauties to survey,
And every morn delighted sees the gleam
Of some fresh pennant dancing in her stream,
A masty forest, stranger vessels moor
Charged with the fruits of every foreign shore;
While, landward — the thronged quay, the creaking crane,
The noisy workmen, and the loaded wain,
The lengthened street, wide square, and columned front
Of stately mansions, and the gushing font,
The solemn church, the busy market throng,
And idle loungers sauntering slow among ....

The poet then provided a romantic pastoral contrast with the new-born city --- the Bathurst Plains where flocks and herds in thousands "Awake the woodlands with their joyous sound" — and asked:

Thy blue-eyed daughters, with the flaxen hair
And taper ankle, do they bloom less fair
Than those of Europe? Do thy primal groves
Ne'er warble forth their feathered inmates' loves?

For him, the answer was plain, convictism was the primal blot upon the Austral landscape:

'Tis slavery's badge, the felon's shame
That stills thy voice and clouds thy opening fame ...
Land of my hope! soon may this early blot
Amid thy growing honours be forgot;
Soon may a freeman's soul, a freeman's blade
Nerve every arm, and gleam through every glade —
No more the outcast convict's clanking chains
Deform thy wilds and stigmatise they plains ....

In his pregnant book, A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales ... Wentworth
declared the colony to be "the only one of our possessions exclusively inhabited by Englishmen, in which there is not at least the shadow of a free government". He suggested that the colonists might be driven to make overtures to the United States, if only with the intention of placing themselves "under the government of more just and considerate rulers" although he declared that they would never take such action except "in resistance to tyranny, and in vindication of their most sacred and indubitable rights". In addition to such generalities, Wentworth set out constructive proposals for the reform of the colony, politically and economically. In particular, he emphasised that the free and freed population exceeded the convict population and that the proportion of people capable of sitting on juries and exercising elective functions would continue to increase.

Wentworth made no apology for including ex-convicts, immigrants and the native-born, among those qualified to elect colonial representatives to free institutions. He dismissed the pretensions of John Macarthur and the Exclusives in forceful bitter phrases. They composed, he said

.... a party in the colony, by whom the very notion of granting such a privilege to a class of men who have been subject to the lash of the law, would be treated as chimera pregnant with the most fatal consequences to this infant community ... an aristocratic body, which would monopolise all situations of power, dignity and emolument, and put themselves in a posture to dominate alike over the Governor and the people. If you consult one of this faction (they deserve no milder appellation) he will tell you that it is dangerous to vest any authority beyond the narrow circle of his own immediate friends ... The covert aim of these men, is to convert the ignominy of the great body of the people into an hereditary deformity. They would hand it down from father to son, and raise an eternal barrier of separation between their offspring and the offspring of the unfortunate convict. ....

Successful or respectable Emancipists and intelligent Native Youth read such strictures with admiration and delight. Whether the mass of ex-convicts cared either way is a matter of doubt. They had never enjoyed the franchise in the Old Country although, if dog-eared copies of the periodical Pickwick Papers, which later circulated in the colony, ever fell into their hands they might have seen possibilities of free beef and beer in an elective system of government. There is little doubt that young Joseph Harpur, son of two of John Macarthur's well-treated serfs and brother to Charles Harpur, Australia's first considerable poet, spoke for Native Youth in stanzas published in the *Australian* under the title, "Australia's Patriot":

Wentworth, whose spirit soars above the dross—
The sordid yoke that binds the grovelling crew, 
Above the mean acount of gain or loss,  
Attendant on the justice you pursue.
O, pay to Fame whate'er to Fame is due, 
And much is due from such a soul divine;—
Glory, the Patriot's glory, bright and true
Shall crown thee, and the poet's bays be thine—
Attune thy lyre again—thy country's lyre;  
And act with glory still, and sing with fire.

Following Bigge's Reports, civil courts replaced military jurisdiction in the colony but military officers continued to act as jury in criminal cases; only in civil actions could the parties have a jury of freeholders. This opened the way for Wentworth, who was called to the English bar about the same time as he published his book, to return to Sydney and champion the cause of Emancipists and other non-Exclusives in the colonial law courts. At the same time the colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were separated, under a Governor and Lieuten-

ant-Governor respectively, while consultant Legislative Councils were instituted in both colonies.

Through the Australian and in the courts Wentworth urged unity among the "gentry, merchants, landholders, yeomen, traders and other free inhabitants" of New South Wales in a demand to be "placed on the same footing as all other ... Plantations settled by British subjects, and, together with the liberty of the press, which they already enjoy, to be re-invested with those other imprescriptive rights of Englishmen, Trial by Jury and Taxation by Representation ...." 34

As Wentworth well knew, "certain private families" possessed "sufficient wealth and influence to monopolise for themselves and their nominees ...... whatever legislature maybe established" unless the franchise were wide enough and the membership large enough "to give the colonists a real voice in the management of their affairs ......" Consequently, a public meeting which met on Anniversary Day, 26 January, 1827, declared that they would "prefer continuing in that degraded condition in which they are rather than have an elected legislature created among them of such circumscribed extent as would leave them the name of popular representation, whilst in reality it delivered them into the hands of an oppressive and rapacious oligarchy." 35

In 1828, the British Government introduced a compromise measure which increased the size and extended the powers of the Legislative Council though the Imperial authorities were not then, or later, prepared to place a penal colony "on the same footing as all other .... Plantations settled by British subjects ...." The new Council had fifteen nominated members and lacked power to discuss any law without the Governor's consent. The Governor took

care to provide himself with a conservative majority by nominating non-official members from among "certain private families". As things turned out, the Governor's virtual despotic power was often used to protect convicts and emancipists from victimization.

By 1838, the colonial constitution was due to come up for reconsideration. Agitation directed against the inadequacies of the Act of 1828 culminated in a public meeting in Sydney on 29 May, 1835, when Wentworth renewed his attack on the unrepresentative nature of the colonial legislature. From this meeting stemmed the Australian Patriotic Association led by Wentworth, Sir John Jamison and Emancipist Dr. William Bland. The Association's Committee commissioned Wentworth to draft bills for a new constitution and arranged for an English Parliamentarian to act as paid colonial agent to push the Emancipist cause in the House of Commons. Meanwhile, the sons of John Macarthur (who died in 1834) used their considerable influence in England to keep the Exclusive point of view before legislators.

Wentworth, by now a rich man and the owner of wide acres at Windemere on the Hunter, had modified his earlier extravagances. He was satisfied to accept the limited franchise qualifications incorporated in the British Reform Act of 1832 as the basis for the A.P.A's demands. There is no reason to suppose that he was either cynical or insincere about this. In common with James Macarthur, who disliked him, he was coming round to the view that "a democracy of equals" was a safer guarantee of law, order and property in a penal colony than a legislature open to democrats who could easily turn into socialists and levellers. Before long, the A.P.A. was agitating for a retention of transportation rather than an extension of the franchise.

brothers and a few Radicals objected but most members of the Association agreed with Wentworth. The A.P.A. emerged as an instrument for urban middle-class Emancipists rather than as a radical or democratic organization although Radicals and democrats clung to its edges.

By the 1830's Australia had become, in Parrington's phrase, "a new world with potentialities before undreamed of ..." The old penal Australia had been coercive, hidebound, cheeseparing, unimaginative, static, a sustenance economy resting on a social and moral quagmire, "a species of society beyond comparison less favourable to colonization than utter solitude," as Jeremy Bentham put it.\(^{37}\) When John Macarthur and Samuel Marsden demonstrated that prison labour could be exploited to grow fine wool almost without limit, the situation changed from dull acceptance to ebullient optimism. A tide of newcomers, with money to invest in sheepwalks, lapped over the edges of a stagnant economy and seeped between the interstices of the prison society. They formed the "New Gentry" in contrast to the satirically-labelled "Ancient Nobility" but the two never quite interlocked socially although their economic interests rapidly coincided.

In 1831, the Ripon Land Regulations replaced free land grants for sale by auction at an upset price per acre. Once again Imperial policy changed the pace and direction of colonial development although not in the manner Westminster desired. Influenced by the theories of W.G. Wakefield and the Colonial Reformers, the Colonial Office believed in controlled development within boundaries that could be efficiently administrated. Instead, the new regulations turned "squatting" on Crown Land from a disreputable illegality into a respectable and profitable way of life. "Squatters" became the cutting edge of Australian


development. Like their English contemporaries, Marx’s "Manchester Party", they were "necessarily revolutionary".\(^{37b}\)

Spurning the Nineteen Counties, which British authority vainly tried to stabilize as the only proper basis for orderly and civilized development, "Squatters" flooded into the newly-discovered "Australia Felix" south of the Murray and west of Melbourne and into other promising pastoral areas in the seemingly limitless wide spaces beyond the official boundaries. "As well might it be attempted to confine the Arabs of the Desert within a circle, traced upon their sands, as to confine the Graziers or Woolgrowers of New South Wales within any bounds that can possibly be assigned to them," reported Governor Sir George Gipps (1838-1846), adding: "and as certainly as the Arabs would be starved, so also would the flocks and herds of New South Wales, if they were so confined, and the prosperity of the Country be at an end."\(^{38}\)

As Gipps clearly saw, the official conception of Nineteen Counties (later increased to twenty), which aimed at keeping agricultural and pastoral communities within a circle of law and order, ignored the facts of the Australian environment, especially the tyranny of distance. "In early Australia a ton of wool was usually at least ten times as valuable as a ton of wheat, and sometimes twenty or more times as valuable. Whereas a settler who grew wheat 150 miles inland from Sydney, would have paid more than the wheat was worth to transport it merely to Sydney, let alone London, his wool was usually valuable enough to afford the freight across the world."\(^{39}\) Thus, the dynamics of Australian development now rested with pastoralists and Squatters and not with Colonial Reformers, cockatoo farmers, urban liquor or shipping.


interests, immigrant workers or the Colonial Office.

Meanwhile, changing circumstances were giving rise to fresh social groupings, including a developing middle class in Sydney and in the new town of Melbourne, created in 1837 to service Squatters who had invaded hitherto out-of-bounds Australia Felix. In South Australia exponents of new colonial ideas had in 1836 founded a colony on Wakefieldian principles which some hoped would be a paradise for dissenters. In Western Australia, a fresh influx of neo-Macarthurian idealists were struggling to make ends meet without convict helots or a sufficiency of free labour to help turn unproductive sand plain into illusory landed estates.

In the older colonies, by 1838, there were also new people with new ideas. True, many free immigrant labourers were the manufacturing system's redundant poor, almost as alienated as the original convicts. Others were akin to America's Founding Fathers in that they brought with them vision of a New Jerusalem as well as their discontent with things as they were. Some saw cities set upon colonial hills and a democracy that would give a vote to every citizen and have no room for helots or slaves. At the very least, most immigrant newcomers wanted a small farm of their own or opportunity to improve their lot by following their old trades or learning new ones. In 1838, they formed an Australian Union Benefit Society and in 1839 "delegates of the trades" began to speak at public meetings and to present their views in the public prints.

Thus, neither Squatters nor immigrants filled the role allotted them by stay-at-home Colonial Reformers. The Squatters flooded beyond the boundaries of civilized restraint using "Old Hands" as shepherds, stockmen and hutkeepers blithely uncon-
scious that the aborigines had any rights to land they did not till or graze. Immigrants preferred the companionship of city streets and trade associations to "mateship" in bush grog-shops or lonely communion with parrots, 'possums and flea-ridden sheep dogs in bush huts back o' beyond.

The native-born were equally wary of engaging as rural workers for £20 to £25 a year and rations. As early as 1827, naval surgeon Peter Cunningham noted that "young men of low rank are fonder of binding themselves to trades, or going to sea, than passing into the employ of settlers, as regular farm servants". While the "Ancient Nobility", who had resisted the cramped agrarianism of reforming governors, now struggled to keep their heads above a flood of newcomers.

Once the yeasty ferment of the 1830's settled down, however, old and new colonists found common cause against the Imperial Government's attempt to preserve colonial lands for posterity and the Empire as a whole and the Exeter Hall ideal of trusteeship for native peoples. Both Imperial ideals showed genuine concern for human welfare but were heavily tinctured with pragmatic notions which justified Protestant Christianity and British Commerce as the only approved seedbed for the cultivation of a "true and perfect civilization" and for "the introduction of all that is contributory to ... happiness—liberty—literature—arts—sciences—commerce—just legislation—and international harmony".

By the end of the 1840's the Squatters emerged as the most positive and forceful protagonists of a new Australian image, an image more attuned to the Australian environment than the Exclusive image of the Macarthurs of Camden or the larrikin image of the Rocks. In the beginning, the Squatters were able to secure "support from almost all groups of colonists and ... to mobil-


ize and exploit to advantage a general dissatisfaction with various aspects of imperial land administration..." The split, when it did come, was a split between urban and pastoral interests rather than between bosses and workers. Initially, urban interests allied themselves to some extent with the neglected agricultural interest but finally a town versus country dichotomy evolved which persists to this day. Each section of the community developed its own identity — its own myth — and each warrants closer examination against a wider background that is usually accorded Australian myth-making.

At the beginning of a momentous decade, however, all this was implicit rather than explicit in the various social groupings and economic interests that joined to celebrate the colony's Jubilee in January 1838 and to sign Addresses of Welcome to the new Governor, Sir George Gipps, in February of the same year.

Chapter Two

Jubilee Year: 1838

It is the Jubilee; it shall be Holy unto you.
Lev. xxv. 12.
On 26 January, 1838, New South Wales, the Penal Colony of Her Uncrowned Majesty Queen Victoria, celebrated its 50th anniversary. There is no record that the young Queen (who was 20) thought anything of the matter. In 1838 Benjamin Disraeli, her favourite-to-be, had not discovered the Empire. At thirty-three, he was too busy providing himself with a firm political base by marrying a rich widow to concern himself with Imperial matters. Besides, the Queen was a Whig. Whether from conviction or from fervent admiration for her Prime Minister, the charming, aging, ex-roue, Lord Melbourne, is a matter of conjecture.2

Lord Melbourne's Whiggism was traditional and lazy rather than vigorous and idealistic. His instinct was always to let well alone but he did not agree with what he told the Queen was the current and dangerous 'fashionable theory' of letting colonies go the instant they caused trouble. As the Queen recorded in her Journal, "Lord Melbourne observed with great justice that would be just the way to encourage them to revolt, for they would say then, 'Why, we have nothing to do but to revolt to get rid of our masters!'"3

The Prime Minister's homilies to his Royal Mistress on colonial affairs were couched in simple terms. "Lord Melbourne observed," she wrote on 31 August, 1838, "(that) George III was deeply hurt at the loss of the American provinces, which I observed was no wonder; I said I thought it was his fault. Lord M. said most likely it was; but that it was impossible any longer to

1. The young Princess Victoria became Queen on 20th June 1837; the Coronation took place on 28 June, 1838.
keep up the great Colonial Policy, namely that they should exclusively trade with England and make nothing for themselves...."

He added: "The Separation was easily done, they had nothing to do but to declare it ... the first settlers were composed of people who left England in discontent, — of dissenters, etc., and consequently no loyal people could spring from them ...."

The first settlers in New South Wales also left England in discontent for they were convicts and had no choice in the matter nor, as the first Governor, Capt. Arthur Phillip R.N. observed, were they colonists fit "to lay the foundations of an Empire". Indeed, he thought "they should ever remain separated from the garrison and other settlers that may come from Europe, and not be allowed to mix with them, even after the 7 or 14 years for which they are transported may be expired." Things did not turn out like that and by 1838 many of the leading colonists were convict Emancipists clamouring, through the Australian Patriotic Association, for civil and political rights equal to those accorded free-born Englishmen elsewhere. Some even demanded rights beyond anything the British Parliament had been prepared to grant home-keeping Englishmen in the Reform Bill of 1832. Yet, as Charles Buller the Australian Patriotic Association's agent at Westminster, made clear to Emancipist leaders in Sydney, as long as New South Wales remained a penal settlement, transportation would remain "the great obstacle to your gaining a representative government ...."; those who lived "in a place in which the first care of government must be the security and coercion of prisoners", he added, could not "enjoy the full liberty of Englishmen." The Queen and Lord Melbourne would have agreed.

Although the Queen may have been inclined to act like the


5. H.R.N.S.W., 1, 2, p. 53.

6. Australian, 3 July, 1838. (Quoted A. C. V. Melbourne, p. 227.)
ladies of Sydney, and draw the blinds when the chain gangs passed, she must have been aware from her conversations with Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston that New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land existed and that her dominion extended over them as well as over India, the West Indies, Upper and Lower Canada, Cape Colony, and the series of strategic points in Africa, the Indian Ocean and the East Indies, where military bands nightly played God Save the Queen. Nevertheless, she might have been hard pressed to name them all or point unerringly to their positions on a Colonial Office map. Certainly, there was no reason for her in 1838 to pay particular attention to what Mr. Under-Secretary James Stephen at the Colonial Office dismissed, somewhat irritably, as "the peculiar colony".

By and large, New South Wales in 1838 was progressing reasonably well despite the forebodings of conservative colonial authors such as the sharply intelligent James Macarthur and the dubious "Major" James Mudie, Esq., or the dissenting radically-minded John Dunmore Lang. "The Colony is like a healthy child out-growing its Clothes", Whiggish Governor Richard Bourke had written in 1836. "We have to let out a tuck every month". True, if Victoria Regina read The Times with the assiduity expected of a Queen she could not have missed the reported evidence of witnesses before the Parliamentary Select Committee under Sir William Molesworth, the Colonial Reformer, inquiring into the transportation system," its efficacy as a punishment, its influence on the moral state of society in the penal colonies, and how far it is susceptible of improvement.

After nearly ten years of frantic pastoral development Jubilee Year found the colony in a euphoric mood despite a slight

11. F.P. S. C. on Transportation, 1837, p. iii. Molesworth (1810-55) was reputed leader of the Colonial Reformers in Parliament after the death of Lord Durham.
depression in trade and an exceptionally dry summer. Within fifty years, as a dozen or more editorialists, versifiers and essayists proclaimed, a penal outpost on the furthest perimeter of civilization had grown into a thriving colony with a valuable export staple in wool and an adventurous expanding population spreading over the hinterland of thriving coastal towns and thrusting out across largely uncharted seas among exotic islands and strange peoples.

The Establishment and Exclusives now had no doubt that Captain Arthur Phillip, R.N., first Governor of the colony, had been right when he forecast against all official thinking that he was laying the foundations for an extension of empire. Most of them also shared his conviction that convicts and Emancipists made poor mortar for the construction of free institutions. Educated Emancipists and their supporters in the Australian Patriotic Association, on the other hand, shared something of the Romantic extravagance of James Tuckey, Lieutenant aboard the ship which took the first convicts to Port Phillip and Hobart Town (1803-4), although they might have cast their hopes in different words:

I beheld a second Rome, rising from a coalition of banditti. I beheld it giving laws to the world, and superlative in arms and in arts, looking down with proud superiority upon the barbarous nations of the northern hemisphere.\(^\text{12}\)

Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles), musing over a sample of clay brought back from Sydney in 1788, was moved to write:

Where Sydney Cove her lucid bosom swells,
Courts her young navies, and the storm repels,
High on a rock amid the troubled air
Hope stood supreme, and waved her golden hair ...
There, ray'd from cities o'er the cultur'd land,

Shall bright canals and solid roads expand—
There the proud arch, Colossus-like, bestride
Yon glittering streams, and bound the chafing tide;
Embellished villas crown the landscape-scene,
Farms wave with gold, and orchards blush between .../3

By 1838, Sydney's elite lived along the ridge above Wooloomooloo, high on a rock amid troubled air, where they had pretty glimpses of sea and ships through shrubs and trees in their "umbrageous gardens" to the "young navies" gathered on the lucid bosom of Port Jackson. Their material interests, however, lay mostly inland where the colony's rapidly increasing two million sheep and 400,000 horned cattle provided economic foundation for a booming speculative decade which led many men "of gentle blood", as Assistant-Surgeon Thomas Bartlett of the 51st Regiment of Foot put it, to suppose that the new world was enjoying all the advantages of the golden age; that people of all descriptions .... were able to elevate themselves to a footing in worldly wealth with their more fortunate (because earlier born) brethren at home, and, at the same time, to enjoy a purely arcadian existence...not as in the old country, by the possession of a certain quantity of mineral dug from the bowels of the earth, but by owning a certain number of innocent animals; that wealth was acquired not by means of noisy machinery, nor by precarious commerce, but simply by allowing the fulfillment of nature's first law, the propagation of the species .... /5

The less elite, who could not boast of "gentle blood", lived and worked along lower Pitt, George, York and Kent Streets, around the waterfront, or in the Rocks. They did not despise noisy machinery (ex-convict Simeon Lord was already making hats, blankets and stockings from local wool) or precarious commerce (which had already enriched ex-convicts Kable, Underwood, Lord and a number of other Emancipists) and as

often as not looked seaward rather than landward for their economic opportunities. Those who did not keep pubs, brothels or slop-shops for seamen went to sea themselves in preference to remaining one of those dismissed by Kingsley's Parson Frank Mabberly as the "lanky, lean, pasty-faced, blaspheming" native-born sons of poor Emancipist or immigrant farmers whose small properties suffered alternate flood and drought rather than waved with golden corn or blushed with mellow fruitfulness.

In the 1830's and 1840's, young footloose Americans moved West beyond the wide Missouri "to fight Injuns and kill b'ar or buffler" or packed trade goods along the Santa Fe Trail to sell illegally to Spanish-speaking Americans on the borders of New Mexico. Young Australians, with a similar itch, went to sea to trade guns and liquor for flax and shrunken human heads with Maoris in New Zealand or to kill seals and hunt whales in the unchartered waters of the Pacific. Port Jackson, where between three and four hundred ships from all parts of the world berthed each year, offered Sydney's native-born adventure and independence besides chances of gain far beyond anything that lay over the Blue Mountains, on the Monaro, or across the Murray, where £10 to £25 a year was the best the Squatters could offer.

As early as 1827, Peter Cunningham noted that "young men of low rank are fonder of binding themselves to trades, or going to sea, than passing into the employ of the settlers, as regular farm servants". Cunningham attributed this to reluctance on their part to working alongside assigned convicts while Kingsley's Geoffry Hamlyn noted that the native-born made it a point of honour not to touch their hats to their "betters" because the convicts were forced to do it. These motives may

have been present but, as the careers of Currency-born John Jones and James Kelly demonstrated, Sydney and the sea offered better prospects and greater independence for enterprising and respectable young men without initial capital than the land where, as Currency Lad James Ryan remarked, "The tyrants were well-known and marked men, they resided for the most part in mansions and drove their carriages, rolling in wealth at the cost of human blood".

Ryan borrowed his rhetoric from Horatio Wills's short-lived newspaper the Currency Lad (1832-33) ignoring the fact that rich Radical urban Emancipists like distiller Robert Cooper lived in big houses, drove to the races in four-in-hands or tandems and did not hesitate to send their convict servants to the magistrat for fifty of the best. True, the "Ancient Nobility" also lived in fine houses and, according to socially insecure James Mudie, were "ridiculously proud; quite laughable .... haughty in their manners .... very grand indeed" and "particular as to whom they allow their daughters to marry" as Wentworth had learned to his chagrin. While, within the boundaries and along the Hunter, the "New Gentry" aspired to emulate the Wyndham's of Dalwood, who lived in "a great house of cool stone corridors and high-ceilinged rooms, of wide iron-barred doors opening on a stone flagged courtyard where servants pumped water splashing into pails ... and through the windows wandered scents from Grandmamma's garden — summer roses, lemon-hedge, lavender and sage and queer herbs for tisanes ...."

The "Squatters", who now represented the arrowhead of economic progress, owned no land or mansions, had no time to loll in carriages and were too short of labour and too far from magistrates to exact discipline with a knotted lash. Mudie was out-

of-date in 1837 when he dismissed Squatters as "ticket-of-leave men that have become free ..." These were the rogues and vagabonds, who had established themselves on waste land between properties within the boundaries, where they scraped a living stealing cattle or selling sly grog to assigned convicts on neighbouring estates. By 1838, "Squatters" were mostly young or youngish "persons of sanguine temperament" embarked on the hazardous adventure of making money by overlanding sheep, establishing stations beyond the boundaries, dispersing justifiably hostile or thieving aborigines and grappling with foot-rot and scab in sheep and the human perversities of an increasingly inadequate labour force. Most of them liked to consider themselves gentlemen although they worked with their hands, smelled of sheep and rank tobacco and came from diverse social backgrounds. Many were immigrants anxious not to be lumped with convicts, ex-convicts or Currency Lads. Captain Foster Fyans, first resident magistrate in the Geelong and Portland Bay districts, wrote:

The squatting population consists of such various classes of persons that it is impossible to speak of it as a body. Many of the squatters are gentlemen, worthy and excellent men, of undoubted character and well connected at home...Another class of squatters is a kind of shop-boys. A plain man can barely approach them. They have wonderful sources of wealth and comfort, with dirty huts and no comfort, but with plenty of pipe-smoking, grumbling, and discontent...Here is a country yielding all that man can require for only a little labour. It abounds in a class who care for nothing excepting self-interest...Another class consists of old shepherds...I have known many of them to become wealthy, and some who did not forget themselves; but most were out of their places, and it would have been better for the community had they remained shepherds rather than become masters.23

"New Gentry" and many "Squatters" had been attracted, as satirical Thomas Bartlett pointed out, by misleading visions of "an Arcadian life in a country in which there is no cold winter's blast, no snow" free from "sulphurous fogs" under "a pure Italian sky" but most of them found no time "to luxuriate ... and at the same time .... amass a large fortune by the exercise only of common prudence" or "to enjoy the pleasures of continued summer, with only the short intermission when the rains fall, and to revel in the possession of almost perfect health .... There was something of romance, too, and an appearance of courage in making the attempt .... it is thus by a union of exaggeration and imagination, that a number of persons voluntarily exile themselves, and, generally, for life ...."

In contrast to the indignities and disappointments associated with tending scabby sheep in the harsh interior, New Zealand and the islands offered adventurous young Australians what the Rockies and the prairies provided for American Mountain Men and those who took the trail to Santa Fe: a free, lawless and risky way of making money supplying sought-after commodities for a seemingly inexhaustible market. In Australia, Emancipists Kable, Underwood and Lord showed the way by their rapid, profitable and unscrupulous development of the local sealing industry. Their native-born apprentices and rivals were soon forming crews and building ships to share with American sealers and whalers in the ruthless exploitation of largely uncharted seas.

As with the Mountain Men and the Santa Fe traders, the bonanza years were comparatively short-lived but while they lasted they opened the way for hundreds of young Australians to escape from wage-slavery or rural exploitation in an increasingly bourgeois world although the most successful of them, like John Jones

and James Kelly, rapidly succumbed to embourgeoisment themselves. Certainly, the rank-and-file native-born showed no particular egalitarian social political consciousness. Their fathers, the convicts, had been divided from each other, as John Manifold has pointed out, by differences of social background, education, regional dialect and degree of criminality. All they had in common was their exile. The educated or aspiring among them had no wish to stay in the anonymous egalitarianism imposed on them by law. The Australian Patriotic Association's equation of property with citizenship appealed to their sense of respectability. The ignorant, unlucky or vicious had little political or class consciousness beyond a feeling that Australia was their "home" and that they were the only true-blue "Australians". "Surly defiance, dumb insolence and ... impudent mockery were [their] usual forms of resistance to the system."

The convict legacy provided an inheritance for the Cabbage Tree Hat Mob and later larrikins but handed down no tradition of political rebelliousness to Currency Lads despite the heady rhetoric of 21-year-old Horatio Wills, native-born son of an English highway robber, who urged:

Look, Australians, to the high-salaried foreigners around you! Behold those men lolling in their coaches—rioting in the sweat of your brow—while you, yes, you, the Sons of the Soil, are doomed to eternal toil—the sport and ridicule of pettifogging worldlings...your children shall imbibe from the breasts that suckle them the all-absorbing desire of revenge—and look, with eager expectation, to the day when their numerical strength will justify them in declaring, 'We were not made for slaves'.

Rather than imbibing the desire for revenge with their mothers' milk many Currency Lads were sober, hardworking and an-

xious to improve their status by other than political means. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest, as Ken MacNab and Russel Ward have argued, that convicts, Emancipists and Currency Lads shared strong attachment to Australia but little to show that they developed an egalitarian class interest that helped shape the early political development of New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land. They supported the Australian Patriotic Association rather than any immigrant brand of Chartism or colonial version of democracy. Their inchoate nationalism, with its contempt for immigrants, probably hampered rather than helped the growth of a colonial democratic political movement.

Nor is it easy to accept the argument that "our ancestors usually had the right of it when they assumed that material progress was likely to bring moral progress in its train ...". That many Emancipists and some Currency Lads achieved material success is indisputable. That they gained moral stature thereby is less certain.

Respectability rather than rebelliousness was the common bond between many Currency Lads. Fiery young Horatio Wills, who wrote some of his most trenchant pieces when suffering a hangover, turned Squatter. By Jubilee Year he held a valuable pastoral lease on the Molonglo, where he presumably consorted with the liberal-minded Catholic but essentially conservative Terence Aubrey Murray of Yarralumla. The following year he began a marathon overland trip with 5000 sheep and 500 cattle into the Port Phillip District where, in due course, he became "something of a country squire, taking active interest in church, agricultural, immigration and charitable movements". As a member of the Victorian Legislative Council he canvassed land reform, exclusion of Chinese, colonial defence and penal


His eldest son, Thomas Wentworth Wills, attended Rugby, the English public school, and played cricket for Victoria.30

John Jones, Wentworth's partner in an ill-starred attempt to buy the South Island of New Zealand for a few hundred pounds, is a remarkable example of a Currency Lad whose material success quickly dispersed any egalitarian notions he might have cherished initially. His successful career, which culminated as shipowner and whaling master, began with illicit trade between ships in the harbour and the Rocks. At the age of sixteen, he had made enough money to pay £800 for the Sydney Packet, on which he shipped as his own super-cargo for a profitable voyage around the whaling stations of New Zealand. The following year he had three boats and 36 men working for him in New Zealand waters. In March, 1837, he joined with "the Merchant Shipowners of the Port of Sydney" in resisting an agitation for increased wages by seamen and wharf labourers who had formed what the shipowners considered "a combination on the part of the men which they believe they can carry into effect at this important and busy season of the year."32

The rise of Captain James Kelly of Hobart Town was hardly less spectacular. Born at Parramatta, the son of a seacook and an unmarried convict mother, he was apprenticed at thirteen to Kable and Underwood to learn "the Art of Master Mariner" promising in his indentures "not to absent himself day or night from his Said Masters vessel ... nor haunt alehouses, taverns, or play houses ..."33 Whether he followed these instructions to the letter or not, young Kelly finished his fifth and final year of apprenticeship earning £12 a year and began an adventurous and profitable career as sealer, whaler, merchant and ship-

33. K.M. Bowden, Captain James Kelly of Hobart Town (Melbourne, 1964), pp. 8-9. I am indebted to Dr. Bowden for these and other details in this summary of Kelly's life.
owner.

By the time he was fifty, Kelly owned a town house in Hobart, a farm at Bruny Island, rented a pew in St. David's Church, had sent his two sons "home" to Bath Grammar School and enjoyed the patronage of Sir John and Lady Franklin on the vice-regal committee conducting the Grand Tasmanian Regatta. At the peak of his career Lady Franklin, writing to a friend in England describing the Regatta, referred to Kelly as "a curious and rich old fellow who was the chief manager of the Regatta boats ... he sports a carriage on which he has for a crest a hand grasping a harpoon with the motto Olium".

Alas, disaster and tragedy lay in wait for Captain Kelly! On one of his early sealing voyages, which achieved a record tally for a Hobart ship of three thousands skins, Kelly quarrelled with the Maoris and in an affray sometimes dignified as "the Battle of Otago" he was instrumental in destroying 42 Maori canoes. The Maoris never forgot and twenty years later took their revenge, attacking one of Kelly's whalers, destroying the gear and seizing dead whales moored alongside for treatment. On her next voyage the Maoris plundered the same ship. These inci-
dents might not have proved irretrievable except that about the same time Kelly lost another ship in bad weather and all three disasters coincided with the financial crisis of the 1840's. In September, 1842, Kelly was forced to assign his estate, losing nearly everything he possessed. He died of a stroke in the street on 20 April, 1859.

Australia's sealers and whalers, like America's Mountain Men, were utterly lawless and, amid the peerless beauty of tropical lagoons and snowy peaks, stank of blubber, fouled clothing and bad liquor. Some succumbed to their surroundings and
abjured respectability as readily and more thoroughly than the Cabbage Tree Hat Mob. Others, like James Kelly, rose above their origins, sported their plate, kept a fine table and drove in their carriages to social occasions from which their parents would have been excluded. Either way, alienated or aspiring, seamen or bushmen, the native-born developed a sturdy self-independence and a chip-on-the-shoulder pride similar to that found in after years among native-born and immigrant Australian trade unionists and the Australian Imperial Force. This was the indigenous soil from which the Australian legend sprang although the compost that gave it democratic shape arrived with urban immigrants.

In comparison with the traditional and widely accepted political and moral authority of the Imperial Establishment and colonial Churches, schools and law courts, the ethos of mateship, independence and a growing nationalism represented a limited and rudimentary morality. Even in its most primitive form—honour among thieves—it lacked real psychological compulsion. Tom Inglis Moore and Humphrey McQueen have made it clear that mateship among convicts was more often marked by intimidation and betrayal than by loyalty to fellows in distress.\(^34\) Informers and "mates" who turn "Queen's evidence" are as prominent in Australian legend and literature as Sydney Cartons or the bushranger Johnny Gilbert who died fighting so that his mate Dunn could live long enough to be hanged.

Mateship among bushmen, miners and soldiers derived as often as not from the nature and circumstances of avocation rather than from convicts, who excluded immigrants from the Magic circle. In this sense there was nothing unique about mateship. Immigrants from industrial England and Scotland did not have to come to Australia or go to America to discover "workmates" or

"butties". Australians changed the vernacular to "mate" and Americans to "buddy" but the idea was the same and derivative in both instances.

Barry Argyle suggests that the legend of the footloose independent bushman, an integral part of the mateship ethos, derives from the picaresque novel, popular in eighteenth-century England, in which the rogue hero survives all vicissitudes because he must in order to experience the variety of adventures necessary to the particular literary form. Argyle cites James Tucker's Ralph Rashleigh (written about 1845) as an example and raises the "interesting speculation that the demands of English readers helped create the Australian myth of the invincible bushman ... well sustained since by Australian readers in the mainland's five capital cities". 35

However we look at the origin of mateship there is not much evidence that either independence, affluence or bar-rail camaraderie lead to increased moral stature. Apart from the fact that Squatters, Emancipists and the native-born shared a climate of opinion that saw nothing wrong in the ruthless extermination of natural amenities in pursuit of profit, Australian seamen and bushmen, as surely as the Mountain Men and buffalo hunters of America, were instruments in the corruption of nature and primitive man. They helped debauch "the lesser tribes without the law" with liquor, infected them with venereal disease and, on occasion, shot them without giving the matter a second thought. Thus, in laying the foundations of the new nation celebrated at the Jubilee, they also helped undermine the cultural cohesion of the "pure native sons of savage liberty" Wentworth had hymned in his prize-winning poem. Inevitable this may have been, given time and place; moral it certainly was not.

Despite the anxiety of "the Native youth" to usher in the Jubilee "with much rejoicing and great splendour" initially there was no great public interest although "the Australians" had established a tradition of meeting for an Anniversary Dinner on 26 January each year at which the big guns of the Australian Patriotic Association fired salvoes in defence of native rights and in favour of trial by jury and colonial self-government. As late as 17 January, John Dunmore Lang's Colonist reported: "The depression in trade has, alas, produced an undeniable depression on the spirits of our merchants and citizens. They have really more serious matters hanging on their minds than the mere display of a public Anniversary—they are not in the vein. All thoughts are now given up to having anything like a Public Jubilee." 37

The Colonist was premature in announcing the demise of public celebrations which Lang's editor, Henry Bull, had no doubt hoped could be disassociated from Lang's bete noir: "... the great majority of that class [Emancipists] who had acquired wealth... by the sale of rum and the practice of enormous extortion, by grinding the faces of their poorer brethren." 38 The Sydney Herald was also contemptuous. On 15 January, it declared that "the Patriots may as well keep quiet: Their day is gone by; the 'Tories' have been too active in London and have told too true a tale [about "the Felony of New South Wales"] for the Representatives of the Patriots to have any effect ..."

That Emancipists and Exclusives might coalesce into an "Australian" interest mutually fearful of "wild democracy" did not seem likely than although there were many straws in the wind, including James Macarthur's evidence before the Transportation Committee, when he said:

I think that whenever a new Act is passed for the government of New South Wales, it will be advisable and expedient to introduce a representative system, which shall be preparatory to the future exercise of a representative government in the fullest extent to which it is exercised in any colony although he was careful to add looking at the state of society caused by the existence of transportation for so many years ... certain modifications of the usual forms of representative government ought to be adopted in any plan brought into execution.39

Before Jubilee Year was out the Australian Patriotic Association, which irrepressible radical John Dunmore Lang dismissed as "a sort of Colonial Ragfair attended by all the blustering attorneys in the colony," had begun its drift towards the anti-popular pro-conservative policies which four years later prompted Wentworth's old paper the Australian to declare that "the Liberator" who "first taught the natives of this colony what liberty was ... has betrayed them since and have withdrawn their confidence from him".41 The judgment had no validity even in 1842 but the changed circumstances that eventually made Wentworth spokesman for the squatters had advanced sufficiently in 1838 to make it doubtful whether he could be depended upon to deliver, even if asked, the sort of speech that would please both the Establishment and the native-born on Anniversary Day in Jubilee Year.

As could be expected, the Australian, Wentworth's old paper and forum for the Emancipists' cause, had no doubts about the Jubilee. "The year and the month which has just commenced, bring with them events of extraordinary interest," native-born George Robert Nichols (Radical Bob) declared in his New Year editorial, "the 26th of January, 1838, being the 50th anniversary of...the Colony. Having debated on this subject in several articles relative to the approaching Jubilee, we shall now forbear to make any remarks on the

41. Australian, 18 January, 1842.
42. G. R. Nichols (1809-1875), son of a convict; first native-born barrister; edited the Australian early 1838.
prosperous condition, the inexhaustible resources, and the glorious prospects, which the Colony presents to our astonished view..."

According to its editor, the Colonist and not "Nichol's Rag" was first to suggest that something should be done to celebrate the Jubilee, although the Reverend John Dunmore Lang was in London so his name was not among "the influential and respectable Householders" who attended the preliminary meeting on 26 December, 1837, and unanimously resolved: "That a Public Meeting of the Colonists generally be convened on an early day to adopt measures for celebrating the Jubilee." Nichols' name was first on the list of sponsors. In 1838, this handsome, Australian-born, 29-year-old son of an Emancipist, stood well to the left of Wentworth in the councils of the A.P. A. which continued to petition for the rights of Englishmen, as elaborated, if not defined, by Edmund Burke, rather than for the Rights of Man.

The public meeting was convened for 3 January at the Royal Hotel, George Street, and the sponsors defined its purpose as follows: "In order to commemorate this important epoch in the history of Australia, and to celebrate in the most joyous way, the civilised Birth of our much blessed and rising Colony, to join heart and hand in one common union at the Banqueting Table, which it is intended shall be sumptuously prepared under the superintendence of a select Committee of Management .... Gentlemen Patriotically disposed to assist by their efforts in consummating with splendour and good harmony the Feast of the Jubilee, will be pleased to assemble at the Royal Hotel, on Wednesday next, the 3rd inst., at Twelve o'clock precisely .... As a preliminary step, it is proposed to solicit of His Excellency the Acting Governor, the use of one of the wings of the Market Place, and to request the aid of Government in fitting up such wing as a Banqueting Hall."

Including the sponsors, only twenty-four people attended the

43. Australian, 2 January, 1838.
44. Colonist, 3 January, 1838.
Wednesday meeting. Obviously, the colonists were either doubtful about "the civilized Birth" or the present blessedness of New South Wales or reluctant to "join heart and hand in one common union" at a banquetting table obviously meant for "influential and respectable" £20 franchise Householders at least. Hastily, the original sponsors corrected their initial mistake by adjourning the meeting until 8 January, "when those Persons who are desirous that measures should be adopted for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Colony as a Public Festival, are respectfully requested to attend at the Mechanics' School of Arts at the hour of 12 o'clock, noon ...." 

Meanwhile, to everyone's relief, the Sydney Gazette, oldest and most staid of Sydney's newspapers, had announced that "the Australian Jubilee will be taken in hand by the Government, and that the arrangements will be made throughout the Colony to render the day as one not likely to be forgotten ...." The Gazette added: "The natives, as might have been anticipated, are taking up the matter with creditable spirit worthy of the occasion." In short, the Acting Governor, Scottish Peninsular War veteran Lieut-Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass, had no intention of leaving the Jubilee in the hands of the "Australians".

Not deigning to notice the Colonist's claim to have originated moves for the celebration of the Jubilee the Gazette observed sarcastically that it would have been "considered presumptuous in us to have interfered in any shape with the arrangements proposed for the celebration of the Jubilee ... while the Australian had taken the management of the affair under its protection" but, "as it may now be ... considered as a matter of history that our contemporary has failed in the accomplishment of his object, we may perhaps be forgiven in conceiving it expedient to bring a similar project forward

45. Colonist, 6 January, 1838.
46. Sydney Gazette, 4 January, 1838.
After dwelling on the rapid progress of the Colony over fifty years, a progress "unparalleled in the history of any age or country", and looking forward to the time, "which cannot be far distant", when New South Wales will "assume its position among the brightest gems in the British diadem," the Gazette asserted that the "only stumbling block in the way of the celebration of the Jubilee passing off with eclat, is, in our opinion, the insolent effrontery of several of the more unregenerate members of the felony, who must persist in intruding their presence on all occasions ...." The Gazette concluded that "the ill-judged attempts of brazen-faced men to intrude" should be resisted at the meeting called for 6 January at the Mechanic's Institute although the "criterion of character" should be "equally applied to all classes, whether Emigrant, Australian, or Emancipist ...." This could be done, it was suggested, by the selection of stewards for the occasion "to prevent the intrusion of improper characters".47

Alas! for the Gazette's hopes. On 13 January it regretted to report that the "attempt on Monday last to get up a Public Meeting to adopt measures for the celebration of the Jubilee .... failed like the former, about eleven or twelve individuals being all that were in attendance. Those who did assemble parted without ... taking any further steps in the matter ...." The Gazette suggested that "the original requisitionists" should apply to the Acting Governor to proclaim 26 January a public holiday and grant such other aid as may seem necessary.48

In a note printed in the same issue the Gazette quoted a report from "one of our contemporaries" that "the 'Native' Australians ... intend celebrating the 50th Anniversary by a grand ball and supper ... at the Pulteney Hotel ... patronised by Australia's fair

47. Sydney Gazette, 6 January, 1838.
daughters and her manly 'currency lads'". The result said the Gazette, "may be anticipated." Presumably, there would be no stewards to keep out brazen-faced men and improper characters. However, the price of the tickets - two guineas each - was calculated to keep ordinary lads and lasses out although in Sydney the most improper persons were often found to be plentifully in funds.

With the public holiday in mind, the colonists, whether Native-born or imported, as the Gazette put it, began to take up the celebration with enthusiasm. Soon the newspapers were carrying advertisements from Thomas Wood, "Lamp Contractor of King Street", respectfully informing "his Friends and the Public" that he had already received "many Orders for Illuminations on the Night of the approaching Jubilee" and begging "such Individuals who are desirous of evincing their joy on the occasion" to lodge their orders early. The newspapers also carried advertisements urging "persons disposed to promote the getting up of a Sailing Match, between Boats of the first and second Class" to call at the Office of the Harbour Master, on or before 24 January, to register their craft for contesting a sweepstake. It was also proposed, to hold "a Whale-Boat Race for a Sweepstakes, should a sufficient number of Boats be willing to enter." 50

On 25 January, even the ultra-conservative Sydney Herald, which had so far disdained to mention the Jubilee, carried a News and Note crosshead, "Public Holiday", which said: "Tomorrow, being the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Colony, will be kept as a public holiday. The Government offices, Banks, and other public establishments will be closed. Divine Service will be performed at St. James' Church, and a sermon preached before the Diocesan Committee by the Bishop of Australia. A Regattá is being got up, and there will be a Dinner at the Pulteney Hotel in the

Evening." Then, by way of reminder that the birth stain still persisted, the Note continued: "The Supreme Criminal Court opens on Thursday next; there are one hundred and forty-three prisoners for trial."

The Colonist was skittishly jubilant. "We are happy to see," the editor announced, "that Sydney is not going to mope over her depression in trade on so joyous and interesting an occasion. It would be betraying a craven-like want of genuine pluck in our citizens, were they not to make on this occasion at least a show of joyous celebration. We are after all, then, to have, let us see — Divine Service at St. James' Church .... A Regatta, on a small scale .... Then, on the evening there is to be a splendid ball and supper, given by natives to their friends .... last of all, when night shrouds our city in her sable mantle, we expect to see the windows of all our loyal and patriotic citizens so brilliantly illuminated, that the very stars will seem extinguished, and, bye-the-bye, we had almost forgot, are not the Government to order some splendid fireworks to amuse the boys? Hurra! what a blazing night we'll have of it!"

A more realistic note was struck by a Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Pullerton, who wrote a two-column letter to the Colonist from Windsor, in which he reminded colonists that when they "contemplate with astonishment" the past improvement of the Colony and "reflect with delight on the probability of its future greatness", not to forget present ungodliness and "the impure and unhallowed affections of a morally debased and sensual people ...." God, he continued, had given the inhabitants of New South Wales "riches in abundance," he called upon "all classes of the community" to the "performance of those moral and religious duties by which alone the year can be hallowed".

52. Colonist, 20 January, 1838.
The Australian kept its big guns for Anniversary Day itself. "This is an epoch——", Nichols announced in a main leading article, "an epoch in our history: and one which, when the names and proceedings of the present generation will have long sunk into oblivion, will be remembered by our posterity with admiration. Future heroes and legislators will relate with pleasure to their rising offspring every circumstance connected with this glorious period in the annals of Australia .... it shall not be asserted," the article continued, with a side flick at its contemporary the Herald, which carried no Anniversary Day leading article, "that this journal ... has maintained an inviolable and unworthy silence on an occasion interesting alike to the patriot, the philanthropist, and the statesman ... Now is the time for us to stand forth - now is the time for us to avow our sentiments - and now is the time for us to congratulate our liberal fellow-citizens on their unprecedented improvement ... Let us then ... follow truth as our guide ... and avoid acrimonious scurrility ... (and) take a retrospective view of what we originally were; then let us consider the glorious, the exhilarating condition of our future prospects."  

The Gazette considered it probable that the Colony would in future be comparatively free from the curse of convict contamination .... As it is to immigration, and not to transportation, that the Colonists must in future look .... for the requisite supply of labour, .... each succeeding year in this new era .... must behold the infusion among us of healthy and virtuous cargoes of immigrants, to supply the wants caused by the withdrawal, from private service, of the vile and unprincipled outcasts who formerly made so very considerable a portion of our entire population. It becomes us then to be 'up and doing' for on ourselves alone depends the settlement of the question, whether New South Wales ... is to ADVANCE or RETROGRADE in the scale of Colonial prosperity? --- whether we are

54. Australian, 26 January, 1838.
56. In New South Wales assignment was abolished in 1838 and Transportation in 1840.
still to remain justly branded, from the lips of a British Secretary of State, with the approbrious designation of 'the most depraved community on the face of the earth,' or, at one and the same time, to advance in moral worth and national importance.... The way is clear: reformation in Colonial morality, as well as advancement in National importance, can only be obtained with the infusion of a race of virtuous and industrious immigrants...."

The Sydney Herald refrained from editorial moralising about the past or future but on 29 January devoted a few paragraphs under "Domestic Intelligence" to a report on "The Jubilee" which said: "At twelve o'clock the Royal Standard was hoisted.... and a salute of fifty guns fired. The steamer Australia had been hired by a party of Australians; about eleven o'clock she got under weigh (sic) from the Cove, and after cruising about for a short time, anchored near the starting boat (for the Regatta), and, dancing was commenced, and continued at intervals during the day.... The day was remarkably fine, and there were great numbers of boats of every description.... we are glad to be able to say that there was not so much drunkenness and riot as we have been in the habit of seeing.... In the evening, about forty gentlemen dined together at the Pul­teney Hotel, Mr. G. R. Nichols in the chair. A few houses were illuminated and great quantities of rockets and other fireworks were let off." The same issue devoted 2½ columns to news from America and the main leader dealt approvingly with "Emigration From the Agricultural Counties of England".

On 30 January, the Australian declared itself proud to devote 1½ columns to a report of the celebration during which "Australia's native and adopted sons, on this ever-memorable occasion, (though not with the spirit and enthusiasm of Britons), evinced ardour and patriotism sufficient to rescue their names from ridicule
and contempt ...." After repeating that Catholic Bishop Polding and "the various dissenting persuasions" held services as well as Anglican Bishop Broughton, the Australian went on to emphasise that the steamboat Australia, "which was engaged by four Australians", hoisted "the standard adopted by the natives of the Colony .... amidst the most deafening and enthusiastic cheering .... an ensign which, in all probability, will, before fifty years hence, be seen in every port and on every sea — the emblem of an independent and a powerful empire .... At twelve, Dawes' Battery, over which the royal standard of Great Britain floated triumphantly, began to peal forth its thunders .... It certainly gratified our vanity, to behold our harbour with its hundred coves — a harbour unrivalled in the world — the scene of such bustle and activity — such wealth and importance — such commerce and independence. Great Britain — the inhabitants of which, say, and say with truth, 'where'er the billows roam, where'er the surges roam, survey our empire' — might well be proud of such a progeny ...." 

Despite the Australian's wistful hope that the inhabitants of Great Britain "might well be proud of such a progeny" most of them continued to prefer to emigrate to the United States of America, while in London, The Times had nothing at all to say about the Jubilee of New South Wales. Indeed, its newsreports only mentioned the Colony three times throughout Jubilee Year (other than the views of witnesses before the Molesworth Commission), being mainly concerned about bushrangers in Van Diemen's Land and the fact that "all vegetation looks extremely bad owing to the protracted draught (sic) ...." 

The Colonist, all enthusiasm evaporated now the "Australians" had appropriated the Jubilee, dismissed the celebrations in a paragraph which reported that the Rev. R. Mansfield preached an eloquent Anniversary Sermon in the Wesleyan Chapel, Macquarie St., the Rev

57. Australian, 30 January, 1838.

58. The Times, 2 November, 1838.
John Saunders preached to a respectable congregation in the Baptist Church and Bishop Broughton preached "a ... judicious sermon on the present state and future of Australia ... dwelling on the prevalent vices of the community, and the indifference which it manifested in the matter of religion ..." Seven columns in the same issue were devoted to the doings and sayings of Dr. Lang, so lack of space for the Jubilee was perhaps understandable. No doubt Henry Bull, editor of the Colonist, had his troubles with the redoubtable John Dunmore Lang.

(iii)

Despite the paper warfare that accompanied the celebration of the colony's Jubilee the respectable and sub-respectable citizens of Sydney were fully conscious that it was an event which, as the Rev. William Woolls, classical master at Sydney College, reminded them, would command the attention of future historians. "That in the course of half a century, the desert should become a flourishing city, and that the dreary woods should give way to the liveliness of cultivation," he wrote, "are certainly in themselves matters of interest." The original penal settlement now had an identity of its own and a future which free Englishmen might contemplate with equanimity. Or, as an anonymous poet put it in the Australian Magazine:

While other States decline and fall,
Rise thou the Mistress of them all,
Send forth thy fame to furthest Pole —
Australia, great and free.

The initial apathy which greeted the first suggestions, "around the festive board" at the Anniversary Day Dinner in 1837, that the Jubilee should be celebrated with "due eclat and beat of drum" was not so much due to a reluctance on the part of "respectable" colon-


ists to acknowledge the birth stain as to the fact that the original proposal came from members of the Australian Patriotic Association, unjustly considered to be the last resort of ... True patriots all; for be it understood, They left their country for their country's good.

What Sydney's short-lived Literary News called "a kind of jealousy" existed between the two most prominent Sydney factions — Exclusive "clean-skins" and Emancipist "Patriots" — but, as the editor emphasised, when either faction "is beforehand in any ... measure, the adverse faction is sure to ridicule both measure and supporters ..." Yet this was an occasion when most colonists probably agreed with Literary News that "... if ever there were an occasion when [party spirit] ought to be merged in general harmony and cordiality it is this. An opportunity like the present which will not occur again for fifty years, affords surely, sufficient excuse for all parties, and all classes" to forget "their particular prejudices ..." When Patriot interest appeared to lag, and Establishment took the matter up with promises of official support, erstwhile opponents saw the celebration as "a very meritorious proceeding" and "the getters-up therefore transformed into marvellously proper men".

In short, once the desirability of some form of celebration was acknowledged everybody agreed that the rapid progress of the colony was a miracle likely to amaze future chroniclers. "In the records of past ages we read of cities which were built in a day, and of kingdoms which, in a short period, acquired splendour and magnificence," proclaimed Mr. Woolls. "Thus rose Tarsus — 'no mean city' — and Anchialus, another city not far distant from it, both of which, although incredible to those who do not consider how many millions of men the Assyrian Kings had at their command, were built in a day." True, Sydney had not been built in a day but the colonists did have the advantage of "exiles" and might at some future date be compared to ancient Rome, once mistress of the world,


63. William Woolls, Miscellanea, pp. 110-11.
which had "emerged from obscurity, and spread the terror of her arms and hands, without experiencing the same inconvenience and difficulty which paralysed the efforts of the early colonists of this continent". 64

If a classically-minded English clergyman, who was more conscious of contemporary evils (drunkenness, profanity and lechery) than hopeful of future glory, could permit himself comparisons with Assyria and Rome small wonder that the native-born and those who saw their own future, and the futures of their children, in Australasian terms, waxed enthusiastic over the occasion. As early as 1827, James Tucker, reputed convict author of Ralph Rashleigh or The Life of an Exile reflected on future possibilities as the transport Midas nosed into Port Jackson and perhaps recalled the verse he later used as the motto to his chapter on his arrival in New South Wales:

The band of Romulus, it is most certain, 
Wore ruffian stabbers and vile cutpurse knaves; 
Yet did this outcast scum of all the earth 
Lay the foundations of the Eternal City. 65

While in 1823, the colony's "native-born champion", William Charles Wentworth, anticipated Macaulay's New Zealander, gazing at the ruins of London from the broken arches of Westminster Bridge, by declaring:

And, oh, Britannia! should thou cease to ride 
Despotic Empress of old Ocean's tide— 
Should thy tame lion—spent his former might— 
No longer roar, the terror of the fight; 
Should e'er arrive that dark, disastrous hour. 
When, bowed by luxury, thou yield'st to power; 
When thou, no longer freest of the free 
To some proud victor bend'st the vanquished knee; 
May all thy glories in another sphere 
Relume, and shine more brightly still than here; 
May this, thy last-born infant then arise, 
To glad thy heart, and greet thy parent eyes; 
AND AUSTRALASIA FLOAT, WITH FLAG UNFURLED, 
A NEW BRITANNIA IN ANOTHER WORLD!

64. Ibid.
66. Ibid. p. 68.
The following year a Van Diemonian poet, Kirk Hervey, had a similar more pastoral vision of the Australian future:

I see bright meadows, decked in livelier green,
The yellow corn-field, and the blossomed bean:
A hundred flocks o'er smiling pastures roam,
And hark! the music of the harvest home!
Methinks I hear the hammer's busy sound,
The cheerful hum of human voices round;
The laughter and the song that lightens toil,
Sung in the language of my native isle. 67

The editorialists and poets who entertained Arcadian visions of the Australasian future found an enraptured reader in a protégé of George Nichols, the classically-educated James Martin, who in 1838, at eighteen, published a remarkable book of essays inspired by Washington Irving's American Sketch Book (1819). The Irish-born son of a free immigrant, Martin was barely a year old when he arrived in the colony with his parents in 1821. Educated under Daniel Thurston, an Emancipist school-master who conducted the Commercial Academy at Parramatta, and at William Timothy Cape's Emancipist-supported Sydney College, opposite Hyde Park, young Martin began a notable career, which led to the Premierships of the State and the High Court Bench, on Nichols' Australian and in Nichols' law office. Said by some to be the natural son of Daniel O'Connell ("The Liberator"), a story he dismissed as ridiculous but never publicly refuted, 69 Martin burst on the Sydney journalistic scene in a shower of sparks which provoked jealousy among the less-obviously endowed, a jealousy not diminished by his arrogant dismissal of most local poets as pretenders to the laurel crown and his penchant for advising governors how to govern.

Martin dedicated his "small volume" to Nichols, "As an Humble Testimony of the Admiration and Regard of the Author," and set it

afloat feeling that he had "little to dread from the attacks of criticism" because he was just eighteen which, he felt sure, pleaded strongly "in palliation of whatever errors and inaccuracies may be discovered in my compositions". Seated on a tombstone in the Surry Hills cemetery, young Martin enthused over ....

the dawning grandeur—the awakening magnificence of my country...the indications of its extensive wealth—the many evidences of its gigantic resources, and the proofs of its astonishing, and unparalleled advancement towards national renown...fancy pictured vividly before me the splendid empire of which this Colony is the infant germ...  

Mindful that he had his own way to make, the youthful author reminded the colonial wealthy that they could serve their country in no better way than offering their patronage to the embryo "orators, philosophers and statesmen" in their midst. He did not include poets one of whom, Charles Harpur, he dismissed in an essay "The Pseudo-Poets" as a "tall, blear-eyed, pert-looking, coxcombish person". Harpur, whom later critics number among the best of the colonial poets, retorted by describing Martin as, "Just loosed from school, and learned enough to string Rote-beads from Horace." Edward Smith-Hall, fiery editor of the Monitor valued Harpur's Tragedy of Donohoe (which Martin called "a coarse and ridiculous production") and printed fourteen of its twenty-three scenes.

The quarrel that developed between Harpur and Martin is an early indication of Australian involvement in the continuing worldwide conflict between utilitarian and Romantic values: on the one hand, a utilitarian concern with material values and a pragmatic evaluation of social and aesthetic standards; on the other, a flight from the rationalizing and scientific spirit, whether displayed in bourgeois self-help and the ethos of the market-place or in different degrees of "scientific", as opposed to "Utopian" socialism. In early nineteenth-century England, as we shall see,

70. James Martin, Sketch Book, pp. 132-44.
71. Ibid, p. 169.
73. Monitor, February-March, 1835.
this conflict of values surfaced in the intellectual confrontation between Benthamites, with their belief in laissez-faire economics as the best guarantee of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and Romantic poets and writers, whether traditional, like Scott, Coleridge and Southey, emotionally progressive, like Shelley and Dickens, or a confused mixture of both, like Carlyle.
Chapter Three

Imperial Framework

This comprises no presumptuous view of our character; it is Britain that now gives to the world the standard of all that is excellent—it is to British manners and customs that all nations now conform themselves—Britain leads the fashion and gives the law, not merely in the tinsel of dress, but in the whole frame of social acquirements. — David Laurie, Hints Regarding the East India Monopoly (Glasgow, 1813).
Behind all the rhodomontade and party spleen of Jubilee newspaper comment one thing stands out: as the Gazette put it, "a change whether for 'weal or woe' must inevitably 'come o'er the spirit of our dream' ..." Change — transition from one state of society to another — was the character of the age, in Queen Victoria's England as well as in Her Majesty's Penal Colony of New South Wales. "... old opinions, feelings — ancestral customs and institutions are crumbling away," wrote Edward Bulwer Lytton in *England and the English* (1833), "and both the spiritual and temporal worlds are darkened by the shadow of change ... The age ... is one of destruction! ... Miserable would be our lot were it not also an age of preparation for reconstruction."

What Matthew Arnold later described as "the old European system of dominant ideas and facts" was rapidly dissolving. The process had begun much earlier and the French Revolution, followed by Napoleon, had accelerated inevitable change. Christian orthodoxy under the rule of the Church, civil government under the rule of king and nobility, had broken down. The rising middle class had successfully challenged the old social hierarchy of fixed ranks, each with its recognized rights and duties. An economic organization based on village agriculture and town guilds was no longer adequate to modern needs. The basic cause of change was economic. The development of commerce and manufactures had released men from their bondage to subsistence agriculture and opened the doors of opportunity to enterprise and talent. As Marx and Engels saw it: "All that has been regarded as solid, crumbles into fragments; all that was looked upon as holy, is profaned; at long last, people are compelled to gaze open-eyed at their position in life and their


social relations."

Of course, however exact the basic analysis, it did not happen like that at all. A German-Jewish intellectual might gaze open-eyed at the undoubted fact that wherever the bourgeoisie had risen to power, they had "torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors'" and "lost no other bond betwixt". But ordinary men and women were much too involved in change to see it in perspective. They adapted themselves to changing circumstances and failed to realize what was happening until it had happened. Even then they were more apt to yearn nostalgically after some illusory past than to consciously plan for a revolutionary future. Far from seeing themselves as agents of revolution, the European, English and American bourgeoisie, like the Australian squatters, believed they were conservative upholders of law, order and the rights of property. In England, especially, they preserved as much of the ancient structure as they could, admiring the Gothic facade however much they might wish to change the internal arrangements.

To most intellectuals the immediate post-Napoleonic era appeared an age of disillusion and despair. "It was the age of the 'Holy Alliance', Waterloo had been fought, the Revolution was dead, and the 'Son of Revolution' was rotting on a rock in a distant sea .... The Bourbons were restored, the feudal barons were returning to claim their lands, and the pacific idealism of Czar Alexander had unwittingly mothered a league for the suppression of progress everywhere. The great age was over. 'I thank God,' said Goethe, 'that I am not young in so thoroughly finished a world.' .... That new heaven, called Utopia, whose glamour had relieved the twilight of the gods, had receded into a dim future where only young eyes could see it; the older ones had followed that lure long enough,


3a. See Chapter 4, p. 122, n. 61.
and turned away from it now as a mockery of men's hopes. Only the young can live in the future, and only the old can live in the past; men were most of them forced to live in the present, and the present was a ruin."

Schegel, Novalis, Chateaubriand, De Musset, Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Gogol, even Balzac and Carlyle, turned back to their own version of the classical and Christian concept of natural law, the *ius naturale* ... the law imposed on mankind by common human nature ... and the idea of original sin. They were prepared to throw over the "Age of Reason", culminating in the French Revolution, and the concept of the Rights of Man, which rested on the belief that "morals are man-made, that the moral foundations of society are man-made, and hence that right and wrong are values induced and created by observation and experimentation"; in short, they looked back longingly at the Age of Faith and belief in the objectivity of the ancient virtues of faith, hope and charity, spurning empiricism in philosophy, liberalism in politics and subjectivism in morals. Other Romantics — Byron, Heine, Lermontof, Leopardi and, above all, Schopenhauer — threw up their hands in bitter despair: "... there was no divine order ... nor any heavenly hope; ... God, if God there was, was blind, and evil brooded over the face of the earth".

Unheeding both Romantic nostalgia and Romantic despair, the European bourgeoisie went ahead building up the economic surplus essential to a restoration of civilized progress after the devastation of revolution and war. By 1830, they were everywhere the dominant influence in economic and social recovery, in America and Australia as well as in Europe. They enlisted the depressed classes in their cause, even to the extent of encouraging violence, but

once they had secured a transfer or a substantial share of power they clamped down tightly on popular demands. Philosophically, the spokesmen for the English bourgeoisie were the Utilitarians, whose political and moral precepts derived from John Locke (1632-1704) through Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and whose most persuasive contemporary spokesmen were James Mill (1773-1836) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). The Utilitarians opposed Romanticism and mysticism of any kind and based their arguments on an appeal to reason as they understood it. They trenchantly criticised both the medieval concept of the ius naturale and the revolutionary concept of the Rights of Man. Bentham declared the Rights of Man to be nonsense and the doctrine of imprescriptable rights to be "nonsense on stilts".5

John Stuart Mill defined Utilitarianism as, "The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and privation of pleasure." The Utilitarian concept of pleasure was hardly Epicurean. Happiness, Mill was quick to point out, "is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether". In other words, the Greatest Happiness Principle involved individual sacrifice in the interest of the general good. The underlying assumption throughout was that men are actuated solely by self-interest but that, actuated by reason, each man was the best judge of his own and the public interest.

Thus, the greatest happiness of the greatest number could best be assured by non-interference with the freedom of individuals to do as they liked provided what they liked doing did not inter-

fere with the happiness of others. Whereas medieval and most Roman-
tic thinkers regarded society as an "organic" whole, a product of
slow growth, for the Utilitarian society had no meaning "except as
the arithmetical sum of the individuals composing it".10 The State,
in this view, instead of being an organic growth in the Burkean
sense "...a partnership not only between those who are living but
between those who are dead, and those who are to be born ..." be-
came a machine with power to impose the pleasure-pain calculus.

Naturally enough, most men and women, bourgeois or not, did
not swallow the bleak Utilitarian ethos whole. Although many
doubted the traditional Christian dogmas and were pulled this way
and that by what Alfred North Whitehead has called the conflicting
claims of incompatible doctrines, almost everybody clung to the
traditional morality. They had no doubt that good was good and
evil evil and an intense moral purpose dominated the lives of men
and women in all walks of life, from rich evangelicals to poor
Methodists, from cultivated eventual Catholic convert John Henry
Newman to the provincial blue-stockng agnostic Mary Ann Evans who
became George Eliot. John Stuart Mill even found inspiration in
Utilitarianism itself. "...when I first read Bentham ... I had
what might truly be called an object in life; to be a reformer of
the world".12

Mill and other earnest agnostic Victorians eventually found
relief from scepticism in a Religion of Humanity: man took
the place of God as the proper object of devoted love and service.
Most people, however, were content to follow or pay lip service
to customary and conventional notions and did not worry their heads
about fundamentals. Meanwhile, the Utilitarian concept of self-
interest found general acceptance in the new Political Economy. It
became the conventional wisdom that the chief function of the State

10. W. T. Jones (ed.) Masters of Political Thought (3 vols., Lon-
12. J. S. Mill, Autobiography (1st pub. 1873). World's Classics, 
was to remove restrictions — especially institutional restrictions — on the freedom of individuals to pursue their own interests unless these restrictions served the utilitarian purpose of insuring like freedom for others. Notions of utility — leading ultimately to the marginal utility theory of value — pervaded the thought of the Classical School of Economists who formulated what Carlyle called a "dismal science" with tools of analysis forged by Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus.  

In England, France, Germany, Holland and the United States of America utilitarian values, under whatever name they were called, provided the current climate of opinion among practical men. In France, where revolutionary fires still smouldered, the July Monarchy of Louis of Orleans (Philippe Egalité, *le roi bourgeois*) enshrined the bourgeois virtues of frugality, hard work and unostentatious behaviour. "His predecessor on the throne was fond of plumed bonnets and had had himself anointed at a revival of the medieval coronation. Louis Philippe wore a plain hat, carried an umbrella, walked on foot through the mud, and bowed with democratic affability to his subjects in the streets." He also believed that unlimited democracy left property undefended and incited enmity towards wealth."

In Germany, Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* were in full flower. "We have trade schools and technical schools and commercial schools springing up on every corner; the high schools and classical education suddenly turn out to be foolishness, and the whole world thinks of nothing but mines and factories and making money," grumbles the elder Buddenbrook, playing with his gold snuff-box. "We, the bourgeoisie — the Third Estate, as we have been called — we recognise only that nobility which consists of merit," declares Morten Schwarzkopf, displaying the badge of his Göttingen students.


fraternity; "we refuse to admit any longer the rights of the indolent aristocracy, we repudiate the class distinctions of the present day, we desire all men should be free and equal, that no person should be subject to another, but all subject to law."  

In the United States, the Jacksonian Democrats were trying to make young Schwarzkopf's Third Estate extend to all the nation. They shocked the European, English and Australian bourgeoisie not because they wanted to replace one class with another, according to the Marxian dialectic, but because they wished to open the doors of bourgeois opportunity wide enough to admit all "the people". In the words of R. B. Nye and J. E. Morpurgo:

The Jacksonian view of economic life exactly fitted the needs of an expanding nation. With the opening of the West and the mushrooming of industry, opportunities were great in the thirties and forties. An important aspect of Jacksonian political philosophy was its desire to keep the door to wealth open by cancelling out any special privileges which gave economic advantages to the favoured few. Jacksonianism was the classic philosophy of a rising middle class, aimed at encouraging creative individual enterprise ... The Jacksonians believed deeply in laissez-faire, holding that an overdevelopment of governmental power, state or federal, crushed individual enterprise and smothered individual opportunity. They could not foresee, in the forties, that concentrated economic power might close the doors of opportunity as tightly as the most controlled bureaucracy.  

In England, middle-class reformers used Chartist and other working-class agitation as "something in our rear to frighten the Aristocracy" into concessions but "the role of violence in the Reform crisis [of 1832] was not quite what it seemed... The threat of violence worked, not because the Aristocracy feared a revolution more than Reform [they 'scrapped together every disposable 


Sword and Bayonet within fifty miles of London to overawe the National Union of the Working Classes but because they thought the mild concession represented by the Reform Bill a small price to pay to quieten popular discontent, to transfer the middle class from opposition to support of the political system, and, in Durham's phrase, to 'attach members to property and good order'. Even Wellington and the Tories were willing in the last analysis to pay it ...." Basically, aristocratic statesmen like Peel and Gladstone (who both had middle-class origins) accepted the new ethos while most of the new voters preferred to be represented by the upper classes provided they legislated for property and progress rather than in favour of privilege and reaction. The aristocracy tried to protect patronage and property; under pressure they relinquished patronage to join with the middle-class in defence of property.¹⁸

There is a persistent belief that Australia had no middle-class other than a handful of shop-keepers and merchants. Russel Ward quotes the 1841 census which divided the community of New South Wales as follows:

Between [the] group of 4,477 squatters, importers, bankers and professional men and the 50,158 mechanics, labourers, servants and so on, there were listed... only 1,774 'shop-keepers and other retail dealers'. These figures give a 'middle class' of only 3.1 per cent [compared with 14.80 per cent 'upper class' and 82.10 per cent 'lower class']¹⁹

Although he admits that the upper class in early Australia was composed mainly of middle-class Britons he concludes that because of "the disproportionate weight of the lower class group" their values eroded aristocratic traditions and dominated the Australian ethos. It would be truer to say that middle-class values spread throughout the whole of society. Apart from the fact that


the "upper class" was predominatingly middle class in origin and outlook the free immigrants who composed an increasing proportion of the working class had come to Australia to better themselves by rising, if they could, into a middle class which was far from confined to "shopkeepers and other retail dealers". Rather than bringing with them the "proletarian turmoil" of industrial Britain many migrants had left the old country to escape from proletarian-character.

As the Reverend John West observed, "The future of these colonies will depend on the courage and perseverance of the respectable classes. As might be expected the prevailing spirit of the colonies is democratic: the democracy of the middle classes, not of the mob." 20

Australian reformers, led by "Australians" and "Patriots" rather than by Radicals or Chartist, drew their ideas from current English liberal middle class thought rather than from "mateship" or the egalitarianism of bushmen, assigned convicts, the chain-gangs or escapee bushrangers. The colonial "gentry" represented property and progress rather than patronage and privilege while "the smallness of the middle class resulted in a lower class that was dominated by the prospect of establishing, not a classless society, but a one-class society, and that one class would be petty bourgeois in orientation." 21

As the radical People's Advocate saw it, the enemy of the "artisan, the mechanic, and the labourer" was not the middle class employer but the "idle, assuming and unproductive aristocrat" 22 and colonial conditions did not provide much scope for the idle and unproductive. Colonial conditions, urban as well as rural, favoured the sort of social democracy that eventually evolved among the uprooted Britons who saw in Australia a chance to better themselves. "Ask any one what he came to the colony for,

21. Humphrey McQueen, A New Britannia, p. 125.
22. People's Advocate, 9 December, 1848.
and his answer will be: "to better his condition," the People's Advocate declared in 1848. A few years later the English United Service Magazine correctly assessed colonial economic and political mobility, the real seedbed of the Australian ethos, when it reported:

In so new a country there can manifestly be no aristocracy, properly so called; industry, skill and capital, are the only qualifications necessary to win success. If he possesses these, and uses them to advantage, one man is as good as another. Hence, the temperature of the social atmosphere is calm and undisturbed.23

The Reverend John Dunmore Lang and some urban Radicals were impressed with the virtues of America's republican form of government and its federal constitution which was also essentially middle-class. As early as 1837, Lang's newspaper the Colonist, reporting the arrival of the first American Consul, J. H. Williams, welcomed him ".... with unfeigned goodwill, regarding it as a pledge of increasing intimacy between the two countries, from which mutual advantages may be expected to flow .... The spirit of commercial enterprise was never, perhaps, more energetic, adventurous, and persevering, in any nation, than it is now in the United States of America...." The Colonist saw America as a political as well as a commercial exemplar for Australia, although it was careful to qualify admiration for the American Constitution by adding, "It is manifestly the interest as well as the duty, of Australians to cling affectionately to the throne...."24

Dr. Lang's Colonist was not the only colonial newspaper to welcome Mr. Williams or to note similarities between Australia and the United States of America. Early in 1838, the Australian

23. Quoted Humphrey McQueen, A New Britannia, p. 123.
observed:

The great similarity between the Colony and the United States of America — as to the manner in which they were originally peopled with British subjects, and which they afterwards progressed towards wealth and importance— is so striking that we're led to speculate upon the probability of this Colony yet, at some future and not distant period, being distinguishe{, like its prototype, for virtuous principle and independence of spirit and for having a Government unshackled by the follies and evils which encumber the long established constitutions of European countries....

Some Americans, at least, were not impressed. Among the items from overseas published in the Sydney Herald some weeks before the comment above, was a paragraph lifted from the Boston Courier, which read: "A friend has sent us a bundle of newspapers from the opposite side of the globe ... They are all published in Sydney, the principal town and seaport in that region of the world ... the English call New South Wales, and which they have peopled from the gaol and scaffold ..." Superior Bostonians would not have been amused had they known that some time earlier a Sydney newspaper had accused colonial-born Australians "... the sons of convicts and emancipists ..." of developing "...habits of haughtiness, or insolence, contemptuousness and independence, bearing a strong affinity to the habits, manners, customs and ways of thinking of the North Americans ...."

(iii)

The Reform Act of 1832 and the Whig ascendancy that followed were semi-triumphs for the English utilitarians, with a small "u". Utilitarians have existed throughout history under various philosophic labels but they reached the apogee of their practical

27. Sydney Gazette, 13 January, 1825.
influence in mid-nineteenth century England and in the English-speaking countries influenced by English political and economic ideas. Even Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks spoke with admiration about English clothes, English manufactures and English economic ideas. The economic face of utilitarianism was laissez-faire, and laissez-faire, in the name of progress and enlightenment, led to the moral quagmire denounced by Romantics and the Utilitarian left-wing alike for, as Bertrand Russell pointed out, Marxism was in some aspects an outcome of the Utilitarians, continuing their rationalism and opposition to the Romantics. James Mill was horrified at Owenism, Britain's first essay at socialism. He wrote: "Their notions of property look ugly; ... they seem to think that it should not exist, and that the existence of it is an evil to them. Rascals, I have no doubt, are at work among them ..." Whereas, his son, John Stuart Mill, found it difficult to reconcile Utilitarianism and the Religion of Humanity, and sometimes tetered on the edge of something like socialism.

The exemplar of practical English utilitarianism was Thomas Babington Macaulay, who always denied that he was a utilitarian. This denial had some substance because it was against Macaulay's nature, as it was against the nature of most of his English contemporaries, to subscribe to any "ism". Thus, as William H. Marnell puts it:

There was in England only one Macaulay, but the followers of Macaulay were legion. In theory they were still churchmen. In practice they were still church-goers. In their consciously held beliefs they were still supporters of the divinely created order. But they had accepted as the foundation of their effective beliefs the sheer materialism of Jeremy Bentham and his school and the classical economics which dovetailed with it with such devastating perfection. It would never occur to Macaulay to suspect a scintilla of inconsistency between his protestation of religious faith and his statement in


a review of Robert Southey's Colloques: 'It is true that the Christian religion sanctions government, as it sanctions everything which promotes that happiness and virtues of our species. But we are at a loss to conceive in what sense religion can be said to be the basis of government, in which religion is not also the basis of the practices of eating, drinking, and lighting fires in cold weather.' It is entirely in keeping with his viewpoint as one of the economic blessed that he be quietly unmoved by protestations of suffering from the depths, and somewhat bored by them. 'We must take into the account the liberty of discussion, and the strong interest which the opponents of a ministry always have to exaggerate the extent of the public disasters ... In the old world we must confess ourselves unable to find any satisfactory record of any great nation, past or present, in which the working classes have been in a more comfortable situation than in England during the last thirty years."

The utilitarians were not indifferent, as sometimes suggested, to the existence or fate of colonies despite the fact that, as Adam Smith predicted, Anglo-American trade increased rather than diminished once the bonds of mercantilist dependence were broken. Even Jeremy Bentham, the Grand Old Man of Utilitarianism, allowed the Colonial Reformers to persuade him from the hostility to Empire he had displayed when addressing the French Convention in 1793 under the title "Emancipate Your Colonies". By the 1830's influenced by Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862), Bentham had modified his views and drew up a scheme for the formation of a joint-stock colonisation society. Probably, as Halevy suggests, he and James Mill were driven to accept British colonisation as "a fact before which their logic capitulated."

Planned or unplanned, the fact was that the place of the American colonies had been taken by new settlements. The progress of the Industrial Revolution could not be gainsaid. The need for

new markets and fresh sources of raw material, allied with a decisive superiority at sea, had led a self-confident people to expand into an "international vacuum" kept empty "because rival trading powers were unable to leap across the British-controlled high seas". It was an expansion destined to continue despite the doubts and hesitations of the Manchester Party and doctrinaire liberals.

The 1830's saw a major revolution in British colonial policy, a revolution which coincided with the triumph of free trade and an extension of the principle of responsible government. The driving force behind this change from apathy to purpose, so far as the Whigs were concerned, was Lord Howick, afterwards the 3rd Earl Grey, an influential figure in Government circles long before he became Secretary of State for Colonies in 1846. "But in his eyes the colonial claim to self-government was always subordinate to the imperial policy of free trade, to the imperial duty to watch over colonial welfare and to imperial interests as a whole, among which the interests of Great Britain were paramount." From the beginning Howick believed that "....the maintenance of our connection with the colonies was to be regarded rather as a matter of duty than one of advantage".

Wakefield, a powerful and tireless publicist for the new group of Colonial Reformers, argued that unoccupied Crown Lands should be sold at a "sufficient price" to force migrants to work for wages until they had saved enough to buy land of their own. He thought this would form a permanent though fluctuating labour pool more productive as well as more humane than reliance on convict or slave labour. He contended that the income from the sale of land should be kept in the Land Fund to finance continued emigration at a pace that would meet the colony's most pressing need — labour.

35. Ibid, p.2.
The "sufficient price" of land, he argued, should be high enough to "maintain a constant supply of labour..." and this could be determined only by experience; "... if nine farthings per acre should check the natural increase of people, by causing a scarcity of well-paid employment, it would be too much; ... if ninety pounds per acre should not promote the greatest increase of wealth and civilization, by maintaining a constant supply of the demand for well-paid labour, it would be too little ..."

Wakefield's theory was a by-product of the problem set in 1803 by the Reverend Thomas Malthus in his well-known *Essay on Population* in which he argued that as population tends to increase by geometrical progression people must always outrun food supply, which can at best only be increased by an arithmetical progression. "This was the basis of Ricardo's theory of marginal rent (1817) and McCulloch's theory of the fixed wage-fund (1826) which together established the new Political Economy as the 'dismal science'. Low wages and chronic unemployment appeared to have been entailed upon the human race as the conditions of material progress." Wakefield sought a way out of this impasse by immigration, agreeing with Utilitarian John Stuart Mill that "colonization, in the present state of the world, is the very best affair of business, in which the capital of an old and wealthy country can possibly engage." Wakefield's vision extended far beyond the mere expedient of shipping surplus population overseas. If a policy of systematic colonization were followed,

The Colonies would no longer be new societies strictly speaking. They would be so many extensions of an old society ... The colonists, being an instructed and civilized people, would be as well qualified to govern themselves as the people of Britain; and, being a wealthy people, they would be able, without going to war, to assert the birth-right of all British subjects— to enforce in the British Parliament, against a bad British ministry, their claim to equality before the


law .... This would render them happy in a most intimate connexion with their mother country; .... the American war of independence would no longer be a favourite theme .... and Britain, above all, the happiest empire in the world. 38

Among those who thought seriously about these things this was the Imperial ideal, the cutting edge of Imperial policy, an edge often blunted by official lethargy or nicked by the activities of a powerful colonial lobby with influential Whig connections and propaganda outlets in the Spectator and the Colonial Gazette. For his part Wakefield, the most scheming and persistent of Colonial Reformers, believed that so far as Australia was concerned, the fulfilment of the Imperial ideal depended largely upon controlled settlement within the Nineteen Counties — "from the Manning to Murrumbidgee, from the coast to the Lachlan" 39 — set by Governor Darling in October 1829. By 1829, however, squatters had already reached the Murrumbidgee and when Gipps arrived in 1838 licensed stockholders had spread in all directions beyond the official boundaries of settlement. The greatest happiness of the greatest number had to give way to the material interests of British investors and the romantic colonial individualism of a handful of adventurous men on the make. Wakefield might propose and the Colonial Office decree but the Australian environment and colonial self-interest were likely to have the last word. Schemes of concentrated settlement provided with the proper constitutional framework of civilization — law, order, Church and State — would have to wait on the convenience of a "Big Man's frontier".

Seen from the Colonial Office the issue was clear enough: Britain's overseas possessions were an integral part of British power and prestige and should be governed to enhance the welfare of the whole rather than to preserve the privilege of first-comers in newly-opened colonies of settlement. "I believe that much of the

power and influence of this Country depends upon its having large Colonial possessions in different parts of the world," declared Howick, after he became Earl Grey. "Nor ought it to be forgotten, that the power of a nation does not depend merely on the amount of physical force it can command, but rests, in no small degree, upon opinions and moral influence ...."[^40]

Lord John Russell, who became Secretary of State for Colonies in 1839, pinpointed this ideal in a specific instruction to the newly appointed Colonial Land and Emigration Committee. The Crown Lands of the Colonies were held in trust not merely for existing Colonists but for the people of the British Empire collectively."[^41] Parliament and people were less concerned. "We hear what Manchester will do — and [what] Birmingham will do — and Coventry and Liverpool, but what the Colonies will think or do — what those vast empires which raise our state from a Kingdom into a mighty empire — what they will think or do — no one hears — no one cares — not one thinks," grumbled Charles Buller, Parliamentary Agent for the Australian Patriotic Association, writing to its President, Sir John Jamison,[^42] bewailing that the people of the United Kingdom cared nothing for the colonies.

"Commercial men who stirred with excitement over impediments to trade in the alien Caribbean and the China Sea, were frankly bored by Britain's possessions in Australasia and Canadas. The reason was clear. In the middle third of the nineteenth century the British bourgeoisie was more interested in maritime routes and trade "colonies" than in "settlement" colonies. Generally speaking, until the 1880's British Governments were ready enough to recognise the need to open world markets to British trade, and to secure fair and equal treatment for British traders, but they were reluctant to extend the Empire or to use force to obtain concessions


[^Quoted Melbourne, Early Constitutional Development in Australia, p.206.]

or to support the claims of bondholders.

In Australia, British policy sought "to assist the spontaneous colonial movement of expansion by providing at once the required capital and, in the persons of tens of thousands of paupers, the necessary labour." But, "the Liberals of the 'thirties', slower than the Tories of the 'twenties' to adapt their colonial policies to circumstances, fought like doctrinaires a war against the wool they needed, ceding an occasional armistice when Goderich or Glenelg closed Wakefield's now old-fashioned book".\(^44\)

Despite the activities of the National Colonization Society and the support of Whig and Radical Colonial Reformers, including Sir William Molesworth and Charles Buller, backed by the Colonial Gazette and the Spectator, the House of Commons remained unimpressed by Reformist doctrinaires in England or by colonial self-interest in Australia. As the Spectator commented: "An interesting discussion of the great national advantages derivable from a judicious disposal of the waste lands of the Colonies, occupied, to the shame of the absent be it spoken, of a House so thin that its not being 'counted out' became the marvel ...."\(^45\) Meanwhile, in defiance of Imperial dictate, Australian squatters continued to expand into the "wastelands" Wakefieldians and their supporters wished to see developed as an Imperial heritage.

With Lord Howick (afterwards Earl Grey) in Melbourne's cabinet there was no fear of the colonies being forgotten. "Lord Howick's influence in Lord Melbourne's Cabinet has been as great as might have been expected from the operation of his industry and willfulness upon the ignorance and idleness of most of his colleagues. As to matters on which they are utterly ignorant and careless, his painstaking habits have given him a paramount weight .... We allude to Colonial questions and the subject of Colonization. Upon these


points he is, as he deserves to be, a sort of oracle among the Whig chiefs . . . so that when any Colonial question comes before Cabinet it is really decided by Lord Howick's voice."

Whatever the colonial problem or cause, Howick was never wanting in interest, time or moral prescription. He had been Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office for three years while his father, the 2nd Earl Grey, was Prime Minister. As Secretary for War (1834-9) in the Melbourne Cabinet he continued to pay the strictest attention to colonial affairs and strongly criticised the lackadaisical methods of his fellow-Whig, Lord Glenelg, at the Colonial Office. Glenelg, who was Secretary of State for Colonies from 1835 to 1839, and his Permanent Under-Secretary, James Stephen, were Evangelicals whose interpretation of the best way to secure "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" differed from that of Howick and the Colonial Reformers. Stephen, a painstaking man of high-principle, saw clearly enough that utilitarian philosophical dicta were logically incompatible with the Evangelical doctrine that the individual, whatever his colour or caste, had certain basic inalienable human rights.

Following the Emancipation (of Slaves) Act in 1833, English Evangelicals found a fresh cause in denouncing the deplorable neglect of native peoples throughout the Empire. By mid-1834, they had secured a "Humble Address" from the Commons praying "that His Majesty will take such measures and give such directions to the Governors and Officers of His Majesty's Colonies, Settlements and Plantations, as shall secure to the Natives the due observance of justice, and the protection of their rights, promote the spread of civilization among them, and lead them to a peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian religion."

In July the Colonial Office circulated Governors throughout the Empire in similar terms.

46. Spectator, 29 June, 1839.
and the following year, a Select Committee was appointed, the Aborigines' Committee, to examine the problem and make recommendations.

Meanwhile, the British and Foreign Aborigines' Protection Society was instituted with Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, leader with Wilberforce in the fight against the slave trade, as president. Glenelg and Stephen readily adopted Evangelical principles in formulating policies to protect aboriginal rights in the colonies. Thus, Australian settlers were under the constant if distant surveillance of London's "Exeter Hall", where May Meetings were held annually to focus public opinion on some field of Christian endeavour. "Empire, to the crowds of Exeter Hall, was an opportunity for civilizing and converting the savage and the slave, and under that flag the Colonial Office marched for many years." 47

Romantics as well as utilitarian reformers showed that concern with empire Marx and Engels had characterised as part of the bourgeois revolution. "The old local and national self-sufficiency and isolation are replaced by a system of universal intercourse, of all-round inter-dependence of the nations ... new industries ... no longer depend upon the homeland for their raw materials, but draw these from the remotest spots ..." 48 As early as 1775, Edmund Burke had stressed what he considered the essentials of a new concept of Empire in his Speech on Conciliation with America when he declared:

My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties, which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government;—they will cling and grapple to you; and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood, that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another; that these two

47. C. E. Carrington, The British Overseas, p. 259.

48. The Communist Manifesto, passim.
things may exist without any mutual relation; the cement is gone; the cohesion is loosened; and everything hastens to decay and dissolution.49

Other Romantics concurred in regarding the essential virtue to be drawn from common names, kindred blood and a common cultural heritage. For instance, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were Romantically conservative in their rejection of utilitarianism and "calculating meddling reason" and in their adherence to the feudal concept of state and society as an "organic unit" and a "moral unit". As Carlyle put it: "Never on this Earth, was the relation of man to man long carried on by Cash-Payment alone ... ."50 Nevertheless, even Thomas Carlyle and the Lake Poets, who "assailed the fundamental premises and conclusions of liberal, utilitarian and materialistic thinkers", had Arcadian visions of England's Imperial destiny— dreams, too late so far as Australia was concerned, that took concrete form fifty years later in Joseph Chamberlain's "New Imperialism" based on commercial and strategic interests and the firm conviction that "... the British race is the greatest of governing races the world has ever seen".52

Carlyle anticipated Chamberlain's belief in the superior racial qualities of Englishmen over "Niggers ripening towards nothing but destruction" for "to this English People in World History" had been assigned "the grand Industrial task of conquering some half or more of this Terraqueous Planet for the use of Man," and it was the English people, and the English people only, who possessed "war fleets, spinning jennies, warehouses and West India Docks" sufficient for the task.53 The American Transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, shared this Imperial euphoria:

49. Quoted George Bennett (ed.), The Concept of Empire, pp. 41-2.
The culture of the day, the thoughts and aims of men, are English thoughts and aims. A nation considerable for a thousand years...it has, in the last centuries, obtained the ascendant, and stamped the knowledge, activity and power of mankind with its impress. Those who resist it do not feel it or obey it [the] less. The Russian in his snows is aiming to be English. The Turk and [the] Chinese also are making awkward efforts to be English. The practical common sense of modern society, the utilitarian direction which labor, laws, opinion, religion take, is the natural genius of the British mind. The influence of France is a constituent of modern civility, but not enough opposed to the English for the most wholesome effect. The American is only the continuation of the English genius into new conditions, more or less propitious... England has inoculated all nations with her civilization, intelligence and tastes; and to resist the tyranny and prepossession of the British element, a serious man must aid himself by comparing with it the civilizations of the farthest east and west, the old Greek, the Oriental, and, much more, the ideal standard ....

Less idealistic, more utilitarian than either Carlyle or Emerson, Wakefield advocated Colonial Reform because he believed it the only way of guaranteeing the spread of English civilization and consolidating the growth of English commerce. By ignoring opportunities for the systematic exploitation of colonial resources he feared that what he called "new people" would fall into barbarism:

.... people who, though they continually increase in number, make no progress in the art of living; who, in respect to wealth, knowledge, skill, taste, and whatever belongs to civilization, have degenerated from their ancestors; who are precluded from acquiring wealth by the labour of slaves; whose education, though universal, stops before the age of puberty, and thus becomes, if not an evil, at least a dangerous thing, instead of the greatest good; who, ever on the move, are unable to bring anything to perfection; whose opinions are only violent and false prejudices, the necessary fruits of ignorance; whose char-

acter is a compound of vanity, bigotry, obstinacy, and hatred most comprehensive, including whatever does not meet their own pinched notions of right; and who delight in a forced equality, not equality before the law only, but equality against nature and truth; an equality which, to keep the balance always even, rewards the mean rather than the great, and gives more honour to the vile than the noble.\footnote{56}

As Coral Lansbury has shown,\footnote{57} the hope that a new and better England could be created in Australia, or some other place where everything was harmony, beauty, tranquillity and delight, was never far from the imagination of the Romantics. Baudelaire, characteristically enough, wanted luxury as well, cities enwrapped by the westering sun in hyacinth and gold, \textit{un pays superbe}, \textit{un pays de Cocagne}, where the slower hours contained more thoughts, where the clocks chimed happiness, a unique land, superior to other lands, as art is superior to nature.\footnote{58} The English Romantics, on the other hand, preferred nature to art and sought a Shangri-la free from poor houses, steam engines, slums and factories, where natural man could lead a natural life in thatched-cottage comfort rather than in elegant houses with gilded leather on the walls and lofty latticed windows, massive furniture and "mirrors, metals, draperies .... plate and ceramics" to perform "an unheard and mysterious symphony for the eyes".\footnote{59}

For the English, Coral Lansbury observes, "The return to the land, to four acres and a cow, could endow a man with a certain royalty. This," she adds, "was one of the most passionately held myths of the industrial age and it was to shape the whole concept of Australia in the literature of the period".\footnote{56}

It was a poor man's vision as well as a literary cliche. While ex-military officers and younger sons dreamed of country mansions,

\footnote{56}{E. G. Wakefield, \textit{A Letter from Sydney}, pp. 68-9.}

\footnote{57}{Coral Lansbury, \textit{Arcady in Australia: The Evocation of Australia in Nineteenth-Century Literature} (Melbourne, 1970).}


\footnote{59}{Coral Lansbury, \textit{Arcady in Australia}, p.33.}
a Georgian version of Baudelairean style, poets and poor men had visions of verdant woods and fields, vine-covered cottages, hollyhocks against white-washed walls, a faithful hound baying an evening welcome when the day's work was done, a gentle wife spinning wool or plying a busy needle, and clustering children innocent of want or pain. Utilitarians and Romantics alike favoured emigration as the great panacea which would solve the "Condition of England" problem posed by Malthus's "pessimistic and seemingly irrefutable thesis" and by the new Political Economists. On the one hand were those who feared the redundant poor would become levelers and revolutionaries threatening the England that Frank Naborly, in Henry Kingsley's Geoffrey Hamlyn, admired, "... an old, well-ordered society, the ordinances of religion, the various give-and-take relations between rank and rank, which make up the sum of English life...."

On the other hand were poets, and philosophers, who grieved over the decay of small, organic, rural units in a changing England and sympathised with unemployed farm labourers and derelicts cast up by the Industrial Revolution in overcrowded cities.

.... a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.

Malthusians and utilitarian Political Economists neither pitied nor despised the redundant poor. The labouring masses represented not human souls but economic units. Their value was precisely the value of any other commodity and that value was determined by the market. The third report of the Select House of Commons Committee on Emigration in 1827 put the matter bluntly:

The first and main principle is, that Labour, which is the commodity of the poor man, partakes strictly, as far as its value is concerned, of the circumstances incident to other commodities; and that its price is

60. Klaus E. Knorr, British Colonial Theories, p. 269.
diminished in proportion to the excess of supply as compared with the demand, the condition of the lower classes must be permanently depressed. 63

The fact that the supply was in excess of demand appeared self-evident to most observers. As the First Report of the Emigrant Committee put it, "...there are extensive districts in Ireland, and in England and Scotland, where the population is at the present moment redundant...." 64 This situation not only offended the utilitarian sense of economy (it cost money to keep the non-productive poor alive) but disturbed the social peace and utilitarian complacency, especially in Ireland where "...a considerable part of the population is dependent for the means of support on the precarious source of charity, or is compelled to resort to habits of plunder and spoilation for the actual means of subsistence...." 65

There were three possible solutions. "The industries of the United Kingdom might expand to absorb the surplus unemployed; or steps might be taken to lighten the burden which oppressed them; or, finally, the growth of population might be checked." 66 The first and last were out of the question in Victorian times. Britain was already experiencing its first period of technological unemployment; machines were replacing men in factory and workshop. At the same time, Malthus's "moral restraint" was all the Victorians had to offer in the way of birth control. Some method of social reform seemed the only solution. Malthus himself had suggested in 1803 that emigration was a "natural and obvious remedy" although he warned that in the long run this could be only a "slight palliative". Palliative or not, Evangelicals, Colonial Reformers and humanitarians alike took up emigration with the enthusiasm of social idealists. As things turned out, Australia offered little attraction to the poorer classes compared with Canada and

63. P.P., Second and Third Reports of Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom, 1828, p. 15.
64. P.P., First Report of Select Committee on Emigration ..., 1826, IV, 404, p.3.
65. Ibid. Quoted C. M. H. Clark, Select Documents ..., p. 70.
the United States. In the years between 1825 and 1851, nearly three million people emigrated from Britain, about 2,700,000 to North America compared with 223,000 to Australia and 44,000 to all other places. Basically, apart from a natural suspicion of its penal origins, this was due to distance and the high cost of the passage. 67

Reformers, anxious for the development of British colonies, sought to right the balance by advocating schemes of assisted migration. This eventually led to the British Government accepting, at least in part, Wakefield's arguments that the Government should establish a Land Fund from the proceeds of colonial land sales and use this to subsidise emigration. Lord Durham, in his famous report that was part of the major revolution in British colonial policy noted by Ward, put the matter firmly:

The ... country which has founded and maintained these Colonies at a vast expense of blood and treasure, may justly expect its compensation in turning their unappropriated resources to the account of its own redundant population; they are the rightful patrimony of the English people...ample appanage which God and Nature have set aside in the New World for those whose lot has assigned them but insufficient portions in the Old. 68

In 1831 the British Government substituted the sale of Crown lands within the boundaries for grants against capital and at the same time began a tentative scheme for assisting migrants to Australia, beginning with female migrants ".... in consequence of the representations .... from various quarters of the evils resulting from the great disproportion of the Female to the Male Population in the Colony ...." 69 In 1835, the system was extended to agricultural labourers and mechanics and followed in 1837 by the appointment of a Thomas Frederick Elliott, a highly-competent Colonial Office official and sympathetic Colonial Reformer, as Agent-

General for an extended system of assisted emigration. A further upshot of Wakefield's persistent string-pulling was the establishment (1840) of a Colonial and Emigration Commission with Elliott as Chief Commissioner. From then on, British policy attempted to direct land and emigration policies on systematic lines, largely inspired by Wakefield, in the interests of the Empire as a whole rather than in response to the requirements of any particular territory or economic interest — a task well-nigh impossible to reconcile with the current acceptance of State non-interference with laissez-faire and the doctrines of free trade and representative Government.

With the resignation of Sir Richard Bourke as Governor in 1837 the British Government appointed an able, Whiggish, Army engineer, Sir George Gipps, to implement Imperial policy in New South Wales. In 1837, the population of Great Britain was about 17,000,000 with perhaps another 7,000,000 in Ireland, 24,000,000 in all, whereas the British overseas made up less than a fortieth of the number, with Australia low down on the scale with less than 200,000. No wonder the "peculiar colony" still carried little weight at Westminster where, if it had not been for Exeter Hall and the Colonial Reformers, it was probably only a slight exaggeration to say that "any government would rather lose a colony then lose a division in the House".70

Yet, Exeter Hall and the Colonial Reformers had a genuine sense of Imperial mission. "Concentration," Wakefield declared, "would produce what never did and never can exist without it — Civilization". What Wakefield did not notice was that, under Australian circumstances, concentration was already taking place not in neat rural communities as he imagined it should but in the coastal cities where there were already dozens of clerks, book-

keepers, wharf labourers, lightermen, etc. for every squatter and bushmen. A colonial civilization was already in the making, with newspapers, bookshops, literary periodicals and institutions, libraries, and schools comparable with, if not better than, the public schools of England which, in Bourke's day at least, still flogged boys into parsing correctly the Latin classics but neglected such utilitarian subjects as mathematics and foreign languages.71

For all his utilitarian reforming zeal, Wakefield was look-backwards just as much as Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth, with their visions of wattled cots and country mansions as the answer to the Malthusian problem of excessive capital and the redundant poor. The immediate future lay with the unsystematic Macaulay in England and the squatters in Australia. Nor did the Emigration Commissioners have any particular desire to facilitate the settlement of immigrant labourers and poor settlers on their own small holdings, even after working due apprenticeship for sheep farmers. They were only too conscious that the imminent abolition of assignment and transportation would make it well-nigh impossible to satisfy the already persistent and acrimonious demand for more and more rural labour. Governor Gipps's problem to be was how to act as mediator between official procrastinators, Exeter Hall idealists, utilitarian ideologues, on the one hand; and colonial self-interest & Parliamentary pressure groups, on the other. It was a task that within ten years brought him to a premature grave.

71. Hazel King, Richard Bourke, pp. 3-6.
Chapter Four

Antipodean Temper

What is wanted here is law, good faith, order, security. Anyone can declaim about these things, but I pin my faith on material interests. —Charles Gould in Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*. 
Sir George Gipps, successor to Whiggish Sir Richard Bourke as Governor of New South Wales, arrived off Sydney Heads on the morning of Friday, 23 February, 1838, on board the ship *Upton Castle*, 596 tons, 131 days out from Plymouth, via the Cape of Good Hope. Off-shore winds kept the vessel heaving helplessly within sight of the bluff sandstone cliffs and grey-green landscape of the strange new world he had come to govern in the name of Her Majesty, the young Queen Victoria. The contrary winds — symptomatic of colonial public opinion on matters of Imperial concern — were calculated to irritate the dour obdurate 47-year-old Major of Engineers as he paced the narrow deck of the small vessel while signals fluttered backwards and forwards from mast to headland. Sir George was not a man to suffer opposition or delay philosophically. This was the second quarter of the nineteenth century: the age of steam had begun. A Governor of New South Wales should not have to wait on the whim of wind and weather on the threshold of his new domain.

The hot dry February winds that baffled the ship's master, Captain Thomas Williams, were different from the moist cloying breezes of the West Indies where Sir George had laid firm foundations for his acknowledged administrative efficiency in colonial affairs. Nor did faultless white teeth gleam a welcome from broad black faces in the boats that crowded to meet the latest ship from Home. The slaves here were white felons, not bought negroes, and the Governor felt a certain grim satisfaction in knowing — the way things had been put to him during briefings at the Colonial Office — that he would almost certainly preside over their liberation for Sir George was a Whig, a liberal, a man of high moral principle and wide humanitarian sympathies. He was also experienced enough and realistic enough to appreciate that the end of convict assignment in New South Wales would involve him in economic

1. In 1838, acting on the Transportation Committee's Report, the British Government abolished the system of convict assignment.
and social problems as grave as any that had attended the abolition of slavery in the West Indies.

More than ten years of effort in the colonial service had taught Sir George that, viewed close-up, social reform was never the disinterested ascendency of good over evil pictured in the sermons of Archbishop Richard Whately and the pamphlets of Wilberforce's "Saints". Nor was he satisfied that simple application of utilitarian principles, so logically expounded by Wakefield and the Colonial Reformers, would be readily acceptable solutions to pressing land and immigration problems in the colony of New South Wales. Schemes of concentrated settlement provided with the proper constitutional framework of civilization - law, order, Church and State — were easy enough to devise on paper but he soon learned

... that Australia presents a surface to the Settler very different from that of any other country, into which Colonization by Europeans has been introduced; that, in consequence of the absence of dense forests or extensive Swamps, it is pervious to the Settler, in almost every direction, whilst the traffic over it is further facilitated by the general dryness of its soil. In their natural state too, the lands, though far from rich, offer very extensive pasturage, and therefore afford the means of profit to the Settler, almost without the outlay of any Capital. These peculiarities have since the first occupation of the Colony led to the wide dispersion of its inhabitants; and, without seeking on general principles to invalidate the soundness of those theories, which have lately been propounded on the subject of Colonization, and which assume as their basis the necessity of concentrating population, I think I may venture to say that they are altogether inapplicable to a Country like New South Wales. Let the evils of dispersion therefore be what they may, they must here be borne with; our flocks and herds already stray over a country 900 miles long by 300 wide; and I hesitate not to say that any attempt to bring them within the limits even of our twenty contiguous Counties would end in failure, if not in the ruin of the Colony.2

Here, then, was no fanatical Colonial Reformer bursting with what The Times called fine-spun theories that poured "an absolute diarrhoea" from the brains of "your political economists"? He was, rather, a practical, hard-working utilitarian with a small "u", ready to adapt theory to circumstance, shape Imperial cloth to colonial fit, provided that by so doing he did not betray his trust and submit entirely to colonial self-interest. Sir George had assimilated enough classical education at The King's School, Canterbury, where William Grant Broughton, the mildly Tractarian Bishop of Australia, had been a fellow-pupil, to agree with Melbourne and the Whigs that progress should be an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary process. With this firm commonsense Sir George combined a brusque businesslike manner which showed plainly that he did not suffer fools gladly. "Apt in diplomacy, he yet lacked the wariness of refraining from a clever saying not essential to the matter. Seeing the goal, he was imperious in driving towards it, forgetful that all human creatures will not move in the same manner, and that many are more easily led than driven."*

Either way, Sir George had neither Imperial support nor local backing sufficient to make ex-convict shepherds and stockmen accept Exeter Hall principles and extend "mateship" to aborigines nor to coerce the squatters into preferring systematic development for the sake of posterity to the excitement of immediate profit. In an outburst of political spleen The Times dismissed all Whig Reformers as "the mongrel revolutionists of Queen Victoria's reign", declaring them "as unlike the constitutional Whigs who enthroned King William as Papists are from Protestants, and jobbers from statesmen..."* But they were men who scarcely pandered to "that worse than United States democracy which labours so diligently to destroy our ancient institutions..." For their part, most colonists

3. The Times, 23 July, 1834.
5. The Times, 5 November, 1838.
6. Ibid, 9 November, 1838.
had little truck for moral gestures unrelated to economic interests and no sense of obligation to a Whig Government which had inclinations towards reform but was not always sure what direction to follow to achieve progress without impinging too much on privilege.

The majority among the free and freed colonists of New South Wales were not interested in Romantic or Utilitarian concepts of Empire, nor in the spread of Christianity and the preservation of civilization. Their main concerns were the rights of Englishmen, the price of wool, the tenure of land, and the shortage of labour. The enterprising among them provided the dynamic for the "squatting rush" that had turned New South Wales from a gaol into a colony. Their vitality was expanding the perimeter of an Empire Romantics and Reformers alike cherished. More perhaps than any other frontier, Australia was isolated from the main stream of European thought and culture, a fragment without roots, struggling to develop a political and social identity on a foundation of semi-serfdom under particularly uncompromising geographical conditions. The Australian frontier was a "Big Man's" frontier, too raw, isolated and economically dependent to develop the self-contained community envisaged by Romantics and Colonial Reformers; too new and undeveloped for the establishment of post-utilitarian ideas of democracy, socialism or the Religion of Humanity. For the nonce, the squatters provided Australia with an identity and a purpose, albeit the identity was limited, huckstering and a trifle swashbuckling and the purpose immediate and practical—more land for more sheep.

By contrast, in America, the poor man's frontier was real, although the pioneers who founded new communities across the continent led anything but the idyllic life European Romantics envisaged. The trains of covered waggons that crossed the wide Missouri were communities in embryo, micro-economies, the seeds of a new civil-
ization. The dour men and brave women who filled them battled against hostile forces, the environment, the elements and Red men, for possession not only of the land but of the future. In a way, the great lumbering vehicles had taken over from the Mayflower and the Pilgrim Fathers, who brought European civilization to the north-eastern coasts of America, although the Spanish had been first in the South-west and the French along the Mississippi. Waggon trains pushed out from the great river into the vast prairies with a Waggon Master to maintain the law, if necessary, with Winchester and Colt; a preacher to remind the travellers that they were "ever in their great Taskmaster's eye"; wives and sisters to chasten husbands and brothers and admonish the children; and one common purpose: to establish new homes in safe and fertile places. Even Wyatt Earp's Tombstone, in Arizona beyond the Rio Grande, archetype Western settlement in the later days of gunplay, gambling and gold, had fifteen city blocks, a magnificent Town Hall, churches, a County Courthouse, a town band, a newspaper and a stolid bourgeois citizenry who represented the norm rather than the romance of the Wild West. American folk heroes include Johnny Appleseed and Daniel Boone as well as Wyatt Earp and "Doc" Holliday.

In Australia things were different. The overlanders and squatters who followed on the heels of the explorers were mostly expatriate English and Irish minor gentry, or dispossessed Scottish yeomen, who travelled alone with their sheep and their ex-convict or native-born stockmen. They fanned out from the coastal settlements of New South Wales and Port Phillip, looking over their shoulders towards Sydney or Melbourne as the centres of community life. When they dreamed dreams they were dreams of "Home", far across the sea, which remained for them the only real source of civilization and culture. They were economic virtuosos rather than

economic planners or creators; men who wished to reap rather than sow; itinerant exploiters of natural resources rather than farmers and cultivators; more concerned to found fortunes than to build cities or extend civilization.

The stockmen were even more alienated than their masters but between them, masters and men, they provided the staple for the Australian myth of the sardonic fiercely independent bushman: a man who relies on intuition and "making do" rather than on community values or expert direction; a man whose ethos of "mateship" is confined to white men with rough voices. Nowadays, the bushman has been metamorphosed into the stock figure of "Digger" or "Good Sport", stereotypes still cherished by old-fashioned people who prefer Henry Lawson and the Bulletin tradition to science fiction and sadistic sex movies, but as remote then as now from the real concerns of ordinary Australians. Even in its hey-day, during the nationalistic nineties, the myth never had much relation to the everyday tempo of colonial life. Before the Gold Rushes it had less. In 1838, the total population of New South Wales, which included Port Phillip and Moreton Bay, was less than 100,000 of whom more than 20,000 lived in Sydney, and nearly 10,000 in and around Melbourne. Most of the others lived in settled communities within the Nineteen Counties: "Here the colony ended and the bush began!"

Beyond the boundaries about seven hundred licensed stations spread over the land from Moreton Bay to South Australia, pasturing 1,334,000 sheep and 371,000 cattle but providing a "home" for no more than a few thousand men. The wide open spaces might continue to lure the adventurous and the uprooted ....

With eager eyes to the West
Along the pathways of the sun ....

but the average Australian, then as now, preferred the comforts and stability of the towns and nascent cities made possible by the product of great plains — wool. For every man who owned, herded, sheared or transported wool over the inland, dozens of Sydneysiders and Melbournians were needed to process the imports of manufactured goods and semi-luxuries (rum, cigars, nankeen trousers and panama hats) which kept bushmen in the bush, to organize the transport and the sale of their product and to arrange and record all the financial and commercial transactions associated with importing and exporting, buying and selling. Wool-growing was essentially production for the market, a process centred around the cash-nexus, and bore scant relation to the semi-feudal subsistence economy visualized by Coleridge who, having failed to locate Utopia in America, wrote his friend Southey, "What plan was I meditating, save to retire into the country with George Burnett and yourself, and taking by degrees a small farm, there to be learning to get my/own bread by my bodily labour — and then have all things in common?"

In America, too, Romantic rebels against utilitarianism and the cash-nexus were experimenting with the simple life and sharing all things in common. "Almost every month the port of New York welcomed some new boat-load of Europeans who had come to found a 'Harmony' or a 'North American Phalanx' .... the communists and Christian socialists, the Owenites and the Fourierists, followed by the Icarians and Cabet, who were establishing their communities in every corner of the young republic. In 1840, George Ripley, a Unitarian minister, left his Boston pulpit for Brook Farm, at West Roxbury, nine miles out of town, to begin an experiment in communal living, which lasted to 1846. Novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne joined in 1841 but did not stay long, criticizing its aims in The Blithdale Romance (1852). Emerson declined Ripley's invit-


ation to join, knowing himself incapable of "merging his personal independence in a socialistic fraternity". There is no evidence to suggest that this intense American individualist, "... astute observer of his century though he was, ever understood that there was a logic which moved from Kant's categories through Hegel's dialectics to The Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels in 1848 ...". It was a logic, too, which underlay the High Church Toryism of the later Wordsworth and Coleridge, Chateaubriand's "romantic Catholicism" in Europe and the conversion to Catholicism of Orestes Brownson in America and Joseph Harpur in Australia.

Australia had to wait until the 1890's for William Lane's Utopian New Australia in Paraguay and for village settlements and other semi-socialist Utopian experiments in South Australia. In the 1840's New South Wales was too far and too besmirched by the birth stain for such experiments, although Wordsworth associated emigration with the possibility of spiritual resurrection:

So the wide waters, open to the power,
The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
Her swarms, and in succession send them forth;
Bound to establish new communities
On every shore whose aspect favours hope
Or bold adventure; promising to skill
And perseverance their deserved reward. /2

Australian Transcendentalists, like Charles Harpur and Frederick Maitland Innes, shared Emerson's suspicion of Owenism or any other form of communal restraint on individual adventuring after deserved reward or spiritual integrity. "The individual right to possess and enjoy whatever wealth he may lawfully inherit or acquire must ever remain at the foundation of a sane social system," Harpur declared, "for in no other way could it secure to its members that individuality of will which is the very keystone of social if not of all liberty. This prime necessity of society is fatal to the Owenian or socialist philosophy." Harpur had enough knowledge of

12. Cited Coral Lansbury, Arcady in Australia, pp. 40-1
the realities of farming in Australia to reject any idea of "Harmo-
nies", "Phalanxes" or "Brook Farms" on the Hawkesbury or along the
Hunter. Freedom was his ideal and he held it up as a poetic immi-
gration lure which matched Wordsworth in sentiment if not in poetry

... In the far sunny South, there's a refuge from wrong,
Tis the Shiloh of freedom expected so long...
Till the future a numberless people shall see,
Eager, and noble, and equal, and free.\(^\text{14}\)

(ii)

In Sydney and other towns, the colonial social pyramid was
sufficiently hierarchial, in the older English fashion, to make
class divisions much more complicated than a matter of income or
source of income. Certainly Russel Ward's division of society in-
to 14.80% upper and 82.10% lower class needs closer examination.
The basic division had been between the free and the unfree and, as
Anglican Bishop Dixon of Van Diemen's Land put it, ".... a convict
population is a kind of chaos, a vast society, yet most unsocial
..."\(^\text{15}\) With the advent of Emancipists, the Native-born and free
immigrants who had no claim to be "gentlemen", the convict non-
society shook down into a series of social compromises rather than
into anything recognizable as a homogeneous society by English or
continental standards. "Respectable" Emancipists (i.e. rich or
professionally-educated) were eligible for seats on the boards of
banking companies, non-denominational schools, charitable institu-
tions and business and professional organisations but not for invit-
atations to Government House or a place at Exclusive dinner tables.\(^\text{16}\)
They formed the backbone of the Australian Patriotic Association and
were accepted by the Freemasons but blackballed if they tried to
join the Sydney, Melbourne or Hobart Clubs. "Natives", born in


15. Bishop F.R.A. Nixon, A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania. 23rd April, 1846 (Hobart, 1846).

or outside the marriage bond, assumed the social status of their fathers and could go wherever their fathers were accepted. Ex-convict mothers remained socially anonymous unless they married when they gained some sort of social acceptance according to the status of their husbands. Fudie told the Transportation Committee that ladies in the colony could not afford to be as punctilious in their reception of women of doubtful character as they would have been in England: "... they say it is beginning to get a cross in the blood, joking about the convicts".  

Even if colonial sexual mores were no longer so nakedly profligate Gipps soon found himself reporting: "Drunkenness, the fruitful parent of Crime, is still the prevailing Vice of the Colony." Respectable Emancipist Dr. William Bland, on the other hand, contended that Judge Burton, James Mudié and even James Macarthur exaggerated the depravity of the colony for political purposes. "The alleged depravity of manners, which was principally observable in the licentious habits of the upper classes of days gone by, has almost disappeared," he wrote in 1838, "crime has decreased and is daily decreasing — the police is superior to what it ever had been at any previous period of the Colony — and the want of free immigrants, whether for the purpose of 'infusing tones into society' or of forming a means of permanent increase in our population .... is already decreased ...."  

At the apex of the social scale came the landed gentry, high-ranking Establishment officials and the merchants and bankers who provided the channels and capital for economic development and overseas trade. Then came a wide amorphous band of the "middling classes", those who possessed property or professional qualifications sufficient to make them "respectable" even if they had no pretensions to gentility although some of them, much to the indignation


of the Sydney Gazette laid claim to the title "gentleman" without any social or legal right to it. Strictly speaking, in England, a gentleman was anyone who maintained himself without manual labour. By the nineteenth century social custom pitched the requirement higher, including besides the nobility, the gentry and the Anglican clergy, barristers and physicians but excluding Dissenting ministers, apothecaries, attorneys, and schoolmasters; including overseas merchants but not inland traders; amateur authors and artists but not professionals, despite Carlyle's assertion that a new "Aristocracy of Talent", the "Journalists, Political Economists, Politicians, Pamphleteers" constituted "... the modern guides to Nations" replacing "... the ancient guides ... Prophets, Priests, or whatever their name ...."

The top layer of the "middling classes" included publicans, brewers, auctioneers, money-lenders, landlords and various kinds of entrepreneurs, all edging into the gentry. Clinging precariously along the bottom edge were overworked clerks, underpaid teachers, penny-a-liner journalists, professional musicians, actors, artists, petit-bourgeois shopkeepers and petty functionaries of various kinds. The whole rested on a broad base of the anonymous labouring poor, including a solid wedge of convicts. Intermingled with the different strata were incorrigible thieves, forgers, standover men, sexual deviants, and others who, if caught, comprised chain-gangs that still clanked along city streets or were thrown into the social cesspool provided at Norfolk Island for the doubly and trebly convicted. From top to bottom, the prevailing vices were acquisitiveness, drunkenness and sexual promiscuity but then, as always, moral integrity was not an exclusive attribute of any one class.

If it were true in England, as Dr. Johnson claimed, that distinctions of rank created no jealousy in a people "polished by art and classed by subordination" it was certainly not so in Australia where class distinctions were not held to be accidental. According to the Exclusives, those on the lower rungs of subordination were there mostly through their own crimes and follies and could not therefore claim status according to profession or wealth. Respectable Emancipists, however, exemplified the Puritan justification of economic prosperity as a sign of God's blessing on diligence and enterprise. "And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a luckie felowe," as Tyndale had it in his translation of Genesis. Squatters also presented a problem. Whatever their claims to gentility they certainly had to work with their hands and many of them soon learned to share the habits if not the company of their subordinates. "The bottles were placed on the Table and six young men some of them gentlemen by birth set to for the express purpose of getting drunk during the night. The conversation was not bad, but even the common expressions at table were accompanied almost invariably with the most horrid oaths .... Any person might have fancied he was overhearing the discourse of fiends while celebrating their orgies." ²⁰

James Mudie told Charles Buller at the Transportation Committee hearings in London that although some Emancipists were people of fortune no one would associate with them.²¹ Gipps soon learned that this was not strictly true. Emancipist Samuel Terry, the "Botany Bay Rothschild", died the day before the Governor's arrival, leaving a personal estate of £250,000, £10,000 a year income from Sydney rentals and landed property estimated at £150,000. He also achieved a widely admitted respectability, busying himself with the affairs of the Benevolent Society, the Auxiliary Bible


Society, Sydney College and the Wesleyan Church. He was president of the Masonic Lodge and foundation president of the Australian Society for the Promotion of the Growth and Cultivation of Colonial Produce and Manufactures. He also played an active part in organizing petitions for trial by jury and the establishment of representative government. He built for himself "a formidable mansion" in Angel Place, Sydney, with "a hollow square .... stables, coach houses, servants' quarters, and a celebrated pigeon-loft in the yard."^22

There were always plenty in the colony ready to raise an eyebrow at the sources of the sturdy old Emancipist's wealth. He was accused of smuggling, extortion and worse but Mr. Commissioner Bigge, no friend of convicts or ex-convicts, dismissed all such allegations as "....mere naked assertions, unsupported by any fact of evidence ...." Alexander Harris, on the other hand, contended that Terry's licensed houses ("Terry properties had a knack of sprouting pubs sooner or later: he had a shrewd eye for advancing business sites.") were the resorts of "...the lowest women, sailors, and ruffians, who supported themselves by waylaying and robbing and often murderously wounding any intoxicated sea officer...."^24

Charles Harpur celebrated Terry's death with a few lines of irreverent and indifferent verse:

Old Sam Terry went to a Church meeting
Where he met from the parsons a good deal of greeting,
But as he stood bowing on his old gouty toes there,
All on a sudden he made a great snort they say
Alarming the belles and the beaux there!
Let a great f---t too; -- then fell all amott that day:
Dying the next, and going --- God knows where!^25

Whatever Samuel Terry's destination "from out this bourne of Time and Place" Sydney gave him an impressive send-off. He was not only buried with full Masonic honours but the band of the 50th

Regiment headed the cortège of the grandest funeral the colony had ever seen. The past being what it might, his progeny flourished like the green bay tree as confident of their respectability as any British blue-blood whose family fortunes were founded on patronage and jobbing. In one thing, at least, New South Wales resembled a changing Britain: it was an open-ended society ready to make room for some queer bed-fellows. In addition to Angel Place he built Terry's Buildings, on the east side of Pitt Street where Martin Place now goes through, long one of Sydney's finest non-official buildings although it did encroach on the public way. The Australian Subscription Library, of which more anon, occupied No. 1 Terry's Buildings, "held conjointly with the Sydney Dispensary, the officer of which served also as temporary librarian, daily, from 1 to 4 p.m." His country seat at Box Hill was built for James Meehan, an Emancipist surveyor who attained distinction under Macquarie, probably with the supervision of Macquarie's noted convict architect, Francis Greenway.

Initially, Squatters were people who occupied Crown land within the Nineteen Counties without legal right, mostly ex-convicts and ticket-of-leave men. But as early as 1837, James Macarthur, in his evidence to the Transportation Committee, was careful to make a distinction between "respectable" (i.e. "owners of estates") and "non-respectable" illegal occupiers. "It is usual," he said, "for owners of estates to allow their flocks to graze upon unoccupied land beyond the limit of occupation." The distinction he did not make was between "owners of estates" (i.e. the "Ancient Nobility" and the "New Gentry") and the men of widely diversified social origin who commanded enough capital or credit to buy a flock of sheep and chuck-waggons enough to head out beyond


the boundaries of settlement in search of "stations". These were mostly free settlers with no inclination or insufficient capital to set up as "New Gentry" who had chosen New South Wales as the fittest place to begin life anew or offering the best opportunities for making money quickly during a limited colonial sojourn.

In 1836, Governor Bourke had been forced to accept and regulate this sort of occupation, frowned upon by the British Government and Colonial Reformers alike, by issuing licences which acknowledged the existence of squatting but gave the squatters no legal right to their runs. When Gipps arrived a million or more sheep were spread over 900 miles of the Crown lands of the south-eastern section of the continent which the British Government had hoped to hold for the posterity of the Empire as a whole. Neither Gipps nor British authority could now ignore the fact that squatters provided the greater part of the colony's increasingly valuable export—fine wool. The fact was that the character of the new continent and changing economic circumstances in England had modified colonial development along lines quite different from those envisaged by either John Macarthur or Lachlan Macquarie.

The first of the free settlers were mostly ex-Army and Navy officers jobless at the end of the Napoleonic wars; younger sons or the impetuous offspring of fecund parsonages and professional homes; farmers suffering under the post-war agricultural depression and the slump in wheat prices; impoverished minor gentry fearful of the rate of change in an England dislocated by the Industrial Revolution; middle-class parents anxious about the material prospects of their children in an increasingly competitive society; and, here and there, imaginative Romantics seized with intellectual or religious doubts about the "cash-nexus" and the decay of traditional values. "It requires little capital to begin with," wrote Lieutenant J. G. Spicer, from Liverpool in New South Wales, to his friends, the Russell family, a clergyman's widow under forty with
nine children to provide for from £3000 in consols. ".... One hundred pounds will go as far as £500 in England .... A single gentleman here, with a little economy, might keep his carriage on £150 a year .... My only ambition is to make myself independent of my employment under Government ...."

Lieutenant Spicer, in charge of seventy-five prisoners, was acutely aware of the birth-stain. "I am tired of this villainous place," he wrote to another friend in January, 1830; ".....it is dangerous to go out of sight of the town, day or night, for the bushrangers are becoming so desperate that scarcely a day passes without a robbery being committed somewhere. About six weeks ago a hundred desperate fellows broke loose at a place called Bathurst. Having seized the soldiers, after killing several they took their arms and ammunition. They pressed everyone they met and made them fight, and many who refused were murdered on the spot. They drove everything before them, entered the houses of respectable settlers, and after taking everything useful, burnt them to the ground. However, they were all suppressed in good time, and many have suffered severely for their madness." 28

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Widow Bussell and her eldest son, who had won two exhibitions at Winchester to Trinity College, Oxford, and was intent on holy orders, should prefer to try their fortunes in Western Australia. Moreton Bay and Van Diemen's Land were more besmirched than New South Wales and Port Phillip and South Australia were not yet established. When Captain James Stirling, R. N., a fellow-officer of a family connection, called for settlers to colonize the Swan River District of Western Australia, the fact that there were no convicts added to the inducement of free grants of land in an area Stirling pronounced "not inferior to the Plain of Lombardy". So it came


29. Ibid, pp. 6-7.
about that John Garrett Bussell, aged twenty-six, and three younger brothers with a servant Pearce decided to follow the example of their friend Captain John Molloy of the Rifle Brigade, in starting life anew in Western Australia.

Meanwhile, enthusiastic Colonial Reformers were preparing to found "a Paradise for Dissenters" without convict labour in South Australia, a colony which, according to George Fife Angas, London merchant, shipowner and devout Methodist, offered "a place of refuge for pious Dissenters ... who could in their new home discharge their consciences before God ..." and where "... the children of pious farmers might have farms on which to settle, and provide bread for their families ...". This laudable endeavour cast in new terms Macquarie's vision of a happy rural Arcadia where poor men might make a happy home if they earned the Almighty's just reward by living sober, chaste, godly and hard-working lives. Instead, many of the colonists-to-be showed greater eagerness to get rich quickly by speculation in urban land than by ploughing virgin fields, herding sheep in sound Biblical style, or following William Cobbett's injunction that, "... whatever the pride of rank, of riches, or of scholarship, may have induced some men to believe of affect to believe, the real strength and all the resources of a country ever have sprung and ever must spring, from the labour of its people ...."

(iii)

Australian circumstances, as well as human shortcomings, militated against Captain Stirling's starry-eyed optimism and George Fife Angas's Christian faith in pious Dissenters. As Mr. Commissioner Bigge had pointed out in New South Wales, "... for the ordinary Class of Settlers ... the prospect afforded ... is in many cases a forbidding one. It presupposes Industrious habits, some


some portion of Agricultural knowledge, and the application of annual savings to the purchase of Agricultural Implements, Buildings, and lastly the operation of a steady demand for produce ...." In New South Wales, by the late 1830's, the more enterprising inhabitants were either capitalized wool-growers or traders with an itch for speculation. Only one acre in seventy of allocated land within the Nineteen Counties was devoted to agriculture and the colony depended on Van Diemen's Land, then the granary of Australia, for wheat and flour.

All forms of farming, market-gardening, and dairying were alike treated with neglect, although everywhere within easy reach of the population centres there was excellent land which only needed intelligent care to have yielded abundantly. All through this period New South Wales not only imported breadstuffs, but vegetables, preserves, butter, and other products difficult to carry and expensive to handle, which could very well have been produced in the country ... In 1838 there were 108,000 cultivated acres in Van Diemen's Land compared with 93,000 in New South Wales. Nor does the mere statement of acreage give a full idea of the island colony's superiority, for the actual yield of crops was twice that of New South Wales.

By comparison, the spectacular growth of the pastoral industry had seen the multiplication of banks, loan and mortgage companies to supply capital to finance the wool boom. Sheep farming was essentially a highly-capitalized industry. The squatter had to wait a year before he could shear his sheep and in bad conditions it often took him several months to get wool to the port of embarkation, where it might lie several more months waiting suitable shipping. The voyage to England took another five or six months and there was usually a further delay while the wool lay in English warehouses awaiting auction. Consequently, it was often three years before the pastoralist received any income for his efforts.

Meanwhile, he required capital to pay shepherds, shearsers,


carter, shipowners and to provide the flow of money which kept most of the urban population of contractors, storemen, clerks and the like, in their jobs.\textsuperscript{34}

However, before the slump of 1840-43, the pastoral industry was lucrative enough to attract all the capital it needed but found it increasingly difficult to obtain sufficient labour. In May, 1837, John MacKay, a Sydney merchant, wrote to Governor Bourke proposing the importation of "Boonaha and Dangurs" from Calcutta. Bourke appointed a Committee of the Legislative Council to consider the proposal which Sir John Jamison supported and Wentworth opposed on the grounds that the colony's racial purity should be preserved. The Committee recommended the importation of coolies but the British Government rejected the proposal.\textsuperscript{35} Meanwhile, a number of coolies arrived and in March, 1838, were charged in the Sydney Police Office, under the Masters' and Servants' Act, with absconding their labour and returned to their employers. Reporting this the \textit{Australian} commented, "We conceive that it is the duty of the Government to inquire into the manner in which these poor, half-starved, naked Indians have been dealt with by those who induced them to emigrate to our shores. They are British subjects, and are therefore entitled to the full protection of British laws; as they (are) unacquainted both with the language and the laws of the Colony, it becomes an imperative duty cast upon those in authority to see that they have their just rights."\textsuperscript{36}

Four days later the \textit{Australian} published a statement "made by one of the Coolies". According to this, forty-one coolies had agreed to come to Australia for five rupees a month (equivalent to 10/- sterling) plus keep, consisting of rice and vegetables. They complained that they had not been paid monthly, as promised, that they had been separated from their priest and interpreter and that

\textsuperscript{34} G. Blainey, \textit{The Tyranny of Distance}, p. 127.


\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Australian}, 2 March, 1838.
the mornings being cold they needed warmer clothing; "... they view themselves as kidnapped here as slaves ... there is no person they could appeal to, and they even do not understand their masters orders!! which renders them liable to ill treatment. In order for these poor deluded beings to receive justice .... an interpreter should be engaged as their friend and advocate, [and also] to represent their complaints to the magistracy." Gipps and the Colonial Office opposed further attempts to introduce coolies in 1840 and 1843, Gipps declaring that those who sought coloured workers were "... men .... looking rather to their own immediate wants than to the ultimate good of the country." If there was a general shortage of money, before the slump of 1840-43, the pastoral industry was lucrative enough to attract the capital it needed although there were widespread complaints that banks and investors preferred to speculate in urban land. "At the first Government land sale [at Melbourne], in June 1837, half-acre town lots realized an average of £35 each. At the second sale, in November, the same year, the average was raised to £42. Within a year .... three of these lots, which had been purchased from the Crown by Mr. C. H. Ebden for £136, were sold by public auction for £10,224." Dissatisfied with the results of Government auctions, the Governor transferred the sales to Sydney. Here non-central Melbourne lots realized £118 each, as compared with city blocks for £36 to £46 at the Melbourne sales; and 1,000 suburban acres were sold at £7.11s an acre in blocks of twenty-five acres. Sydney land jobbers were most prominent in the market and before long Melbourne people who wanted small residential blocks were complaining that they were not available at anything like reasonable prices.

37. Ibid, 6 March 1838.
40. Ibid, p. 213.
At the end of 1838, Melbourne interests formed the Port Phillip Bank with a subscribed capital of £120,000 paid up to £50,000. At the end of the first year it declared a dividend of 12½ per cent, compared with the ruling rate of eight per cent. However, the bulk of the bank's business consisted of backing speculative land buyers and the whole of its resources were soon locked up on inconvertible securities. Attempts to open a branch and raise capital in London failed. The mania was universal. Barristers, attorneys, clergymen, military and civil officers, doctors, merchants, settlers and dealers gambled on the future development of the new southern district. Money invested in pastoral pursuits also promised a good return. Charles Sturt, explorer and unsuccessful pastoralist, estimated that with luck a capital of £3,000 invested in sheep would amount to £10,000 within five years as well as affording 7½ percent interest in the interim. Until the crash came the lucky ones made large profits quickly but the amount of money in circulation encouraged continued speculation rather than production.

Despite the boom in pastoral pursuits, Australian reformers and Romantics continued to draw on English Romanticism and American example and dreamed of establishing what the Australian termed a "...staunch and honest race of independent yoo men to be the mainstay of our social fabric ..." The Rev. J. Dunmore Lang, who did not often agree with the Australian, agreed with this. The ideal colonist, he wrote,

... builds his house in the wilderness, and clears and cultivates the virgin soil; ... as his sheep and cattle graze peacefully around him, while his children grow up, perhaps with only the faintest recollections of their native land, the colonist feels that a new object is gradually filling up the vacuum in his soul; ... he finds that his affections are gradually and insensibly transferred to the land of his adoption.

41. Ibid, pp. 172-3.
42. Australian, 10 June 1836.
In his **Australian Sketch Book**, James Martin conjured up a rural Arcady equal to anything imagined by the Lake Poets but he tempered it with a characteristic dash of colonial realism.

If there is a spot in this wide world, where apart from the din and bustle of mankind I could wish to pass through life in ease and retirement, uninfluenced by avarice, or undisturbed by ambition, it certainly is in one of the many sheltered and luxuriant vales which abound so much on the banks of the Hawkesbury and the Hunter. There could I pass each day amid the solitudes of Nature, gazing on the grand and imposing objects around, and holding free and unrestrained converse with the learned and industrious men of former ages. While poring over Virgil's Georgics, I might fancy myself transported back to the Augustan period, and become a contemporary of the poet; I might people in imagination the lands around with handy Romans, and fancy my fields part of the genial soil of Italy. But these are Utopian, visionary schemes, and such as have never yet been realized. Man is influenced in all his proceedings by external circumstances, and cannot tell what condition of life would suit him best until he has been convinced by experience ....

Although no radical, the Reverend William Woolfs shared Lang's and the Australian's dream of rural Arcady ....

Happy the man from business free,
As ancient mortals used to be,
Who, far from Sydney's dusty ways,
In sweet retirement spends his days
And cultivates the fertile soil ....

Those in Australia who cherished Lang's, Martin's or Woolfs' particular version of pastoral were mostly immigrant journalists, city-bred clerks, mechanics and shopboys who crowded the coastal ports and cheered the clichés of radical orators when they denounced the Big Man's frontier and demanded farmhouses before station homesteads, meadows for cows rather than more paddocks for sheep. These urban radicals derived their egalitarian and democratic ideas from Chartist England and Jacksonian America — in both

44. *James Martin, Australian Sketch Book*, p. 90.

of which a spectacular acceleration of manufacturing dominated the economic scene — rather than from beyond the boundaries where bushmen, if they were concerned with anything more than making money and establishing white supremacy over the aborigines, were Romanti
cic individualists not utilitarian collectivists.

Despite the alluring pictures of rural felicity painted by Martin in his Sketch Book and Woolls in his Miscellanies it was un-
usual for men of social standing to live on their grants in the bush. In 1829, Paymaster Captain Terence Murray, late of the 48th Regi-
ment, sent his son Terence Aubrey Murray to pioneer the country north of Lake George. Young Murray (he was barely twenty) made
his first headquarters at Collector and lived there alone except for assigned servants and a few wandering aborigines. Irish, Cathol-
ic and serious-minded he did not make himself familiar with his men
or join other young squires and overseers in the gambling and drinking that were the usual diversions in a hard bush life. There
was nothing Arcadian about farming either inside the boundaries or squating outside. Life was rough, distances great, the work hard, visitors infrequent, blowflies and the smell of sheep a per-
petual presence; scab, dingoes and the depredations of aborigines a constant menace. Scab, a fungoid disease, provided the great-
est worry, "...a word of dread and hatefulness, herald of ruin and loss, of endless torment to all concerned, of medicated drippings, dressings, deaths and destructions innumerable." Poison-
ed baits were put out for the dingoes and, as Margaret Kiddle points out, "They preyed on the young lambs and perhaps deserved their fate, but there were other more innocent victims. Around Colac there was '.... a dreadful increase in the mortality of the blacks, which, on investigation, was discovered to be caused by their eating of sheep that had been poisoned for bait .... or that


had been subjected to arsenical dressing for the cure of scab ...."48

Catholic priests and Anglican Parsons did their best to patrol the blackblocks and were not always welcome when they arrived at station homesteads (often no more than a bark hut) or shepherd's hut, although Murray at Collector "....gave a warm welcome to men of the Church, to priest and parson alike".49 For most of the year as Alfred Joyce recalled, ".... Sunday did not extend any distance out of Melbourne and not at all into the distant bush, but was peculiarly selected by the station hands as washing day for shirts and trousers ...."50 Some squatters, like Joyce, held primitive services on Sunday evenings, using Blair's *Sermons* and Watts' *Hymns* but most masters and men found less innocent Sunday diversions than washing clothes or singing hymns. North of Lake George, where young Terence Murray beguiled his Sundays reading science and the classics, the local overseers and stockmen resorted to a sly grog shanty in the bush half-a-day's ride towards Yass, where rum could be bought for ten shillings a bottle. "On Sundays perhaps fifteen whips would hang from a peg outside the door of the shanty. Near by saddles and bridles would be thrown in a heap and hobbled horses grazing close at hand."51

Young squires and Overseers, who spent most of their spare time playing cards and drinking, rarely matched the gargantuan thirsts of their men. "There is a continual scene of dissipation and drinking among the lower orders," John Thomson wrote to Neil Black, of Glenormiston in the Port Phillip District, a Scots farmer "righteous, frugal, hard-working, and no-one's fool", on 29 December, 1848. "And we poor swells instead of partaking in any sort of enjoyment are kept continually galloping from station to station in mortal terror that Long Jim, Lanky Dick, with Bobby the Bull are all drunk with the sheep looking after themselves on the

tops of the mountains." True, this was Christmas and New Year but station hands were liable to drink themselves into a delirium any time they could lay their hands on a sufficient supply of grog which their masters endeavoured to see was not very often. Non-assigned workers made a practice of "drinking their cheques". As Neil Black reported in December 1840, just after his arrival at Port Phillip, when he was resident managing director of Neil Black and Company of Glasgow, ".... With three of Six Months Wages in their pockets they gird their cangaroo (sic) Skin Knapsacks upon their backs containing their whole stock on hand .... Thus equipt they journey often 150 miles to the next Grog Shop where they have a 'bright flare up' for a few days. When all is spent they are again ready to engage with the first that applies or again return to the bush indifferent whether they are employed or not ...."

Lack of women was responsible for more serious consequences than recurrent drunken "benders". At Glenormiston, Neil Black found that ".... several men are now very ill with the Native pox which shows how they acted with the Blacks. Notwithstanding the bad name [the natives] had here, I am told it is no uncommon thing for these rascals to sleep all night with a Lubra — and if she poxes him or in any way offends him perhaps shoot her before 12 next day — I am certain it is a thing that has frequently occurred". It does not seem to have occurred to Black that Captain Foster Fyans, first resident police magistrate at Geelong and Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Portland District, had the truth of the matter when he reported that two-thirds of the natives of Port Phillip had died from venereal disease which was introduced by shepherds from Van Diemen's Land. Homosexuality, common among convicts, appears to have been fairly widespread in the squatting districts although contemporaries seldom referred to it.

53. Quoted Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, p. 69
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid. p. 121.
56. Ibid. p. 120.
57. Ibid. p. 119.
Small freeholders in the settled districts did not escape the temptations of squatting masters and men. The Reverend Frank Maberly, in Kingsley's novel Geoffrey Hamlyn, found nothing Arcadian about the life lived by small farmers in Australia despite his initial expectations. Maberly had come to Australia with the usual Romantic flight of fancy....

... I pictured to myself the labourer, English, Scotch, or Irish — a man whom I know, and have lived with and worked for some years, emigrating, and, after a few years of honest toil, which, compared to his old hard drudgery, was child's play, saving money enough to buy a farm. I pictured to myself this man accumulating wealth, happy, honest, godly, bringing up a family of brave boys and good girls, in a country where theoretically, the temptations to crime are all but removed; this is what I imagined. I come out here, and what do I find? My friend the labourer has got his farm, and is prospering, after a sort. He has turned to be a drunk-en, godless, impudent fellow, and his wife little better than himself; his daughters dowdy husbies; his sons lanky, lean, pasty-faced, blaspheming blackguards, drinking rum before breakfast, and living by cheating one another out of horses.... What a happy exchange an English peasant makes, when he leaves an old, well-ordered society, the ordinances of religion, the various give-and-take relations between rank and rank, which make up the sum of English life, for independence, godlessness, and rum! 58

For Maberly, as for Macaulay, an acre of Middlesex was worth a principality in Utopia. Both might have learned that degradation and immorality were not peculiar to Australia if they had studied the poems of Crabbe or Dr. William Acton's report on prostitution in early Victorian England. 59 Nor was neglect of the ordinances of religion confined to the Australian colonies. The old well-ordered society Frank Maberly remembered in Devonshire no longer existed in London or the industrial Midlands. Colonists and machine-production went hand-in-hand and between them, as Marx observed,

59. George Crabbe (1754-1832), The Village (1783); Poems (1807); The Borough (1810), etc.
tended to destroy "all feudal, patriarchal and idyllic relationships. It has ruthlessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound men to their 'natural superiors'; it has left no other bond betwixt man and man but crude self-interest and unfeeling 'cash payment'".

Chapter Five

Forever England...

"... What finer thing can we do for Australia than make it another England? ... Who are we to edit the greatest civilization the world had known?... Ours is a race of empire-builders because no Englishman worthy of the name ever yields to climate or environment." William Hyde in M. Barnard Eldershaw's A House is Built (London, 1929).
Sydney in the 1840's was another Plymouth or Brighton except that the climate was different. At least, that is how a succession of newcomers saw it. More exclusively English than either Liverpool or London, was how Deputy Adjutant-General Colonel Godfrey Mundy, who arrived in 1846, described the town. "Were it not for an occasional orange-tree in full bloom, or fruit in the back yard of some of the older cottages, or a flock of little green parrots whistling as they alight for a moment on a housetop, one might fancy himself at Brighton or Plymouth." From the harbour his first impression was: "It might be Waterford, or Wapping, with a dash of Nova Scotian Halifax."

Mrs. Charles Meredith, who arrived a few years before Colonel Mundy, had the same impression. She thought the port had "an air of 'Wapping' about it, by no means engaging" although she found the entrance to Port Jackson "grand in the extreme". Colonel Mundy acknowledged the "undoubted beauties of Port Jackson" but found something "singularly repulsive in the leaden tint of the gum-tree foliage, and in the dry and sterile sandstone from which it springs". In short, Sydney lacked the exotic interest English soldiers and travellers had grown to expect from Britain's far-flung empire.

William a'Beckett, who arrived from London in 1837 and took over the editorship of Literary News for James Tegg, the bookseller, was almost certainly responsible for the magazine's editorial summarising which crystallised the current view of Sydney and New South Wales:

2. Ibid., p. 38.
5. a Beckett, Sir William (1806-1869); appointed acting solicitor-general March 1841; solicitor-general March 1843; acting judge of the supreme court at Port Phillip, 1846; chief justice of the newly formed colony of Victoria, January, 1851. Knighted 1851.
On landing at Sydney, the Englishman may imagine he is entering a provincial town at home, the language, the manners, customs etc., all tend to produce the illusion; the change of country is not therefore so much felt as when we visit the more luxuriant and splendid shores of India, where every thing has a foreign aspect...in Australia everything is English, and consequently the separation from home is less keenly felt, even if it were not dissipated altogether.

By 1848, when Joseph Fowles, "drawing master to the public and private schools of New South Wales", published his survey of city buildings, the colonial capital could be considered "a lovely....town of clean, chaste Georgian architecture" in which, "Whole Streets were pleasant compositions of harmonious buildings, few of them over three storeys high, all clearly designed, well-mannered, and an orderly delight to the eye". That, at least, is how a nostalgic eye from the twentieth century sees it. Those who lived in this slightly blowsy Regency transplant, which Francis Greenway, John Verge and Major George Barney, of the Royal Engineers, hoped to keep forever England, were more concerned with comfort than good taste. "The construction of the buildings is blameably ill-suited to a semi-tropical climate," declared Colonel Mundy; "barefaced, smug-looking tenements without verandahs or even broad eaves. This fault extends even to Government House, whose great staring windows are doomed to grill unveiled, because, forsooth, any excrescence upon their stone mullions would be heterodox to the order or disorder of its architecture. Surely a little composite licence might have been allowable in such a case and climate."

The pattern had been laid down in Macquarie's day when, according to Marjorie Barnard, Sydney was a small town the society of which had as many circles as Dante's Inferno. The best public architecture resulted from what Mr. Commissioner Bigge condemned as Mac-
quarrie's "unfortunate propensity to ornament and architectural effect" and to the fortunate coincidence that he had the services of a highly-talented convict architect, Francis Greenway. Greenway was not the only architect of vision and taste in colonial Sydney. Hampshire-born John Verge, a free immigrant who arrived in 1828, designed domestic buildings in elegant Regency style and in 1832 added sympathetically-designed vestries to one of Greenway's masterpieces, St. James Church. Verge also designed some of the mansions and country houses which dotted the outer suburbs and countryside around Sydney in deceptive imitation of the eighteenth-century English scene.12.

Among these suburban and country houses (not all designed by Greenway or Verge) were the Macarthurs' Camden Park at Parramatta; Captain John Piper's Henrietta Villa at Pott's Point, the handsomest villa in the colony; Ultimo House, which had in its grounds four hundred spotted deer from India; Colonel George Johnson's Annandale; Alexander Riley's Burwood; Sylvester John Brown's Enmore, where his famous son, Thomas Alexander Browne (Rolf Boldrewood) grew up; and Regentsville, where Sir John Jamison kept up ".... a complete manorial centre, with its two hundred assigned servants, its woolsheds, workshops for cobblers, carpenters, weavers and harnessmakers ...." With their owners, retainers, husbandmen and labourers, many of these estates were complete worlds in themselves but their resemblance to the eighteenth-century scene was coincidental only. In New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land benign facades hid the brutal fact that the retainers and labourers were assigned convicts and the husbandmen and gardeners virtual slaves not independent rent-paying yeomen or privileged servants.

Young Thomas Brown (Rolf Boldrewood) lived at Enmore, three miles from town, ".... a large two-storied house .... something

13. The family added the final "e" after 1862: Alan Brissenden, Rolf Boldrewood (Melbourne, 1972), p.3.
between a bungalow and a terrace . . . a verandah fully a hundred feet in length, and twelve in breadth, running across the facade . . . . This was flagged with cream-coloured Sydney sandstone . . . .

Tom's father, Sylvester John Brown, had been a sea-going officer with the East India Company and in 1838 overlanded stock to Mount Alexander, in the Port Phillip district, sending for his family to exchange the comfort of Enmore for a wattle and daub hut outside the Nineteen Counties. Tom Brown was a frequent visitor to Henrietta Villa, Captain Piper's £10,000 house at Point Piper, then occupied by Colonel John Gibbes, the Collector of Customs.

Many a day I spent there . . . A large, well-ordered man¬sion, sufficiently removed from town to have country privileges, Point Piper contained all the requirements for youthful enjoyment. The kindest hostess, the nic¬est girls, a picturesque old-fashioned garden with fruit and flowers in profusion, fishing, bathing, boating to any extent, books, and music, — all the refinements and elegancies then procurable in Australia . . . it did not differ noticeably . . . from . . . country-house life in England . . . .

Edward John Eyre, who arrived in 1833 with all the proper introductions, reported that Colonel Henry Dumeresq, at St. Hel¬ier's on the Hunter River, always dressed for dinner and rigidly maintained English standards of style and civilization in the Aust¬ralian bush. At Ginninderra, on the Molonglo in what was then known as Canberry's Limestone Plains, the Palmers entertained with true English aplomb despite heat, blowflies and the perpetual smell of tarpots and sheep. According to William Bunn, nephew of Terence Aubrey Murray of Yarralumla, after dinner conversation ranged from the latest Sydney gossip to poetry and religion and was well spiced with wit. In Sydney, Sir George Gipps set the stan¬dard for such civility.

18. Gwendoline Wilson, Murray of Yarralumla, p. 195.
Last night we were at Government House [wrote Eleanor Stephen, wife of the newly-arrived Judge Alfred Stephen] Dinner at 7 o'clock. We met there His Excellency, Major General Sir Maurice O'Connell and Lady O'Connell, Mr. and Mrs. Deas Thomson, Mr. and Mrs. Bloxham, Major and Mrs. Anderson and Gentlemen without number, including Major Bunbury, appointed to command the Troops in New Zealand. Mrs. Thomson sang two songs (Italian) beautifully. The dining-room is a very fine large one, splendidly lighted—the dinner service of silver, excepting the plates, which are of handsome china. The wines iced and deals of champagne handed round.¹⁹

Whether of Irish or English gentry or Scottish yeoman background, the colonial upper class cherished the status of country gentlemen. Some of them affected the panache and flamboyance of the Regency aristocracy. Sir John Jamison acted the role of a sporting Whig nobleman, despite the fact that he had begun life as a naval surgeon and owed his title initially to Charles XIII of Sweden for his part in curbing a serious outbreak of scurvy in the Swedish Navy. In the Port Phillip District, young squatters cherished the sporting aristocratic character Garryowen allotted them, "... as gallant, light-hearted and free-handed young men as ever enrolled themselves among the pioneers of a new country".²⁰

Peter Snodgrass, son of Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass acting-Governor between Bourke's departure and Gipps's arrival, was one of the young men Garryowen had in mind. Young Snodgrass aped aristocratic English ways although his father was a son of the manse with dour Presbyterian background. He overlanded stock to Port Phillip in 1838 and was soon numbered among the "Goulburn Mob", the reckless, hard-riding, strong-headed gay young sparks of infant Melbourne. Snodgrass fought two duels, the first with William Ryrie on New Year's Day, 1840, on the site of the present Spencer Street railway station. His pistol discharged prematurely in the


air and the whole duelling party repaired in high spirits to the Melbourne Club. The second duel, with Redmond Perry, a young Irish lawyer destined for a judgeship, a knighthood, and the first chancellorship of Melbourne University, ended in equally serio-comic manner. It took place in August 1841, near to the present Albert Park railway station, and honour was again satisfied when the young squatter released his trigger prematurely and the Irishman fired into the air.²

Captain Foster Fyans included among "gentlemen squatters" those who kept a pack of hounds and organised regular meets.³ They included Comptom Gerald Ferrers, at the Wardy Yallock chain of ponds; Alexander Fairlie Cunningham, at Mount Mercer; the lawyer Charles Sladen, at Geelong; and Thomas "Gentleman" Pyke, near Ballan, on the Werribee River. About 1845, these packs—except Pyke's—were combined to form the Corio Pack which formed the nucleus of the Melbourne Hunt Club in 1854. "Gentleman" Pyke gained his nickname from his tall and distinguished bearing, perfect manners and extravagant style of living, which helped ruin him after fire destroyed his homestead in 1854. Pyke went back to England but returned in 1859 and died at Wedderburn, near Bendigo, in 1861.

The Sydney and Melbourne Clubs, like the Union Club in Hobart, were established on English models for the convenience of young squatters come to town as well as for older and staid members. "All the aristocracy of the country are in it," exulted Stuart Alexander Donaldson, a Sydney merchant who became the Premier of New South Wales, when he organised the Sydney Club in 1838.²³ The club catered for what Gipps described as "young men of good family and connections in England, officers of the army and navy, graduates of Oxford and Cambridge".²⁴ Initially, membership was limited to 200 (later 300). Election was by ballot and one black ball

22. _Ibid_, p. 185.
in ten excluded a candidate.

According to Garryowen the younger members of the equally-exclusive Melbourne Club (founded 1839) copied the boisterous spirit of their English examplars by pouring from the Club "when they had attained, the stage of inebriety, pugnacity, or mischief-making, which unfitted them for quarters where even the line of licentiousness was never too lightly drawn" and going on the 'ran-tan', knocking the hats off policemen, bashing door-knockers, ringing church bells, removing window shutters, disrupting theatrical performances, and finishing up at "The Crib", which Garryowen describes as "a remarkable tenement rearward of the now Australian Club House in William Street" the resort of "certain habitués of the Melbourne Club .... in the hey-day of hot-blood and skinfull of more pungent spiritual influences than are to be found [to be] patronising table-rapping seances ...."

These were the days, in England, when gentlemen made a rigid distinction between "ladies" and women. Ladies were all like Thackeray's Helen Pendennis, gentle, refined, chaste, self-sacrificing and evangelical. Women, on the other hand, were fair game. Dr. William Acton reported in the 1850's that no one acquainted with English rural life would deny that seduction was "a sport and habit with vast numbers of men, married .... and single, placed above the ranks of labour." In a single year (1851) 42,000 illegitimate children were born in England and Wales or, as Acton put it, "one in twelve of the unmarried females in the country above the age of puberty have strayed from the path of virtue."

According to Charles Harpur there were also plenty of "profligate scoundrels" in Sydney whose aim was "to seduce and then abandon, some of the most handsome girls, as they arrived in the several immigrant vessels .... You may know them by the blackguard quantity


of their address and by the flashy jauntiness of their gait and manners. When they happen to be attorneys they are the very Belials of their species. They are special hands too at Cribbage and all fours, and rejoice much in the reputation of being blades that 'know what's what' — they are 'up to snuff' and 'down to hammers'. In a word they are the very Solomons of immorality; and an affectedly wise shake of their worthless heads in disparagement of all good novelties has, in consequence, a most pernicious influence over the opinions of their more ignorant and credulous neighbours."  

Other English sports were followed with equal avidity in the colony. Asked by Sir William Molesworth whether cock-fighting, racing and boxing were general James Mudi replied, "Just the same as in England. The races now have got into such disrepute .... that it is quite a rare thing to see any individuals who are really respectable attending them." 28 So far as boxing was concerned, he added, "....there has been a considerable sensation in the colony about that, and a considerable noise in the public papers to put it down .... there are two or three .... named the same as the boxers in England ...." 29 He said cock-fighting and dog-fighting were common but not bull-baiting. Cricket began early, introduced by the officers of the transport Calcutta in 1803 and developed by the Military Cricket Club in the 1820's. The Military was joined by the Australian, Marylebone, Union, and Currency clubs. 30 

Gambling played a prominent part in all colonial sports. According to the Sydney Gazette a cricket match on New Year's Day 1830 was played for "heavy stakes" and by "four o'clock it was estimated that there were upwards of 100 spectators witnessing the contest". The match was played on the racecourse, now known as Hyde Park. On 17 October another match played on the same ground

27. J. Hormington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, p. 66.
31. Sydney Gazette, 2 January, 1830.
between the Marylebone and Australian clubs carried stakes of £20 a side. The Australians usually wore cabbage-tree hats with broad blue ribbons and streamers behind. The Military sported tall black hats. Bowling was usually underhand. When Robert Still, a member of the Australian Club, introduced overhand bowling he was rebuked because the manner he "threw" the ball sometimes hurt the players.

The theatre was popular among the groundlings and "blades", although respectable ladies did not frequent presentations which ranged from lavishly staged spectacles to the latest London farces and Shakespeare. "Respectable people do not go," Mudie told Charles Buller at the Molesworth Committee, except "perhaps when the Governor goes .... they are quite disgusted, the way the theatre is conducted, in allowing all sorts of people free access to what they term the dress of the boxes ...." He added that prostitutes and "kept women" frequented the theatre and the management would not have been able to keep open without them as an adjunct to theatrical entertainment. Concerts, on the other hand, were far superior and attended by the best people, particularly if the Governor patronized the performance.⁴

The "Ancient Nobility" were more circumspect than young bloods in their pleasures. They mostly preferred comfortable middle-class convention to the sort of aristocratic play-acting favoured by Sir John Jamison and "Gentleman Fyke", though the Macarthurs put their servants in livery and adopted a feudal attitude towards convict labourers. ".... at harvest home, I always make a point of having a dinner cooked expressly, something similar to what is done in England," James Mudie assured the Transportation Committee in 1837 ".... they have one day given them for what they called a jollification, then the dinner was cooked, and as much as the men could

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eat was given to them; and, in fact, I, and other persons, attended as waiters upon them; .... upon these occasions I gave them a certain quantity of spirits, which, of course, I reduced, and sometimes wine; and, indeed, I purchased London porter for them, and recommended it strongly, and offered to give them a quart of London porter a day during the harvest but they preferred spirits ...." Macarthur also told the Committee he was so confident of his assignees feudal loyalty that he was prepared to arm them against bushrangers and had no fear but that they would rally around the family in defence of the homestead.

(ii)

As Sir George Gipps soon discovered, New South Wales was well equipped with the necessary means for communicating British ideas on law, constitutional development, land tenure, labour, art, literature, music, education, religion, temperance and the treatment of the lesser tribes British humanitarians wished to bring within the law. Modified as these ideas were by colonial circumstances and by accretions from Ireland, Scotland and America, they remained the basic foundation for a growing Australian identity. This fundamental heritage lay within the framework of the Graeco-Roman classics plus a pattern of ideas derived from the European Renaissance, the French Enlightenment and classical economics expounded by Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo and the popular Joseph McCulloch.

Buried among the anonymous mass of convicts and ex-convicts there may have been seeds of the recurring "counter-culture" which surfaces periodically throughout European history — "The Antimonian heresy" that the individual is a law unto himself and not subject to external moral obligation or social discipline. If so, these


seeds more often revealed themselves in drunkenness, lechery, brutal crime and the betrayal of comrades-in-misfortune than in mateship or Rousseauistic visions of Arcady based on equal rights, an absence of authority and self-discipline. The English code of a gentleman probably provided firmer bonds of class loyalty than Price Warung's much cited "underground brotherhood" centred about the "convict oath":

'Stiff or in Breath,  
Lag or Free,  
You and Me,  
In Life, in Death,  
On the Cross, never. 34

Writing from a British gaol about a country he had never seen, Edward Gibbon Wakefield declared, with only partial truth, that Australia was a barbarous condition, "like that of every people scattered over a territory immense in proportion to their numbers ...." Every man, he added, "is obliged to occupy himself with question of daily bread; there is neither leisure nor reward for the investigation of abstract truth; money-getting is the universal object; taste, science, morals, manners, abstract politics, are subjects of little interest, unless they "bear on the wool question." 35

Ten years later, William a Beckett was saying the same thing in Sydney's Literary News: "....the natural desire of all being to obtain wealth and independence, and the quality of a man's mind being determined, as well as his standing in life, awarded by his advance towards these desirable possessions, it follows, not only that the higher mental powers which have no connection with mere money-making, are seldom called upon, but all those honours, and all that respect which belongs of right to intellect, are transferred to the very opposite qualification of wealth...." The Reverend David Mackenzie put the matter more succinctly: "The colony

35. E. G. Wakefield, A Letter from Sydney, p. 28.
is yet too young either to appreciate or to reward .... intellectual luxuries."

37

These lugubrious observations were not entirely justified. Neither the wool-growing gentry nor the middling classes of New South Wales were wholly devoted to money-making or satisfied to involve Australia in the "abyss of barbarism and ignorance" Wakefield and others feared. The "Ancient Nobility", the official Establishment, the clergy, even the convict mass, included highly-educated men of intense cultural and scientific interests and many squatters developed an educated interest in the flora, fauna and aborigines of their adopted land. From the beginning, too, Evangelical clergy and Emancipists shared an eagerness to provide some sort of education for the rising generation. William Wilberforce urged the Colonial Office to send out teachers, adding that the salaries offered should be small "because if you were to give large ones, improper people would accept the situations". 38

In 1808, Samuel Marsden scoured England for teachers but failed to find any, declaring that the Civil List salary of £60 a year (the wage of moderately skilled workmen) "was too small for any proper person to accept it". 39 While Father John Joseph Therry made no bones about applying to Government for "suitable convicts who could teach in school for him on week days and recite prayers on Sundays". 40 Archdeacon W. G. Broughton wished to make parochial schools a possibility for a limited number of children and on his first visitation to St. James he stressed the importance of "the continuance of these parochial schools wherein, while the elements of instruction are liberally afforded, the youthful mind is trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". 41

38. H.R.N.S.W., Vol. 1, Part 11, p. 634.
40. Ibid, p. 375.
The admonition of the Lord was deemed good for all classes but the rising middle class wanted more than this. These were the days when a classical education was not only the hallmark of gentility but a necessary doorway to the practice of a profession. Latin was essential for law and medicine and the clergy were assumed to be able to read the Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek and to have some knowledge of Latin. More was required than the popular political ability to toss off a Latin tag. The Rules and Orders of the Supreme Court of New South Wales laid it down that a law clerk, before being articled, had to prove before the Attorney-General and two other examiners, that he "is able to translate the first six books of Vergil's Aeneid, the Gospel of St. John in Greek, and has a competent knowledge of the first six books of Euclid".42

George Robert Nichols, Australia's first native-born barrister, learned his Greek and Latin in England where a rich Emancipist father could afford to send him. The less well-endowed sought something nearer home where their sons could learn to better themselves. By the 1840's both Sydney and Hobart had fine colleges of high standard catering for the "middling classes" and gentry. Nor were these institutions poor colonial imitations of outmoded British prototypes. Several incorporated the latest ideas of educational reformers who, under the influence of Benthamite ideas, condemned famous "public" schools like Westminster and Eton, alleging that pupils "oscillated between tyrant and slave" and acquired "a confirmed taste for gluttonry and drunkenness, an aptitude for brutal sports, and a passion for female society of the most degrading kind ...." before proceeding to Oxford and Cambridge to continue "an utterly useless education in Greek and Latin".43

Reform, when it came, did not quite take the direction the


more extreme innovators hoped. Thomas Arnold, who raised Rugby to the rank of a great English public school, considered Greek and Latin anything but useless. He was the author of an unfinished History of Rome and an edition of Thucydides while the classics remained the basis of education at Rugby and all the reformed public schools. What Arnold did, and colonial colleges struggled to do, was to substitute the ideal of a "Christian Gentleman" for the older aristocratic concept of "gentleman", which was shot through with feudal ideas of birth and rank and duelling. John Macarthur, prickly, assertive, quick to challenge anyone whom he suspected intended a slight, endeavoured to set himself and his family up in the feudal manner, conscious perhaps of the staymaker said to be among his recent ancestry, but local circumstances defeated him.

James Macarthur, educated by the Breton emigré Huon de Kerilleau at Parramatta and at a private school in Hereford, had been intended for one of the old-time public schools, Winchester or Charterhouse. When it came to the point his father was "unwilling to place him at a public school, for in the whole of these great establishments there is much vice, and many temptations to excess". Instead, he had gone "into the counting house of an eminent West and East India broker ... a man of first consequence in that line in the City" where he could gain a "considerable knowledge of the trade in general ..." He emerged the very exemplar of a Christian Gentleman compared with his quarrelsome father or that rakish free-thinking Australian Whig, William Charles Wentworth, who, after failing to win a place at the Woolwich Military Academy or in the East India Company, entered the Middle Temple to prepare himself to be "the instrument of procuring a free constitution for my country ...."

44. M. H. Ellis, John Macarthur (Sydney, 1955), p. 482.
45. Ibid.
Far from indicating an indifference to education, Broughton's and Protestant opposition to proposals for a state-dominated secular education suggest that the vision of a suitable system, for rich and poor alike, wavered like a mirage before the eyes of many colonists. The trouble was that Governors and clergy, reformers and traditionalists, utilitarians and Romantics, cherished different visions and could not agree what system of primary education was most suitable for colonial conditions. Bishop Broughton was particularly sensitive for he saw non-denominational schools as the thin edge of the wedge that would prise the populace from "all that was venerable, and virtuous and holy" to substitute "Utilitarianism, Radicalism and Dissent" in place of "the tremendous certainties" of religion from which most churchmen thought it would be perilous and sinful to waver. As John Barrett sees it, "The fight for the faith, the whole faith, and nothing but the faith, seemed particularly desperate at that time" for churchmen of all denominations "feared the influence of the Enlightenment, which encouraged the repudiation of Christian dogma, the glorification of human reason and the toleration of whatever vaguer forms of religion survived as being reasonable."

In higher education, traditionalists and reformers had a clearer field in which to operate. On Broughton's arrival in the colony, he had been shocked by the hobblehoy manners of colonial youth and the state of semi-barbarism that existed beyond the boundaries of the settled areas. The Colonial Office approved his plan for King's Schools, on the lines of the King's School, Canterbury, where he and Gipps were educated in the Whiggish gentlemanly tradition. The King's School, Sydney, and the King's School, Parramatta, opened in January, 1832, but the Sydney school closed in September of the same year on the death of its headmaster, a

Colonial Office nominee. The Parramatta King's School continued
to gain strength and is still numbered among Australia's great pub­
ic schools. Although frankly founded to mould young minds in
orthodox upper class English patterns, the King's School was, in
the words of that "English gentleman, Australian born", James
Macarthur, open to "the children of the middling classes", as well
as "the most respectable families".

The sentiment was not intended to be as patronizing as it
reads. Although Macarthur and Broughton are generally regarded
as Tories of the old school they were, in fact, originally Evan­
gelical and, consciously or unconsciously, part of the "respect­
able" fifth column which infiltrated the old True-blue hunting-and­
fishing Tory gentry from within. In Australia, as in England,
the gentry and the church might control the King's Schools and other
Church of England colleges, such as the cloistered ivy-covered
Hutchins School in Hobart, "administered by Dr. Arnold's nephew and
staffed by Cambridge graduates", but the ideas taught there were
increasingly middle-class. In Australia, the conviction that
anyone with sufficient application could become a Christian Gentle­
man was even more firmly embedded than in England where the new
style public schools provided ways in which the sons of middle-class
families with money could cross the great social barrier between
gentlemen and non-gentlemen.

For one thing, as the Herald often complained, there was
less rigorous examination of credentials in the colonies than at
home. Nor was the barrier between gentleman and non-gentleman so
high because most of the so-called "gentry" were of middle-class
origin themselves and retained many middle-class manners and habits.
On the other hand, those who aspired to be Christian Gentlemen
were often able to become "well-provided for", if not rich, much

47. Henry Parkes, "Gone Over to the Majority", Sydney Sporting Life,
27 April, 1867.
quicker than would have been possible in Britain, where trappings of gentility were more expensive than in Australia. As George French Angas saw it:

An individual who is pining in Great Britain ——
struggling ... to be a 'somebody', upon a limited income — may, by changing his abode to the genial climate of South Australia, live like a little prince, and become a 'somebody' with the same amount of income upon which he could barely exist in England.

James Macarthur believed that the Sydney King's School was not a success because "respectable" families —— i.e., the Macarthurs, Hassells, Nicholsons, Oxlays, Antilles, Suttors, and others free from the birth stain — preferred to send their sons to school in Sydney, "a sea-port town" where the inhabitants were "to a great extent emancipated convicts of low character ...." More probably, the middling classes of Sydney, including Emancipists who did not consider themselves of low character, preferred Cape's Sydney College or Lang's Australian College, both of which were secular, utilitarian and unashamedly middle-class. By this time, a good many Sydney people counted themselves among the class eulogised by Radical Lord Brougham as ".... the genuine depositories of sober, rational, intelligent, and honest English feeling .... solid, right-thinking men .... not given to change ...."

If some of them were black-balled from the Subscription Library they could all read James Mill in bound volumes of the Benthamite Westminster Review in the Commercial Reading Room or at the Mechanics' School of Arts:

Of the political and moral importance of this class, there can be but one opinion. It is the strength of the community. It contains, beyond all comparison, the greatest portion of the intelligence, industry, and wealth of the state.... The people of the class below are the instruments with which they work; and those of the class above, though they may be called their governors, and may really sometimes seem to rule

them, are more often, more truly, more completely, under their control. If their Governors were not under control
in New South Wales there were "Patriots" enough to make that situation simply a matter of time.]

(iii)

Cape's Emancipist-sponsored Sydney College was an outstanding example of a colonial college based on British precedent modified by local circumstances. The liberal Chief Justice, Francis Forbes, laid the foundation stone on Anniversary Day, 1830, although as it turned out the handsome classically-designed buildings were not ready to admit pupils until four years later. Forbes himself, Wentworth, litigious combative Dr. Henry Grattan Douglass, energetic member of the Sydney Philosophical Society, Emancipist Dr. William Bland, inventor and medical innovator, and a number of rich Emancipists had adopted the latest English principle of founding a proprietary school by putting up £10,000 in £50 shares to launch a non-denominational school in rivalry with Broughton's proposed King's Schools.

The stated object was to provide "a good classical, scientific and religious education" for "the sons of parents in the middle and higher ranks of life ...." When at last opened under the direction of Cape, a middle-class liberal-minded able teacher who had been educated at Merchant Tailors School in London, Sydney College earned the grudging praise of Anglican denominationalist Mr. Justice Burton despite the announced "fundamental principle" of the founders: "That the Institution be available to all parties, of whatever religious Persuasion, and that no Religious Book be used by authority, except the Old and New Testament, without note, or comment."

When Sydney College opened in 1834, the management committee consisted of such stout Whigs as Sir John Jamison, W. C. Wentworth,

George Allen, John Mackaness, John Blaxland, John Hosking, merchant and son-in-law of the "Botany Bay Rothschild" Emancipist Samuel Terry, Dr. William Bland, William Hutchinson, Robert Cooper and Simeon Lord. Of the fourteen college committee men and financial supporters named in the Eighth Annual Report, eight were ex-convicts or the sons of ex-convicts. It is not surprising therefore that Sydney College served the colonial-modified purpose of the new-style English public schools: it provided a medium for the non-respectable to become respectable. As in England, attendance at the right schools and membership of the right clubs helped compensate for unfortunate or recent social origin.

Under Cape, the classics remained the backbone of the curriculum but the standard of instruction in all fields was high and soon only the incorrigibly snobbish could have quarrelled with Old Boy Rolf Boldrewood's later-expressed opinion that to be "one of Cape's boys" was "to be a blue ribbon in the scholastic world". In the words of the 1838 Report it required "little exertion of the imagination to view the Sydney College, at no distant date, pouring forth from its portals our future judges, legislators, and rulers, our heroes (if, unfortunately, this country should ever require such aid), our bards, historians, and our future men of science, of literature, and piety ...."

The Committee's confidence was not ill-judged. Burton noted that between 1834 and 1838, the College had graduated 130 scholars, of whom sixty were in town positions and five at English universities. He could not then know that these and future graduates included three Premiers, a Chief Justice, several judges and two novelists of distinction. In short, Sydney College succeeded in filling a role similar to that filled by Eton, Harrow, Westminster and Rugby in Victorian England: producing legislators, judges, magistrates, lawyers and civil servants for a hierarchical society modelled on evolving British precedent.


In March, 1839, there were seven Catholics and two Jews among the 140 pupils at the College. Fees were £7 a year "for all presented Students" and £12 a year "for non-presented Students in the second division" and £14 a year for "non-presented Students in the first division". The College provided "Slates, Slate pencils, Copy Books... Cyphering Books, Paper, Pens and Ink".57 In his reminiscences, Boldrewood, who tended to idealize the past, contended that the boys never raised religious issues. "We remained united and peaceable as a family (resorting, of course, to the British ordeal of single combat on occasion), but all took rank in school chiefly in accordance with their prowess in the classes or the cricket field. We had no other standards of merit".58 He recalled that Archbishop Folding, "A gentle, if dignified old man", was always among the examiners.

John Dunmore Lang, who did not approve of denominational schools or Emancipist influence of any kind, set up his Australian College in Sydney as a "means of acquiring a liberal education in classical learning, philosophy and science, and to fit young men for entering on a strictly professional course, or for engaging in the general business of life, with credit to themselves and with advantage to the public ...." He went on to insist that "although the education afforded .... is given on Christian principles and is decidedly a Christian education, nothing has yet been done in any way to give the Australian College a sectarian aspect and character, or to preclude any class of the colonists from availing themselves of its benefits and advantages".59

Among the four licenciates of the Church of Scotland Lang recruited to set up his college Henry Carmichael, who arrived in October 1831 aboard the Stirling Castle, with a library of Jeremy Bentham's works in the hold and his head full of the latest English

59. Colonist, 6 January, 1838.
and Scottish ideas on secular education for the middling and lower classes. Carmichael's independent views and growing anti-clerical notions soon brought him into conflict with Lang, who had little sympathy for other people's prejudices, and he resigned from the Australian College when his contract was up in 1834.

Lang had too many irons in the fire to pay proper attention to the Australian College which did not prosper. Throughout most of the 1840's the college remained closed but revived briefly (1850-54) under the Reverend Barzillai Quaife, a Congregational Minister of liberal views who had spent several years in New Zealand where his newspaper, the New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette was suppressed for too vigorously defending Maori land rights.

Quaife's lectures to the students at the Australian College, published later under the title, *The Intellectual Sciences* 1-2 (Sydney, 1872), have been claimed as the first serious philosophical work published in Australia.

Meanwhile, Carmichael had founded his comparatively short-lived Normal Institution (1834-38) which had English and Scottish precedents, notably the Benthamite Borough Road School, London University College, and various schools conducted under a system evolved by Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker educationalist who, among other innovations, borrowed from an Anglican clergyman named Dr. Bell a system of teaching by monitors. Carmichael's Normal Institution had the dual purpose of teaching students to educate themselves and of preparing suitable candidates for what both Sir Richard Bourke and Carmichael himself hoped would become a national and secular system of education.

Carmichael made no bones about his utilitarian and anti-clerical ideas, calling the Bible a book of reference only and dismissing Dr. Lang as "the pestiferous priest and sanctimonious back-

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His Normal School aimed to develop in the colony the general utilitarian conception "of moral, social and physical training, already laid down by Bentham and Mill and in part implemented by Robert Owen" although with odd colonial variations. For instance, following James Mill's belief that dancing "represented parental, filial and fraternal affections", Carmichael appointed a sergeant-major to conduct a "dancing" class which was a mixture of gymnastics, military drill and sword exercises.

Carmichael, with Bourke's encouragement, was responsible for introducing Birkbeck's Mechanics' Institutes in New South Wales (1833) although "several master tradesmen" and Dr. James Ross ("the Birkbeck of Tasmania") had been earlier in the field (1827) in Van Diemen's Land. Mechanics' Institutes were a product of Britain's Age of Improvement launched by Scottish Dr. George Birkbeck and backed by the propagandist zeal of Lord Brougham. The movement's reiterated primary aim was "to impart instruction to workmen in the rules and principles which lie at the basis of the arts [trades] they practise" and by the 1840's "Schools of Art" were established throughout the Empire although most turned into cultural self-improvement societies for the middling classes rather than remaining the break-through in adult working-class education they were intended to be. Charles Harpur, who sometimes suffered from an inferiority complex, unfairly labelled the Sydney Institute a "School for Charlatans" and asserted it had fallen into the hands of "bloody immigrants". Meanwhile Carmichael, one of the Scottish and English intellectuals who roused Harpur's Currency Lad suspicions, had retired to the country where, true to his belief that theory and practice were different aspects of a single activity, he became a surveyor and pioneer in viticulture.

Charles Harpur was not the only critic of Sydney's Mechanics' Institute. 61.


School of Arts. The Colonial Literary Journal, while agreeing with Carmichael that, "The name of BIRKBECK, should be a household word in the family of every mechanic", doubted whether the Sydney institution was the best means of imparting "sound practical knowledge — such knowledge as can be grafted in, and made subservient to the wants of our daily avocations ... No man [the Journal added] can acquire a mastery over any art merely by the information he may derive from popular lectures ...." The Journal deplored the absence of classes while admitting that "by some strange and unaccountable fatality" the classes that had been attempted were "blighted as it were in the bud, and — perished" for lack of popular support.63 The Institute's library, however, "afforded the materials by which the ardent and untiring mind" might "learn to grapple with the difficulties of [a] profession", and where a man might "work the crude designs of his brain into symmetry and beauty ....". [Dr. Lang, while not wishing to find fault with the appropriation of money for the maintenance and support of the Sydney Institute, did not share Bourke's and Carmichael's high opinion of "this modern panacea for popular ignorance ...."

He maintained "that the surest and most effectual mode of permanently elevating the great mass of the community of this colony in intellectual attainment, is to raise a few of its native youth to the highest elevation of learning and science" by subsidizing high schools and colleges [such as his Australian College] rather than leaving the higher branches of learning "to the mercantile principle .... of demand and supply; conceiveing that those who were desirous of attaining a higher elevation on the hill of science, being generally of a wealthier class of society, should be left to pay for more costly conveyance ...."64

Despite widespread evidence of colonial intellectual aspirations, Vice-regal personages, distinguished visitors, judges, the

64. Colonist, 11 April, 1838.
higher bureaucracy and the intellectual elite of the colonies — preachers, teachers and editors — continued to cry out against what they considered the gross materialism of the general run of colonists, native-born and immigrant alike. "The whole population, poor and rich, are (sic) bent on acquiring wealth," declared Charles Darwin after his visit in 1837: "among the higher orders, wool and sheep-grazing form the constant subject of conversation." Sir George Gipps, soon after his arrival, reminded colonists that much as England admired them for the rapid progress they were making in wealth and importance "she is more bent upon raising up in these beautiful regions, a moral, a religious, and an enlightened population ... than upon adding to the extent of her dominion and empire." Standing in the rain at the southeast corner of Collins and William Streets in the infant Melbourne the newly arrived Superintendent, Charles Joseph La Trobe, replied to an Address of Welcome with added warning words:

It was not by individual aggrandisement, by the possession of numerous flocks and herds, or by costly acres, that the people shall secure for the country enduring prosperity and happiness, but by the acquisition and maintenance of sound, religious, and moral institutions, without which no country can become truly great.  

There was no lack of local pundits to underline this sort of Established Whiggism. "There is perhaps, on this wide earth, no place where the god mammon has so firmly fixed his throne," insisted the secular utilitarian Australian. "... men seem slaves, dragged at the chariot-wheels of Mammon". In the Chronicle, the Catholic and Romantic W. A. Duncan declared that "in New South Wales, wealth instead of being an index of superior class or talent, was for the most part the companion of ignorance and assumption, and often brutality and ignorance". The Reverend David Mackenzie,  

64. Australian, 23 March, 1838.  
65. Margaret Weidenhofer, Garryowen's Melbourne, p. 25.  
66. Australian, 1 February, 1840; 9 November, 1841.  
who taught classics at Dr. Lang's Australian College, declared, "Nothing is considered disgraceful here but want of money."  
While the musician Isaac Nathan, in his odd publication *The Southern Euphrosyne*, quoted with approval the following verses by "F. J. M." describing the author as "one of those raræ aves we sometimes find in Australia — a Gentleman":

A sordid spirit rules this barren land!  
No love of art, nor worship of the wise,  
No moral virtues, nor domestic ties  
Nor any sense of greatness doth expand  
The sterile minds that seek this distant strand!  
E'en at the festal board, when warmed with wine  
The talk is still of flocks and fatted Kine,  
Wool, tallow-oil and stations weakly manned.  
Methinks that Mammon here has rear'd her throne  
And that all men walk within his willing yoke  
All, self-involved and wrapt as with a cloud  
In selfishness and sensual thoughts, that own  
No Law of moral life, no high desire  
Nor any touch of love that self doth not inspire!

According to other critics, many of the middling classes lacked what Sydney College committeemen called "personal ambition for honourable distinction" and a laudable desire to "elevate the character" of the country "of which so large a portion is theirs ...."  
For every James Martin and Thomas Brown there were scores, lamented the Reverend William Woolls, who plunged "into scenes of vice and dissipation which eventually undermine the character and reputation, until at length they in some degree resemble the Roman youth in the days of Catiline". Allowing for clerical exaggeration of normal male transgression there seems some point in the reverend critic's attribution of shortcomings in the products of colonial advanced education to "the culpability of parents in removing their children from school before they've acquired a competent knowledge of moral and

intellectual pursuits ...." The love of gain, he contended, led short-sighted parents to place their sons in clerical positions or send them away into the interior "to hunt after sheep and cattle" before they had received "anything in the shape of a liberal education" or had the opportunity to form "regular and moral habits".

The results of this short-sightedness, Woolls alleged, were everywhere obvious. No sooner did a youngster find himself "unshackled by restraint" than he launched "into a course of folly and riot" spending his evenings "in anything but rational amusements" with nothing but brandy and cigars to "kill his vacant hours" and lacking in "love of literary pleasures, and having no foundation in himself whereon he can erect a glorious superstructure of useful knowledge ...." This sad state of affairs had come about because too many parents regarded education merely as "a state of preparation for commercial or agricultural business" or as "training to fill the situation of clerk in a public office" instead of as "a systematic pursuit of knowledge" divested "of mercenary considerations ...." 73

The clergy, who were leaders in the general intellectual life of the colonies, could not be accused of mercenary considerations. Apart from the Reverend Mr. Woolls, they were active in education, literature and science. The Reverend Henry Carmichael published a Compendious Latin Grammar (1832) for use in the Australian College. The Reverend T.H.Braim, an Evangelical parson, wrote a two-volume history of New South Wales (1846) and published Historiae Romanae libri duo (1844) as part of an unsuccessful venture by W.A Duncan to publish classical texts for use in Australian schools. The Reverend Dr. John Lillie of Hobart, whom Lady Franklin declared "a very clever person ....who possesses perhaps the most general science of any body in the island", published a Lecture upon the Advantages


of Science (Hobart, 1839), Lecture upon the Importance of Classical Learning (1840), Knowledge as the Means of Correcting Prejudice (1843), Lectures Delivered at the Mechanics' Institute ... (1849) besides sermons and polemical works.

The indefatigable Dr. Lang wrote a book on Polynesian origins besides poetry, polemical pamphlets, historical and descriptive prose and political manifestos. Father W. B. Ullathorne published several important and influential books during his comparatively short stay in Australia and was a prolific author afterwards. Presbyterian John West's History of Tasmania (Launceston, 1852) is now still regarded as an authority. Besides his Miscellanies (1838), the Reverend William Woolls published several long narrative poems and A Tract for the Times (Parramatta, 1849) followed by a Postscript to the Tract for the Times (1849). Several other colonial clergymen made important contributions to science and scholarship or wrote informative reminiscences of their stay in Australia. Among the forty or more volumes of verse published in the colonies between 1810 and 1850 at least six were by clergymen.75

From a scientific point of view, the most distinguished clergyman was the Anglican Reverend William Bramwhite Clarke, the geologist, whose verse won second place to Macaulay for the Chancellor's Gold Medal at Cambridge in 1819, four years before W. C. Wentworth secured similar distinction for his Australasia. Clarke began his Australian career as headmaster of King's School, Parramatta. In 1844, he settled at Willoughby in North Sydney, where he remained for the next twenty-six years. He continued his clerical duties but the colonial government from time to time seconded his services to carry out geological investigations. In August 1849, he announced the discovery of tin in Australia and in 1853 the New South Wales Government made him a grant of £1000 for

his part in the discovery of gold. He was a member of the Royal Society of London and the Geological Society of London awarded him a medal for his work in Australia. He published two substantial volumes on geology and some two hundred scientific papers besides two volumes of verse.

As an Anglican, the Reverend W. B. Clarke was unusual in his scientific interests but a succession of Nonconformist ministers, including Lady Franklin's "very clever" the Reverend John Lillie, the Reverend John West of Launceston and Henry Carmichael of Sydney, were apostles of "enlightenment". All three were nineteenth-century liberals who exalted secular learning and scientific progress. In Lillie's words, they looked forward to a future "in which the human spirit, freed from every disturbing and oppressive influence, shall realize the full evolution of its indefinite and most glorious capacities of both moral and intellectual improvements".76 These ideas, derived from overseas and promulgated by dissenting clergymen, educators and laymen, added up to the "Religion of Humanity" Michael Roe identifies as the Australian answer to the backward-looking authoritarianism of Bishop Broughton and the "Ancient Nobility", rather than the egalitarianism and religious indifference of the "Australian Legend". In fact, the Australian version of the "Religion of Humanity" degenerated into an acclimatization of British middle-class "respectability" and did not at any time achieve a climacteric "proletarian upsurge" against British or colonial class distinctions or a rational distrust of old-world institutions and superstitions.

Immigrant Robert Lowe and his Atlas newspaper provided the catalyst which transmuted the emerging "Australianism" of Wentworth and the Emancipists into an emigrant version of English utilitarianism. Lowe, a brilliant English barrister never fully reconciled to a

76. John Lillie, Knowledge as a Means of Correcting Prejudice (Hobart, 1843), p. 43.
colonial political role, stayed in Australia less than eight years (1842-50) before returning to England to fulfil his destiny as an architect of British liberalism. It was long enough to provide a focus for urban Australian liberals to coalesce into a political interest sufficiently representative and sufficiently strong to constitute the norm of Australian politics once the Imperial authorities had conceded self-government.

A utilitarian from his student days up Lowe believed in laissez-faire, free trade, the right of private judgment in matters of religion, practical experience as the only ground justifying political change and widespread education as a necessary element in controlled social progress. He welcomed the Reform Act of 1832 but opposed universal suffrage as a threat to the British Constitution which he considered as nearly perfect as human intelligence could make it and, through the monarchy, a practical means of harmonizing the aristocratic and democratic elements in a balanced and civilized society. Back in England, he opposed the Australian Constitution bills as measures designed to help squatters keep their monopoly of colonial lands.

An Anglican himself, Lowe supported the Church of England because he believed it to be an essential part of the British Constitution. Lacking all religious fervour, he was what Newman dismissed as a Latitudinarian churchman, one for whom "Religion must be straightforward and above board, an affair of morals and good sense" finding "the Puritan conception of a capricious inner flow of grace no less distasteful and absurd than the Catholic conception of a flow of grace through the sacraments". The Atlas was particularly virulent against the Lord Bishop of Australia not only because Broughton had Tractarian leanings but because Lowe believed a secret pact existed under which Broughton had pledged support in

77. Chancellor of the Exchequer (December 1869-August 1873); Viscount Sherbrooke (1880); died 27 July, 1892.

the Governor's fight against the squatters over licence fees and land tenure in return for Gipps's veto on Lowe's recommendation of a national system of secular education in his famous Education Report of 1844.

Although Wesleyans and other Dissenters joined Anglicans and Catholics in petitions against Gipps, Lowe himself tended to agree with the Star and Working Man's Guardian that he had been defeated by "the antique dogmas of our forefathers, prevalent in the days when Queen Bess burned heretics". For Lowe the fact that the denominational system left half the children between the ages of four and fourteen without education was sufficient justification for a national system. From his Oxford days he had advocated what he called "irreligious" education and saw nothing but obscurantism in trying to blend theology with secular learning. He did not rely on public support — the masses appeared to be indifferent to the issue — but upon the aristocracy of the intellect, the only aristocracy he acknowledged.

Certainly, a number of leading colonial intellectuals were among Lowe's supporters including Catholic W. A. Duncan, J. H. Plunkett and Roger Therry; Presbyterian Dr. Lang and Thomas Mitchell; and Quaker Joseph Phelps Robinson. Nevertheless, in vetoing the Legislative Council's far from overwhelming support for Lowe (a majority of one in a House of twenty-five members), Gipps undoubtedly expressed the wishes of a majority among churchmen, Anglican, Catholic and Dissenting alike. Consequently, there seems little substance in Lowe's belief that Broughton had bribed the Governor to veto the Report's recommendations by promising to oppose the squatting interest, an interest which Broughton himself had often enough condemned as selfish and irreligious. The issue was much deeper than Lowe and his supporters would allow.


Broughton and Allwood, in Sydney, Bishop Nixon in Hobart, and their Anglican supporters everywhere believed that the Church of England was the earthly covenant of God and the proper guardian of proven morals for British people at home and abroad. The Dissenters who supported them substituted Christianity for the Church of England but shared the general clerical confidence that the Christian religion provided the only authority able to give clear moral judgments about man's duty to God and to their fellow-men. In short, churchmen not only believed what they taught but considered it their duty to indoctrinate their flocks and all who would listen with what were then, in all British countries, generally accepted moral values. They assumed "that any collapse of faith would destroy the sanctions of morality; and, morality gone, society would disintegrate." As a corollary, they took it for granted that early indoctrination in the schools was an essential factor in social learning and morality.

Even sceptics like James Anthony Froude and Henry Sidgwick agreed that some form of established religion provided a respected psychic prototype which enabled ordinary men and women to cultivate what a colonial rationalist called "the goodly plant of social morality". As Froude put it, "an established religion ... is the sanction of moral obligation; it gives authority to the commandments, creates a fear of doing wrong, and a sense of responsibility for doing it .... to raise a doubt about a creed established by general acceptance is a direct injury to the general welfare". Lowe, a convinced rationalist who had firmly rejected his father's wish that he should take orders, did not share fellow Oxonian Henry Sidgwick's reluctance to publish sceptical views which might unsettle the faith of "average human beings" and lead, if not to the actual "dissolution of the existing social order" at least to the

increased danger of such a catastrophe.$^6^4$

Lowe, who believed in the utility of the Church of England and the necessity for its subjection to the British Constitution, did not care two straws for what he considered the delusions of "average human beings". Lowe was not a man to suffer fools gladly and like Dr. Lang, though with more intellectual sharpness and greater wit, he was apt to consider fools all those who did not share his utilitarian rationality. For him, as Ruth Knight remarks, "morality and freedom were inseparable; a voluntary choice was implicit in ethical behaviour. To take away that freedom and substitute the authority of the Church seemed immoral to him. He defined [Newman's] object as 'nothing less than the subjugation of the human mind once more to the dictation of the priesthood' and wrote scathingly of those 'who surrender that dear possession of an honest man, their consciences, into the hands of a being who, whatever his lofty pretensions and high sounding titles, is weak and fallible as themselves'". Lowe had nothing of Burke's sense of tradition as a substitute for the opinions of "weak and fallible men" for he had no conception of himself as weak and fallible compared with his colonial bête noir the Lord Bishop of Australia.

Lowe's ideas on education were as clear and decided as his ideas on morality and religion. As a good Benthamite he saw education as the basic condition of all social and moral improvement. He also made a sharp distinction between education for the rich and education for the poor.$^6^6$ The first constituted a natural aristocracy of talent and needed education in leadership. The second required direction and guidance so that, if their natural talents warranted it, they could become leaders themselves. Or, if they lacked capacity, they could learn to acknowledge that the greatest happiness of the greatest number required due submission to the

facts of life and the laws of political economy.

A brilliant product of Winchester himself he nevertheless con­sidered the classical form of education provided there intellectually inadequate and the social training "coarse and brutal". In Sydney, he supported Cape's Sydney College as a more or less sound Benthamite institution compared to the denominational King's College, Parramatta. Cape was sufficiently advanced education­ally to prepare a would-be colonial élite for leadership and Lowe showed as much enthusiasm, as an examiner in classics at Sydney College, in "plucking" lazy and inefficient colonials as he had as an Oxford tutor force-feeding aristocratic "thundering asses" into fitness for their duties in a still semi-aristocratic society.

So far as primary education was concerned, Lowe in Australia acted in the spirit of the famous phrase credited to him in England: "We must educate our masters". What he actually said, after passage of the Reform Bill of 1867 which he bitterly opposed, was that it would now be essential "to compel our future masters to learn their letters". In Australia, under the 1842 Constitution Act, the unlettered prosperous were entitled to vote under a £20 franchise. As Lowe saw it, "A high pecuniary qualification is not an aristocratic institution in a colony, but quite the reverse". He felt that the "peculiar colony" needed urgent action for, as he said, "There are a large number of children growing up in ignorance, and if we do not educate them other people will. Large drafts of criminals are coming over here and they will educate the children .... No where in the world is education more required than it is here.""#0

Basically, as he confessed to Mr. Justice Stephen, Lowe was not interested in primary education as such. Although in theory he may have believed in careers open to the talents he was not part-

88. Ibid, p. 262.
89. Ruth Knight, Illiberal Liberal, p. 85.
90. Ibid, p. 84.
91. Ibid,
icularly keen to see working class talents fostered. He had a profound distaste for all educational frills or subsidized "luxury". As Asa Briggs reminds us, he sympathized with the view of Charles Adderley, his Conservative predecessor as vice-president of the British Council of Education, that "any attempt to keep children of the labouring classes under intellectual culture after the very earliest age at which they could earn their living, would be as arbitrary and improper as it would be to keep the boys at Eton and Harrow as spade labour". Broughton considered Lowe "a radical of the deepest dye" whereas in fact he was a hypersensitive albino who suffered from mental as well as physical short-sightedness. For the sake of a row, which he dearly loved, he habitually over-stated his own convictions which were deep and sincere enough and much more conventionally middle-class than his enemies, who were many, cared to allow.

Lowe, who arrived with introductions to Gipps which procured him immediate nomination to the Legislative Council, left few friends in a country whose Establishment he quickly offended and whose politicians he dismissed, with an arrogance he did little to conceal, as mostly dull-witted, self-interested and unenlightened. For all his intellectual brilliance, he did not see that the middle-class values he proclaimed could not remain a middle-class monopoly. In England, where the traditional barriers against democracy were higher and deeper-rooted, Lowe's intellectual contempt for the masses stimulated rather than crushed working class demands for political reform. It was left for the Tory outsider, Benjamin Disraeli, to accept the necessity of change.

In Australia, the liberals Lowe had inspired, were quicker than their mentor to see that the working classes were more interested in becoming middle-class themselves than in pursuing unre-

mitting class war. For most thinking Australians, the "Religion of Humanity" provided neutral ground for the reconciliation of class interests in a common middle-of-the-road identity fit, as English novelist Angela Threkeald put it, for Warrant Officers to live in. In English and European eyes, Comte's Religion of Humanity substituted a calendar of great men for the Catholic calendar of saints and, in Beatrice Webb's words, removed human thought "from that wee bit of the world called self to the great whole". This, with John Stuart Mill's image of a perfected humanity as a substitute for Christianity, is hardly the way in which the average Australian looked at life once a free colony had emerged from the original prison. What representative Australians did think about society, religion, economics, democracy, themselves and Australia's future, may emerge from what follows.
Chapter Six

Religion in Exile

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of Man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow in the morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

There seems little evidence to support the widely-held belief that Australian conditions were especially inimicable to religious belief and religious practice. From the beginning, the Christian tradition, supported by habits of conformity and perpetuated by official and clerical effort, provided a constant moral and liturgical background to colonial development. True, the growth and spread of population in a new land faced both church and state with manpower and logistic problems but most colonists lived in the towns or in suitably concentrated areas of the Nineteen Counties. Men in the outback may have been deprived of an alternative on Sundays to the grog-shanty or the weekly wash, and forced to improvise religious consolation in times of sickness, calamity and death, yet John Barrett's study of the statistics and circumstances of church-going in colonial Eastern Australia led him to conclude that the position in Australia was not greatly different from the position in England: two-thirds of the population had a fair chance of effective contact with the churches if they wanted it.

The British authorities and the churches would have liked to bring the aborigines within the Christian fold. Throughout the colonial period the principle of trusteeship was an integral part of Imperial policy and missionary bodies struggled to give effect to it. Governor Arthur Phillip's instructions were to endeavour by every possible means to open intercourse with the aborigines and to enjoin "all our subjects to live in amity and kindness with them". Should "any of our subjects .... wantonly destroy them or give them any unnecessary interruption in the exercise of their several occupations," the Royal mandate ran, "It is Our Will and Pleasure that you do cause, offendere to be brought to punishment, according to the degree of the offence." These instructions were repeated to successive

governors and on 18 December 1838 Sir George Gipps took them seriously enough to hang seven stockmen — four Protestants and three Catholics — found guilty of the Myall Creek Massacre earlier in the year, a proceeding interpreted by the Sydney Herald as supine official grovelling to "the gaping idiots" and "old ladies" at home whose "maudlin sympathy" was excited only "by the possessors of an Ethiopian visage." 

Both the government and the churches considered that the best basis for the policy of trusteeship, easier to propound in Downing Street and Exeter Hall than to implement in the colony, was to convert the aborigines to Christianity and teach them the bourgeois virtues of frugality and hard work. Missionaries, backed by the colonial Establishment and the colonial hierarchies, made repeated attempts to do this. They failed not only because, as Mr. Commissioner Bigge observed, the aborigines "disliked any continued occupation that bound them to the same spot" but because they were more susceptible to the diseases of civilization — influenza, measles, syphilis and alcoholism — than to Christian exhortation which had little relation to the world in which they lived or to the universe as they saw it.

When he arrived in 1829 to succeed Archdeacon Scott, Archdeacon William Grant Broughton was full of hope and enthusiasm about the prospect of renewed activity to Christianize the aborigines. "I am aware of attempts having been undertaken with this in view," he said, "and their abandonment from a sense of existing difficulties and despair of final success" but, "Shall we look on and see them perish without so much as an effort for their preservation?... Unhesitatingly I answer, no. Persevere as you regard the honour of God, as you value the souls of these your helpless and unhappy fellow creatures ...." Eight years later, giving evidence before the Aborigines Committee in London, Broughton, now a bishop,

admitted to a feeling of hopelessness in face of the magnitude of the task:

I have a strong feeling of the duty of this country to use every effort that could be practicable for the improvement of these people, but I am utterly at a loss to suggest how they can be preserved from the effects of the evil example that is continually before them, where they associated with Europeans.7

The aborigines were always fringe dwellers and never part and parcel of colonial society but the Jews, the only considerable non-Christian minority, were an integral and important element who could be ridiculed and ostracised, as they sometimes were, but never ignored. Emancipists Solomon Levey and Isaac Nichols were rich and influential merchants, entrepreneurs and agents for Jewish immigration. "Gentleman" George Robert Nichols, Australia's first native-born attorney and co-editor of the Australian, was Isaac Nichols' son. Although never orthodox (his mother was a Gentile) George Nichols, who became a Cabinet Minister under responsible government, fought the Jewish cause alongside W.C. Wentworth both in print and in the Legislative Council. Barnett Levey, the first free Jewish settler in New South Wales, pioneered the building industry as well as financing Sydney's first permanent theatre. John Lazar, his actor-manager, established a reputation as a "vulgar Cockney" comedian and later pioneered the theatre in Adelaide. Isaac Nathan, Australia's first considerable musician, composed a "solemn ode", Australia the Wide and Free, for the inaugural dinner of Sydney's first Municipal Council (1842) and two "choral odes" for other colonial festivities.8

Joseph Barrow Montefiore, merchant and financier, played a leading part in establishing Jewish communal life in Sydney and Adelaide. In 1832 he was active in helping form a temporary

7. P.P. Report from Select Committee on Aborigines ... 1836. p. 21.
synagogue for a Sydney population of about 350 Jews and in 1841, when 500 of Australia's 856 Jews lived in Sydney, he helped obtain a site in York Street for a permanent synagogue. The colonial government had already granted land for building but in such an unfavourable position that the Jewish community was forced to raise money to buy a more accessible block. Montefiore and his brothers went bankrupt in the depression years of the early 1840's but with the possible help of the Rothchildes J. B. Montefiore was soon back in business in Adelaide and pressed there for a Jewish share in state aid to religion. With Wentworth's support, Sydney's Jewish community was by then fighting the same battle. They did so not so much because they needed the money for their new synagogue and its rabbi but to assert their equality with Christian denominations. As "loyal British subjects" they repeatedly petitioned for equality under the law contending that as they contributed to the general revenue on the same terms as Christians they were entitled to aid "in the same manner as their Christian brethren".

Writing in the Herald on 29 November, 1845, in support of the assertion that Jews should not be compelled to pay taxes from which they received no benefit, a correspondent signing himself "A Jew" set out the colonial Jewish viewpoint. "I deny, gentlemen, in the strongest terms, we are a nation [within a nation] any more than members professing the Catholic, Wesleyan, or any other of the numerous sects." As things turned out the Jews had to wait until 1854 before George Nichols could get a bill through the Legislative Assembly putting them on the same footing as the Christian denominations.

Whether the Herald's 1845 correspondent was being deliberately insulting in lumping the Anglicans with "other .... numerous sects" is a matter for conjecture. Certainly Bishop Broughton was

against recognition of Jews as the religious equals of Christians but he was equally against the recognition of Catholics and Dissenters as the religious equal of Anglicans. His motives, and the whole position of the Church of England in the colony, have been so much misunderstood and maligned that it is useful in any attempt at interpreting colonial thought processes to analyse the bishop's views in relation to the conditions of his time and place.

The Anglican chaplains who served in New South Wales during the first thirty-six years deserve more credit than historians generally accord them. As recently as 1955, in a work intended to update Volume VII of the Cambridge History of the British Empire (1933), Dr. F. K. Crowley repeats Presbyterian John Dunmore Lang's and Catholic Dr. Eris O'Brien's canard that, in Dr. Crowley's words, the early Church of England clergy were mere civil servants who paid scant attention to their religious duties. Dr. O'Brien follows Dr. Lang in condemning the Anglican pioneers for acting as magistrates and engaging in farming. He comments: "Unfortunately the Church of England brought to Australia too many of its vices and too few of its virtues." By this he did not mean the common human vices of concupiscence, drunkenness and greed, which were not unknown among colonial Catholic and Presbyterian clergy as well as Church of England. Rather, he meant the Church of England in its eighteenth-century aspect as a mere "out-relief department of the British aristocracy" with parsons "farming their glebes, riding to hounds, dining and wining with the neighbouring aristocracy, sitting on the county bench, and altogether neglecting their proper work".

With the doubtful exception of the Reverend Robert Knopwood, who served in Hobart from 1804 until he died in 1838, Australia's parsons did not fit into this picture at all. Nor were they like


13. Ibid.
Byron's friend, the Reverend Robert Bland, who "has been challenging an officier of Dragoons about a whore, & my assistance being required, I interfered in time to prevent him losing his life or his living...." Compared with these, the middle-class Evangelicals who pioneered Christian teaching in Australia represented the Puritan tradition in the English Church, a tradition derived from Calvin and Zwingli, and they made the doctrine of human depravity an essential element of their creed. Assured of their own salvation they were eager to save others and pinned their faith on the Thirty-Nine Articles, particularly the injunction that Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation and that the flesh deserveth God's wrath and damnation. They were people of the Book and some of them found no trouble in seeing the lash and the halter as necessary instruments for the expression of God's wrath against depravity and sin.

Nor did the missionaries who in 1798 took refuge in Sydney from the confused politics of Tahiti, proving of great assistance to Chaplain Samuel Marsden, bring with them any possible stigma as clerical remittance men. They were part of the spearhead of the Wesleyan and Evangelical revival which had revolted against eighteenth-century latitudinarianism, drinking and sporting parsons and a highly institutionalized church. As G. Kitson Clark, Owen Chadwick and others have stressed, there was in late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century Britain "a revival of religion and the development of a higher standard of morality" despite the existence of leaden indifference below and a residue of rationalism among Whig intellectuals who tended to substitute the Reign of Liberty on Earth for the promise of Christ's Kingdom in heaven. The missionary movement was an important element in this Romantic revival of emotionalism and concern. Pledged if necessary to


martyrdom, ordinary men and women from the middle and lower middle classes sought to obey quite literally Christ's command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Jubilantly unaware or indifferent to the fact that they represented the spearhead of British commercialism as well as Christ's Kingdom the various missionary bodies had no conception that faiths other than their own might have spiritual value vital to social coherence in environments other than European. Most of them even dismissed Catholicism as semi-pagan idolatory, a conceit the refugees from Tahiti found widely-shared in colonial New South Wales. Yet, for all their short-sightedness, these prim protagonists of Victorian progress and morality provided a catalyst which for better or worse helped change barbarism into the possibility of civilization over large areas of Africa and the Pacific.

All in all, as Archdeacon Ross Border makes clear throughout the period of the chaplaincy (i.e. until 1824 when Thomas Hobbes Scott was appointed Archdeacon of New South Wales in the diocese of Calcutta) few Anglican clergymen deserved Long's prejudiced dismissal as butchers of meat and shepherds of sheep rather than guardians of morals and pastors of men. Nor does there seem much substance in repeated accusations that Church of England clergymen held themselves aloof from the poor and cultivated only the rich and powerful. The Reverend Robert Johnson earned tributes for his work among the sick, whom he assisted out of his own meagre means. Marsden, despite his magisterial role as the colonial arm of God's wrath, helped establish the convict parents of Charles and Joseph Harpur and lent the boys books from his library besides exerting himself on behalf of those he regarded as the deserving poor. The Reverend John Cross, who wore an Evangelical version of the Catholic soutane and stumped about his parish in blunt buckled shoes, won wide acclaim as "a good friend of the poor..... sensitive and tender--

hearted to those in trouble". Later, the Reverend Thomas Sharpe displays in his Journal genuine pity for the convicts and John Barrett cites the Reverend J. Gregor, in the Moreton Bay district, and the Reverend J. H. Gregory, in the Maneroo (Monaro) district, as men "who were in the huts both consistently and courageously". While Thomas Hassall, widely known as the "squire of Denbigh" and the "galloping parson", wrote of his own practice:

I never hurried away from the stations, often stayed a day or two to visit the shepherds and other station people, and when I called would have a pot of tea and some beef and damper and, I hope, a profitable chat with the lonely shepherd or hutkeeper .... Often I would sleep at a shepherd's hut and the man would divide his blankets with me, and give me his own bed if I had been willing to take it.  

(ii)

Archdeacon William Grant Broughton arrived in New South Wales Sunday 13 September 1829 on the eve of a new era in the religious life of a penal settlement groping its way to the status of a colony of free men. Broughton was forty-one, a scholarly Tory gentleman originally of mild Evangelical leanings, who enjoyed the patronage of the Duke of Wellington and the Bishop of Winchester. A product of King's School, Canterbury, and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, he had come late to Holy Orders from lack of funds. He won distinction as a scholar for several essays dealing with textual criticism of the Bible and was chaplain to the Tower of London when the Duke wrote offering him the position of Archdeacon of New South Wales. He originally intended to make his stay a comparatively short step on the ladder of preferment which, had the Tories remained in power, might have led him to an English bishopric and a seat in the House of Lords. As it was he devoted the rest of his

19. J. S. Hassall, In Old Australia, (Brisbane, 1902), p. 73.
life to maintaining the rights and privileges of the Church of England in New South Wales, true to his conviction....

... it is not enough that the Church of England be secured in England .... its principles must be carried out to the most distant quarters of the English empire. Wherever our language is, there our Church should be. Would to God that our rulers took any such view of their duty ....

In 1825, Lord Liverpool's Tory government had some such idea in view when it set up a Church and Schools Corporation in New South Wales, in an attempt to endow the Church of England in the colony and give it a virtual monopoly over public education. By this time there were two Catholic chaplains on the colonial payroll; the Reverend J. D. Lang as the first Presbyterian minister in New South Wales had made his anti-Anglican, anti-Catholic presence felt; and several Noncomformist bodies had introduced something of the dissenting liberal spirit into the colony. From the beginning, the weight of colonial opinion was against the Church and Schools Corporation which had the right to "one seventh part in extent and value of all lands of each County". Even Anglican landowners were less than enthusiastic about such a provision although they probably would not have gone as far as the Australian in assessing popular disapproval:

If numerical strength only be regarded, the Church of Englanders in the colony are but a sect. To call them the National Church is an abuse of words and a misapplication of terms .... Here we have and can have no National Church; and it is therefore wickedness to make a specific appropriation to any one sect. Let the appropriation be general, and then we may give our consent to the grant of one-seventh of the territory to clerical and school purposes.

Under Britain's new Whig Government, which took office in November 1830, there was no likelihood that there would be any further


attempt to endow and establish the Church of England in New South Wales. Under pressure, the Tories had already emancipated Roman Catholics in England (1829) and Broughton, protégé of the Duke of Wellington and pledged to defend the privileges of his church against Popery and Dissent, soon found himself subject to a succession of Whigish Governors and sharing the official Establishment with a Catholic Attorney-General, John Hubert Plunkett, and a Catholic Commissioner of the Court of Requests (afterwards Judge) Roger Therry with Presbyterian John Dunmore Lang constantly sniping from the sidelines. The arrival in February 1833 of a brilliant twenty-six-year-old Catholic Vicar-General, William Bernard Ullathorne, added to his frustration. Ullathorne joined with Roger Therry and Father John McEncroe in urging the appointment of a Catholic bishop resident in Sydney. In May, 1834, Rome's De Propaganda Fide recommended John Bede Polding as Vicar Apostolic of New South Wales and he arrived with official approval, in September 1835, with one priest, three ecclesiastical students and a catechist, all paid by the colonial government. At this time, there were 43,218 Protestants in New South Wales, or 71.5 per cent of the total population, compared with 17,200 Catholics, or 28.5 per cent. Among the Protestants, members of the Church of England were by far the most numerous. 22

By 1834, Bourke had already documented his plans for radically changed relations between church and state and had set down his hopes for a secular and public system of education. 23 In effect, Bourke proposed to establish Christianity rather than the Church of England and to inaugurate a secular and national system of education. The proposals were Whiggish, utilitarian and diametrically opposed to everything that Broughton stood for although, out of decency and with the prospect of a Catholic bishop looming, Bourke recommended


that Broughton be elevated to the episcopate for "the better discipline of the Chaplains of the Church of England, for obtaining the necessary celebration of the Rites of Ordination...and for maintaining the connection of this Church with the Metropolitan". Bourke acknowledged that Broughton opposed the suggested new system since he believed that "though Government might tolerate others, it should afford aid to one Church only, namely, what which it believed to be the true Church".24

Folding and Ullathorne were Englishmen, too, and equally convinced that they belonged to the one true church. The English Benedictine Congregation, in which they were educated in philosophy, theology and the classics, had been driven from England during the sixteenth century and had established famous schools at Douay and Dieulouard in France for the education of the sons of the English Catholic nobility. The French Revolution drove them back to England where they continued to educate upper-class English Catholics. As Professor T. L. Suttor remarks, "far from being theological provincials" they "were probably the best formed churchmen of the day" combining "scholastic rigour alongside prayer on the one hand and a broad humane culture on the other". Folding and Ullathorne were two of their finest products but, Professor Suttor adds, Australia showed no disposition "to absorb the Christian school of thought in all its power" preferring "a tendentious and factitious proletarianism".25 Actually, the colonists showed a preference for utilitarian latitudarianism rather than "factitious proletarianism".

The emancipation of Catholics in 1829 found the English Benedictine Congregation well-equipped and eager to play an active part in the rehabilitation of Catholicism in English-speaking communities and since 1818 they had been responsible, on paper, for the Indian Ocean, New Holland and the Pacific. The first Vicar-Apostolic

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of New Holland, Benedictine Edward Slater, was located at Mauritius and paid little attention to his Australian responsibilities. His episcopate ended in disaster, says Mother Mary Shanahan, historian of the Benedictine Order in colonial Australia, ".... he died on his way to England, fleeing from the censures of Rome and the debts he had accumulated".26 His successor, Dom Placid Morris, another Benedictine of the English Congregation, sent Ullathorne as the Vicar-General to New South Wales in response to an appeal from the British government for someone in authority to deal with the fractious Father Joseph Therry and the difficult Father Philip Conolly, who had fled to Van Diemen's Land to escape from Therry.

Although as cultured and sophisticated as the general run of English Benedictines, Ullathorne and Folding were devoted churchmen untouched by scandal. Ullathorne, whose recusant family had forfeited their Yorkshire estates for their loyalty to the Stewart cause in 1745, was apprenticed before the mast and had been at sea four years when he experienced a decisive religious conversion. Almost seventeen when he entered the Benedictine School at Downside he soon came under the influence of Dom Bede Folding, then headmaster, and agreed to give up his wish to be a Trappist monk so that he could devote himself to mission work in Australia. Folding, whose mother's family had been recusants since the sixteenth century, was orphaned at eight years of age and placed in the care of his maternal uncle, Father Bede Brewer, president-general of the English Benedictine Congregation. Taught first by French nuns and then at Downside, the future bishop was received into the Benedictine Order at the age of sixteen and even as a young priest was so fascinated by missionary possibilities in Australia that his friends called him the Bishop of Botany Bay years before he found his vocation there.27

Broughton had no such sense of vocation. He accepted the call to serve in Australia with reluctance although he was to serve his adopted country with zeal for more than twenty years. His dream of a new England, conserving the tradition of the old despite the dislocation of industrialism and Dissent, may have had some validity in England, where the Church of England was part of the air men breathed whether or not they shared the liturgy. In Australia, where men still wallowed in the original sin of convictism and nearly a third of the population was Irish with bitter memories of Anglican ascendancy, the Church of England could exist side by side with Roman Catholicism and Dissent only by accepting, openly or obliquely, the Whiggish toleration summed up in England by the public-spirited Christian, Dr. Thomas Arnold: "Historically, the Church of England is surely of a motley complexion, with much good about it and much of evil, no more fit subject for enthusiastic admiration than for violent obloquy."

For those who could not accept the logic of Dr. Arnold there was the solution offered by John Henry Newman: conversion to the Roman Church. Broughton could accept neither the logic of the one nor the desperation of the other. In England, he might have found solace and companionship behind blinkers provided by the Oxford Movement. In Australia, where most Anglicans were Evangelical or liberal and where civilized convention provided a thinner veneer over the coarseness, profanity, concupiscence and acquisitiveness of natural man, he sank deeper into despair as he struggled to maintain what he considered the essential condition of English civilization in an English colony: the recognition of the Church of England as a body which, in the words of John Keble, saw the nation as "a part of Christ's Church, and bound, in all her legislation and policy, by the fundamental laws of the Church".

For Bourke and Gipps, good Anglicans though they were, it was the other way round: the Church was part of the nation. Nor did Broughton find many to support him among the Anglican gentry. Most were Evangelicals and had no difficulty in fitting religion into the pattern of their economic and social interests. As Evangelical Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin and champion of emigration, put it: "It is curious to observe, how through a wise and beneficial Providence, many .... do the greatest service to the public when they are thinking of nothing but their own gains." Broughton and Dr. Arnold could at least have found something to agree on in a common fear of Whatelyism and all Utilitarians who maintained that the state's only object was "the conservation of body and goods ..."

Condemned by Dr. John Dunmore Lang, as the *magnus Apollo* of the Tory and aristocratic party in politics and ridiculed by Robert Lathrop Murray as "My Lord Will... the Ecclesiastical Baron" who "for all his pomp has less practical usefulness than many a humble dissenter", Broughton retained sufficient of what Professor Suttor calls "the higher madness" to make his essentially limited views important in any consideration of Australian culture. His views were limited because they were circumscribed by what Canon V. A. Demant has described as a "propensity to make absolute and universal what is relative and conditional". In Broughton's case a belief that the Protestant and reformed Church of England represented the core of English civilization instead of being little more than a typical British compromise arising out of the political circumstances of the Revolution of 1689. His views were important because they underscored the shortcomings of a growing secularism which

30. Tasmanian Review, 2 September, 28 October, 18 November, 1836.
33. Ibid.
left no room for an authoritative insistence on moral, as distinguished from legal obligations, and too hastily assumed that universal education was sufficient antidote for the imperfections of men and the shortcomings of *laissez-faire*.

Where the circumstances of place and time demanded something akin to Coleridge's Universal Church — "neither Anglican, Gallican, Roman nor Greek" — Broughton offered a limited national church which, in the mid-nineteenth century, provided no shade from the harsh glare of colonial materialism for Irish migrants, English Dissenters, Scottish Calvinists and the indifference of poor immigrants alienated from a hierarchial society by the Industrial Revolution. On the other hand, he was realist enough to know that a Universal church without an agreed creed or historical roots in a particular form of society was no church at all.

Broughton saw the Church of England as the living heart of English society and without conscious hypocrisy demanded for it preferential treatment and official acceptance as the traditionally justified expression of purpose and value in English life. He had little or no conception of the equally persistent and equally justified Nonconformist English tradition. For him, this tradition was an aberration that had died with Cromwell and the Commonwealth and had been decently disposed of under the Restoration through exile in the wilds of America. For him, as for Coleridge, Southey and the later Wordsworth, the Church of England provided in every parish of the United Kingdom a civilized nucleus round which human capabilities might crystallize and brighten. It took him a long time to realize that it provided no such nucleus for the disparate uprooted elements that made up Australian society.

For John Bede Folding the Universal Church already existed. Firmly based on the See of Rome, international in its scope,

active everywhere in the known world, it seemed to him a beacon of civilization and learning in a world rent by national rivalries and embittered by class hatreds. If the Church of England provided a nucleus for the English tradition in every hamlet, village, township and cathedral city, where the bells rang out for morning service and men and women knelt humbly before the altar to celebrate Holy Communion, it appeared to Bishop Folding that the sonorous Latin of the Mass, the full canonicals of the clergy, the holy pictures and imagery of Roman churches, provided links in the chain of being that bound men on the periphery of civilization with those at its European rather than purely English centre. Without this sense of continuity the ramshackle pinchbeck colonial settlements that dotted the world wherever European men had penetrated would be no more than dry sticks stuck in alien soil with no assimilable cultural humus to nourish them. "Before everything else we are Catholics," he told his people, "and next by a name swallowing up all distinctions of origin, we are Australians." Not Irishmen, Englishmen or Scotsmen — and all three were represented in his congregation — but Catholics first and secondly Australian.

As things turned out, neither Bishop Folding nor his first Vicar-General, W. B. Ullathome, represented popular Catholic opinion in New South Wales. Both were English Benedictines surrounded by men who saw Little Ireland where Broughton saw Little England. Initially, they shared a vision of the Benedictine Order fulfilling in Australia something of the missionary and civilizing role essayed by Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans in California and Latin America. Ullathome soon realized that this vision had no more hope of realization than Macquarie's vision of an Anglican ascendancy over a happy rural yeomanry or Bourke's optimistic forecast that his Church Act would secure "to the State good subjects,

35. Quoted, T. L. Suttor, Hierarchy and Democracy in Australia, p. 69.

and to society good men". Writing to a fellow Benedictine, Dr. T. J. Brown, Prior of Downside, on 11 July, 1838, Ullathorne admitted ".... the colony will become, of course, an Irish mission, and perhaps ought to be so .... To do anything Benedictine in the colony now is out of the question...." Ullathorne left Australia for good in 1841 after refusing the mitre four times. He refused a fifth time when the see of Perth was established in 1845.

Folding clung to his romantic vision longer than Ullathorne's realism had permitted. "We shall in our Institute come as near to the form of the Benedictine Institute as it existed in England before the Reformation as we can [he wrote in 1845], blending as it did in perfect harmony Episcopal Authority with the Abbatial and producing missionaries who more zealously fulfilled their duties from the habitual renunciation of all things, the consequence of their monastic profession." He believed firmly not only in the Benedictine monastery attached to St. Mary's as a centre of culture and learning but as a future source of supply for missionary priests, men sworn to poverty and sacrifice. "Past experience convinces me [he wrote in 1842] that in young missionary countries the vow of poverty alone can prevent the accumulation of wealth, the bane of the Church and the destruction of the individual." The English Benedictine Congregation did not share Folding's fervour and preferred to keep their ablest young men at home for work among the English upper classes. For the fulfilment of his Australian plans Folding relied on Henry Gregory, a young English Benedictine who had come to Australia with him in 1835, caught up in the same enthusiasm that Ullathorne had initially shared.

Brave, arrogant, blunt to the point of rudeness Henry Gregory, ordained a sub-deacon only six months before sailing with Folding for Australia, was everything that the Irish disliked in Englishmen.

He had all the aristocratic tendencies criticised in the English Benedictines "what they term in Ireland the 'Catholic Soles'", as a correspondent to the *Freeman's Journal* put it. "We in the colony... have our 'Catholic soles' and it would not be considered fashionable for any clergyman to recognise in public any Catholic outside that favoured circle."  

First prior and later abbot of the Benedictines in Australia Gregory became Vicar-General when the Irish Francis Murphy, Ullathorne's successor, became Bishop of Adelaide in 1844. Sent down by Folding to mediate in differences between another Englishman, Bishop Willson of Hobart, and the very Irish Vicar-General, John Joseph Therry, Gregory presented an ultimatum and suggested that if Willson did not accept it he had "better resign his mitre". Willson declined to continue negotiations. 

Bishop Willson, although an Englishman, recognised that "it would be an act of folly to appoint other than Irish bishops for priests and people who were Irish". By 1841, there were thirty-three missionary priests in Australia, twenty-eight of whom were Irish. Sixteen years later, the numbers had risen to one hundred and forty-four with one hundred and twenty-nine Irish. The other fifteen were English, French, German and Spanish. It would be a mistake to conclude from this that the Catholic church in Australia was essentially Irish. As Dr. John Molony has emphasised, the Benedictine ambitions of Folding and Ullathorne did not founder on the rock of Irish nationalism but on the ultra-montanism of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Sacra Congregatio De Propaganda Fide) in Rome. Molony points out that, subject to final approval by the Pope, the Congregation had the power "to initiate, deal with, and bring to conclusion all matters necessary and opportune, even in places in which, although a hierarchy existed, the Church was still lacking in maturity". 

40. *Freeman's Journal*, 30 May, 1857. (Quoted Shanahan, p. 39.)
This be as it may, the Church in Australia had Irish troubles enough especially as Folding, who had no anti-Irish prejudices himself, tended to over-sympathise with the exuberantly Irish John Joseph Therry especially in the Hobart dispute over church debts rather than with the stiff rigidly correct non-Benedictine Willson who was right in principle, wrong in emphasis. Father John McEnroe, an intelligent and moderate Irishman, summed up the position when he claimed:

If an Irish Bishop had been appointed for Hobart Town I think the dissensions and scandals that have taken place from the dispute between Monseigneur Willson and Father Therry would have been avoided, and that religion would be there in a much better state than it is at present. Unfortunately the Irish and English characters are very different in their nature and when any difference takes place between an English bishop and an Irish priest, then national antipathies and mutual mistrusts spring up and prevent a proper understanding and thus perpetuate bad feelings. In my opinion, very few Englishmen know how to govern Irishmen, whether lay or ecclesiastical. 

Catholicism in Australia, despite Bishop Folding and his new Vicar-General, Henry Gregory, remained essentially Irish in expression if not in discipline. Father Therry, who had arrived in May 1820 with Father Philip Conolly, began the church's Australian tradition of support for the forces of social and political protest. Father John McEnroe, who had served under the liberal-minded Bishop John England in America, came to the colony with H. H. Plunkett, newly-appointed Solicitor-General (afterwards Attorney General) in 1832. Both men represented the O'Connellite Roman Catholic liberalism which supported Whigs, Radicals and Dissenters in their assault against Anglican privileges in England. They had even less regard for Anglican pretensions in Australia. Plunkett drafted Bourke's Church Act and supported the Governor and his successor, Gipps, in their efforts to establish the Irish system of education in New

South Wales. McEnroe publicly advocated the rights of the working man, opposed the squatters and campaigned against the continuation of transportation. Roger Therry, the Catholic judge, had been actively associated with O'Connell in Ireland and used his influence with Edward Blount, M.P. to secure English support for Bourke's church and education proposals. The Scottish convert, William Augustine Duncan, crystallised this Catholic liberalism in his newspaper, the Australasian Chronicle but did not share the Irish enthusiasm for Ireland. "Our religion," he declared, "is neither English nor Irish, but Catholic; and our patriotism, if we would hold our...place here, must be neither the one nor the other, but Australian".

(iii)

Bourke's Church Act and his education proposals were no more than the extension of reform from the motherland to the colonies. Between 1688 and 1828 landlords and the Church of England dominated the English social and political scene while in Ireland Catholic priests, trained from 1795 in their own Seminary at Maynooth, were active agents in the fight first for emancipation and then for repeal of the union between Ireland and England. In England and Ireland Anglicans, or those who "conformed" by taking the sacrament of the Anglican Church, had for generations held all the important offices in church and state, staffed the schools and universities and held rich benefices, often as absentees, doled out through friends and relations. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Durham received an annual income of £19,000 a year; the absentee Rector of a rich benefice might receive an annual income of £7,000 while in the industrial and remote rural parishes Evangelical and other poor

clergy were expected to exist on stipends as low as £50 a year. In Ireland, the whole official complex of church and state rested on the backs of a conquered people whose religious and political traditions differed from the religion and traditions of their conquerors. In England and Ireland, the Anglican clergy were part of the Establishment but in Ireland the Catholic clergy identified themselves with the people. They took their preferences with them to the United States of America and Australia. In Australia, the position was further complicated by the fact that in the beginning the Catholic hierarchy was mainly English and the Catholic laity almost entirely Irish.

In England Lord Liverpool and Robert Peel, who began the process which changed the old rural Tories into the new middle-class Conservatives, saw the need for change and appointed Ecclesiastical Commissioners to provide the means for the church to safeguard its Established privileges as well as reform itself. The Evangelicals and all those churchmen influenced by the changing moral climate, which no longer admired libertine aristocrats and hard drinking, fox-hunting persons, were ready enough to cooperate with the Whigs when they came in pledged to political and religious reform. Following the emancipation of Catholics under the Tories (1829) the pace was rapid. Whigs, Liberals, Radicals and Irish Catholic M. P.s led by Daniel O'Connor appropriated surplus church revenue to secular purposes; suppressed ten Irish bishoprics and abolished the Irish equivalent of church rates; enlarged the Ecclesiastical Commission and authorised the Commissioners to draw up a comprehensive and detailed scheme of church reform.

When Broughton left England in 1829 the Tories he favoured had controlled the inevitable process of change. When he returned in 1834, to obtain more clergy and to make clear the conditions under
which he was prepared to accept a bishopric, the Whigs were in office and the equally inevitable reaction against the pace of reform set in. By and large, the Evangelicals and their friends welcomed reform as a logical extension of their own desire to rouse the Established Church into greater concern for moral values and to make resident pastors throughout the country "... the Friends and Benefactors of the Community — the Promoters and Guardians of Piety, Decorum, and Good Order — the liberal, intelligent, and instructive associates of the Rich — the humble, candid, compassionate and charitable teachers of the Poor ...." Broughton, who had Evangelical leanings himself, had no quarrel with this. What he feared, as he later wrote to his friend Edward Coleridge, chaplain at Eton College, "... all may be brought to depend on the fluctuating will of a popular assembly ...."7

In his perplexity, Broughton turned to the Tractarians who repudiated state interference with the church. The Movement dated from John Keble's sermon on National Apostasy in 1833, which declared that the nation was part of Christ's Church and not the church part of the nation. "If public opinion denied this, then the nation was in a state of apostasy; and, whatever the consequence, such a 'direct disavowal of the sovereignty of God' must be implacably resisted," he asserted.9 The Whigs might counter, as Bourke did, that a third of the population of New South Wales was Catholic and cared nothing for Anglican liturgy or beliefs. For Broughton and the Tractarians this was irrelevant. As Geoffrey Faber puts it:

The Church was a legal, constitutional, element in the government of the country. She was this, because she was more than this. By human law she was the Establishment. By Divine law, and by the right of uninterrupted succession, she was the Apostolic Church of Christ in England — and in Ireland [and, Broughton would have added, throughout the British Empire]. To deprive her

47. Broughton to Coleridge, 19 October, 1837. (Microfilm, Nat.L.)
of her worldly goods was, as Pusey explained to his brother, an act of sacrilege, not to be justified by any argument of expediency.49

There was much more in all this than selfish regard for the maintenance of wealth and privilege — although this too had its influence on many who supported Tractarianism. Nor was it merely a last-ditch stand of the old order against the new. The Tractarians were convinced that religion was threatened in England, as Broughton feared it was threatened in Australia, and they regarded their Tracts for the Times as so many shots fired against the laxness and worldliness of a declining and threatened church, on the one hand, and against the avid utilitarianism of people like Archbishop Whately, on the other. There was passion and conviction behind the pedantic dry-as-dust hair-splitting that constituted much of the argument in the pamphlets which nevertheless rapidly became something in the nature of best-sellers. This was the new pulse of the Anglican Church rather than any suggestion of a return to what Dr. Eris O'Brien dismissed as a mere "out-relief department of the British aristocracy".

In particular, the Tractarians rebelled against the Whiggish suggestion that the Church's essential role should be to act as a "moral police", a mere department of state. As one colonist put it:

It is clear that some form of Christianity should be established, to instruct the poor and the ignorant, otherwise it will cost us as much for the support of gaols and penitentaries as the support of the clergy would amount to.50

While it would be an exaggeration to say that Sir Richard Bourke and his equally Whiggish successor, Sir George Gipps, regarded the church as no more than this they still had the average Englishman's notion that religion is mostly a matter of morality. Both men were devout Anglicans of genuine religious feeling. Nevertheless,

49. Ibid.

they belonged to what Newman called the Broad and Liberal party in the church as opposed to the Evangelicals on one side and the Tractarians on the other. They were reasonable men of commonsense who saw that in a colony inhabited by Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotsmen the English system of a society based on landed gentry and a state-established and endowed church could not be maintained, especially as it was under threat in the homeland. What they lacked was Broughton's sense of religion as a confrontation with God and "the bond of integrity by which society is held together". Their attitude was much more strictly utilitarian. Apart from the suggestion of conscious hypocrisy, neither Sir Richard nor Sir George, would have found much to quarrel with in Rebecca West's description of religion in Liberal England as seen by an exiled Russian count:

They want England to be a great Power, a strong country, as they say, and a nation can be certain of strength if it be composed of industrious, sober, honest people, who do not strike or kill their enemies, who do not lie or blaspheme or beg and who keep themselves clean. So they pretend that this is what religion is for: to teach men and women to be moral.

Most non-Catholics in New South Wales would have agreed with this. They hailed Bourke's Church Act not only as "the Magna Charta (sic) of the Religious Liberty of this infant Empire" but also as a means of aiding the clergy to become more efficient, "the cheapest and best police ... for the colony". Lang and many others saw no need of bishops, Anglican or Catholic, to sustain Christian morality. Emancipist editor Andrew Bent, the doyen of freedom of the Press in Van Diemen's Land, went further and complained: "Free institutions are demanded by the Colonists and behold by the first opportunity, a cargo of bishops, priests and archdeacons are (sic) sent out". The poor, Bent grumbled, would be taxed "in order to procure turtle and port for the over-fed

53. Colonist, 16 June, 1836.
54. Ibid, 30 June, 1836.
The two bishops, Broughton and Polding, drew £2000 and £500 a year respectively and the average clergyman £200, all from state funds.

So much has happened since Newman's first Tract for the Times, which proclaimed the bishops and clergy of the Church of England successors of the Apostles, it is difficult to recapture the frame of mind of churchmen like Keble, Pusey, Newman and Broughton who shared with Catholics belief in the Apostolic succession and in the supreme importance of religious dogma. An unprejudiced contemporary view may help us adjust our minds. This is how Alexis de Tocqueville saw it:

... Men cannot do without dogmatical belief; and it is much to be desired that such belief should exist amongst them. Of all the kinds of dogmatical belief, the most desirable appears to be dogmatical belief in matters of religion; and this is a clear inference, even from no higher consideration than the interests of this world. ... General ideas respecting God and human nature are ... the ideas above all others which it is most suitable to withdraw from the habitual action of private judgment, and in which there is most to gain and least to lose by recognizing a principle of authority.57

For thinking Anglicans and Catholics alike their particular church provided clear, precise, intelligible and lasting answers to the fundamental questions which faced mankind. For the Evangelicals the Bible and the Forty-Nine Articles of the Anglican creed had seemed sufficient guarantee of salvation but Bishop Broughton now saw the answers he sought more clearly propounded in High Church dogma than in Evangelical reliance on Scripture alone or in Broad Church commonsense and adaptation to circumstances. He believed that the eternal truths of religion could not, in de Tocqueville's words, "shape themselves to the shifting inclinations of every age, without forfeiting their claim to certainty in the eyes of mankind".58

56. Ibid, 6 September, 1836.


This belief in the efficacy of dogma was not confined to Tractarians and Roman Catholics whose forebodings about the shifting inclinations of the age have been substantiated by time and the progress of secularism. The spokesman for the utilitarians also lacked historical sanction for their certitudes and proved less reliable judges of what the future held.

Convinced that what he considered too wholesale reform threatened the established political and social system in the colonies as well as at "home", Broughton emphasised that he could not work with Bourke in any scheme which offered aid to "three separate forms of Religion, and possibly to every congregation of Dissenters and Jews upon the same principle ..." Glenelg had already approved Bourke's proposals of September 1833 and in an undated minute on one of Broughton's letters he asked: "Could not he be persuaded to become Bishop leaving it open to him to act as he likes afterwards about the Schools?" Satisfied with this assurance, Broughton was consecrated Bishop of Australia on 14 February 1836 at Lambeth Palace and arrived back in Sydney on 2 June to be enthroned in St. James three days later by Samuel Marsden.

Before the end of the same month the Legislative Council had passed Bourke's Church Act (7, William IV, No.3) which embodied his plans for establishing Christianity rather than the Church of England. Because of a technical hitch the new bishop was prevented from taking his rightful place in the Council and voting against the measure but he informed Bourke in conversation and by letter that he thought the Act to be iniquitous, impolitic and a threat to the future of religion.

*I cannot forbear repeating my objection to the entire principle of the measure* he wrote. *The apprehensions with which this fills me arise not so much on account of the Church as of the Government, which is going to involve itself in a labyrinth out of which it cannot be extricated except by renouncing, at no distant date*.

all concern about and connection with, the interests and affairs of religion ... These evils may probably not manifest themselves fully in your Excellency’s time or mine.\textsuperscript{61}

The Church Act remained in force until 1862, by which time Henry Parkes’s \textit{Empire} expressed what was by then a widely accepted secular view that religion was no concern of the state. “The presumptuous office assumed by the State, of deciding what particular forms of faith shall be bolstered up by public exactions, and what shall be left to their own resources, must no longer exist, to reproach the intelligence of the country, and to foster religious animosity.”\textsuperscript{62} Broughton’s warning to Bourke had taken less than thirty years to manifest itself. Under colonial circumstances it would have taken less time for the state to disassociate itself from the church in the unlikely event that the bishop had succeeded in securing exclusive endowment for the Church of England. The time when any one church could claim to be the Church of all Englishmen had long since passed in England. In Australia, it had never been a real possibility quite apart from the fact that a third of the population was now Irish and the Presbyterian Church, in so far as it was represented by Dr. Lang, tended to equate Canterbury with Rome.

(IV)

Compared with colonial America there was a great dearth of serious theological controversy in colonial Australia although there was no lack of religious polemic. Dr. Lang’s vigorous anti-Catholicism, crystallised in his pamphlets \textit{The Question of Questions} and \textit{Popery in Australia},\textsuperscript{63} was ostensibly based on his desire to prevent New South Wales “degenerating into a mere Irish Roman Catholic province” rather than on any desire to refute the “damnable delusion” of Catholicism itself. He was equally hostile towards “the arrogant assumption of the colonial Fussey-ite priests” and he dismissed\textsuperscript{64}...

63. J.D. Lang, \textit{The Question of Questions; or is the Colony to be Transformed into a Province of the Popedom?”} (Sydney, 1841); \textit{Popery in Australia ....} (Edinburgh, 1847).
the Presbyterian Synod of Australia, which admonished him for ignoring the resolutions of church courts, as "a mere synagogue of Satan" actuated by "a spirit of rancorous hostility" towards himself. God, as conceived by Dr. Lang, was a stern Calvinist deity who chose to thunder dictates from heaven through his chosen mouthpiece — Dr. Lang. The good doctor was a man whose only earthly authority was his own opinions. In the Port Phillip District, which he represented in the new Legislative Council of 1843, he became a potent source of early Protestant-Catholic discord.

Many colonists shared Dr. Lang's opinions about "the Romans", including the eccentric Mr. Justice Walpole Willis who raised a storm in 1838 when, at an Anglican Diocesan Committee meeting, he fulminated against "the undue assumption of spiritual power, the adoption of unauthorised traditions and the idolatrous worship" of the Church of Rome. Catholics throughout the colony met to protest to the Imperial Government; E. J. Hawksley, a newly-arrived Catholic schoolmaster who later emerged as a leading Radical journalist, wrote a powerful pamphlet to refute Mr. Justice Willis; while Bishop Polding, whose zeal roused widespread Protestant misgivings, wrote to his contacts in England, "You must move heaven and earth in this business ... Spare no expense, no trouble; oust Willis."

The Tractarian controversies of the late 1840's raised even more heat than Lang's rabid anti-Catholicism or Willis's peculiar temperament. Tractarianism, as we have seen, arose in Britain during the 1830's as a High Church reaction to Evangelicism and Utilitarianism. Led by Keble, Pusey and Newman, the Movement asserted the superiority of Church to State and stressed sacramental and priestly worship rather than Broad Church accommodation to civil authority or Evangelical insistence on the Bible and the Thirty-nine Articles. Like Dostoevsky in Russia, although with less bitter


67. H.N. Birt, Benedictine Pioneers in Australia, Vol. 1, pp. 336-7; Gipps removed Willis from office in June, 1843 because of "the extraordinary nature of the harangues he is in the habit of delivering from the Bench".
opposition to customary religion, the Tractarians rejected the rationalist liberalism of the times, believing that its logical outcome would be the end of religion and the death of God. Bishop Broughton's Tractarian leanings were based on a similar conviction.

The Reverend Robert Allwood, incumbent at St. James from 1840 to 1884, had been influenced by the Tractarian Movement before leaving England in 1839. With Broughton's support he placed greater emphasis upon sacramental worship than was common among the colonial clergy. Allwood outlined his essentially moderate views in reports and lectures to the Church of England Book Society. He set himself against utilitarian values and while he praised science for its humanitarianism he declared that science and secular learning "independent of eternity" did not encompass the full dignity of man. Secular knowledge was in his opinion perishable and a society that depended solely upon man-made morals would also perish.

From the beginning the High Churchmanship of Broughton and Allwood roused opposition among predominantly Evangelical Anglican clergy and laymen. A Protestant newspaper the Sydney Standard declared "Protestant Popery" more harmful to the cause of true religion than Catholicism while Robert Lowe's Atlas maintained that Broughton, Allwood and other clergy with "Popish tendencies" threatened "the Traitorous and entire subversion of our Protestant religion ...." To offset what a correspondent to the Atlas called the "pestilential influence" of "puseyite innovations" Lowe urged Anglican laymen to resist Tractarian efforts to make Bishops demi-gods and the laity mere puppets. Tractarian teaching, Lowe contended, was a misappropriation of public funds under the Church Act. Instead of maintaining genuine Protestantism Bishop Broughton, "our Australian Pope, Patriarch and Pontiff", was spreading "the rankest Popery" at public expense.

70. Atlas, 24 May, 1845.
72. Ibid, 24 May, 1845.
The Tractarian controversy came to a head in February, 1848, when two Anglican clergymen, the Reverend Robert Sconce and the Reverend Thomas Makinnon, defected to Rome. Sconce had been a particular friend of Broughton and the *Atlas* was quick to declare that "the evil which we foretold has fallen" and Puseyism "finally developed into Popery". Broughton, never a committed Tractarian, was shocked and hurt by Sconce's defection. As usual, Lowe had over-stated his case against him. Rather than leaning towards Rome Broughton remained convinced, as Presbyterian John McGarvie put it, that the Church of England represented "the only barrier against the inroads of popery and Practical Paganism".

Sconce wrote a pamphlet explaining his action and paying tribute to Broughton. Basically, his reason for going over to Rome was his conviction that "Catholic verities" were embodied in a Church with a continuous succession since apostolic days whereas the Church of England "cannot pretend to claim more authority [as the Divine Interpreter of Scripture] than any other national church ... she is historically known to have broken off from the rest of Christendom, mainly at the instigation of a profligate King .... We must choose between the Church of St. Peter and that of Henry VIII". On these questions, he implied that the Lord Bishop of Australia had fobbed him off with the reply that "he had no time for reading on such subjects, that he was entirely unacquainted with Ecclesiastical History, and with the writings of the Fathers ....".

To prevent further defections among those of Sconce's parishioners who might have been influenced by the example of their pastor, Broughton took over the empty pulpit of St. Andrew's, Sydney, and preached sermon after sermon in favour of loyalty to the Church of England and against the machinations of Dissent as well as Rome. Nevertheless, "An Old Parishioner of Sconce", in a letter to the

73. Ibid, 26 February, 1848.
74. Letter, McGarvie to Allan. 9 August, 1844. Quoted Michael Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia*, p. 140.
76. Ibid, pp. 8-12.
77. Ibid, pp. 32-3.
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Atlas, questioned the Bishop's loyalty to Anglican principles while "A layman of the Anglican Church" in the Sydney Morning Herald implied that Broughton continued to permit suspect clergy to preach Popery and contended it was high time "zealous and sound lay members should sound the trumpet of alarm". All this was grist to Lowe who, from the beginning, had argued that laymen and not Bishops should have final say on doctrine taught and rituals observed.

The old and widely-respected Anglican Archdeacon William Cowper, dean of colonial Evangelicals, rose to Broughton's defence by circulating the diocesan clergy seeking expressions of love and loyalty to their Bishop. The Atlas proved more accurate in its assessment of popular feeling among churchmen than the Archdeacon. Two clergymen, the Reverend J. Walker and the Reverend W. B. Clarke, openly objected to the Archdeacon's letter because they considered it insufficiently critical of Tractarianism and failed to condemn the "treachery" of Sconce and Makinson. Many rural clergymen agreed with Walker and Clarke while such respected Anglican landowners as Macarthur, Blaxland, Bowen, Oxley and Campbell saw considerable merit in Lowe's insistence that Anglican clergymen should hold their livings direct from the State and not from the Bishop. Broughton died in 1853. His successor was the strict Evangelical Bishop Frederic Barker.

George Bowen, an ex-Army officer who wished to take Anglican orders, was the most original religious thinker in the colony. As a subaltern in the 39th Regiment of Foot he had an early introduction to the ways of the world. In his reminiscences he tells how an old sea-dog naval captain of his acquaintance, horrified at the effects of a religious revival among naval and military forces stationed at St. Helena, sent for one of his midshipmen and admonished him thus:


"So, Mr. Potter, you've got the Holy Ghost in you, have you? Up with you, Sir, at once to the main cross-trees. I hope this stiff breeze will blow the nonsense out of you but, if not, then by —, I'll disrate you!"  

Arriving in Sydney with his Regiment in 1826 Bowen stayed on as a landowner near Windsor from 1831 to 1836 and became a police magistrate in 1838. Intensely religious from his youth he decided, at Bishop Broughton's suggestion, to become a candidate for holy orders. Before doing so he thought it proper to make his unorthodox views clear by publishing a book entitled *The Language of Theology Interpreted* ... (Sydney, 1836). Much of the content consisted of a trenchant attack on "professing Christians" who "imagine that they are partakers of this faith, if they repress all infidel opinions ... if they venerate and carefully retain the lessons of their parents and teachers, if they are zealous for the particular form of doctrine which distinguishes the religious sect to which they belong ...."  

Many colonists, Orthodox, Dissenting, Transcendental and Agnostic, felt similar distaste for what W.B. Wilmot, in current educational controversies, dismissed as "that spurious growth of pharisaical hypocrisy" which distinguished many conventional Christians. Charles Harpur expressed Transcendental opinions akin to Bowen's when he wrote, "Religion in the future will have to found itself upon the nearest approach ... to an individual basis ... exist simply as a private tendency in the pious hearts and unfailing consciences of men — of men religiously guided by, and amendable to God alone". Bowen, however, included secularists and Transcendentalists in his sweeping denunciation of those who took pleasure in indulging their prejudices rather than in denying themselves and

81. G.M.C. Bowen, *The Language of Theology Interpreted* ... (Sydney, 1836), pp. 2-3.  
83. Quoted, Michael Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia*, p. 178.
mortifying their natural inclinations.

The truly religious, Bowen contended with Dostoevskian pas-
sion, possessed two qualities: humility and broken-heartedness...

He must be one who has been shamed by discovering the
folly of all his own favourite opinions, the imbecil-
ity of his own judgment, the perverseness and senseless-
ness of his past conduct, and his degrading bondage
under selfish...and therefore mean passions; he must
be one...who has sought happiness in the world and fail-
ed in finding it; he must be a disappointed man, one
who has eaten of the fruit of his own foolish ways, and
found it bitter...who has been brought low by trouble,
prostrated by calamity, and has had his heart bruised
by affliction...the Gospel, or the good news, can be
preached to the poor only, and not to those who are
well satisfied with their condition....

There was much in this that the Lord Bishop of Australia and
the best and most sincere of his clergy, including the Reverend H. T.
Stiles, Bowen's pastor at St. Matthew's, Windsor, might have appr-
oved. The storm the book raised was caused rather by the author's
use of a powerful near-Swiftian allegory in which he treated the
Scriptures as a giant parable, declared that Predestination implied
"either a want of power or a want of benevolence in the Heavenly Par-
ent", dismissed the idea of a literal hell, and scoffed at Cath-
olic and High Anglican ritual and the diversities of opinion that fol-
lowed the Reformation. He imagined a simple people on a remote is-
land coming by a copy of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, treating it
as Holy Writ and in the course of centuries drawing "strange conclu-
sions and monstrous doctrines" from the allegorical text.

All this was manifestly a hit at Catholics and High Anglicans
but Bowen did not spare Latitudinarians and Dissenters. On his im-
agined island among the Bunyanians a Reformation occurs against eccle-
siastical tyranny. Being human and limited they soon corrupted

84. G.M. C. Bowen, The Language of Theology Interpreted, pp. 7-8,
pp. 11-12.
"the unrestricted use of the letter of an allegory they did not understand" and "the boasted right of private judgment" soon degenerated into "innumerable diversities of opinion, discussions, controversies, and religious animosities". Finally, "the great moving Power of the Nineteenth Century, 'the march of intellect'" finds its way to the island home of the Bunyanians and produces the "usual effects ... a feeling of dissatisfaction, and even disgust towards all that has been hitherto accounted religion ...." 85

On publication of his book Bowen found himself in the midst of a bitter public controversy. The Reverend H. T. Stiles, hitherto a close personal friend, charged him with heresy and excommunicated him at the altar rail in St. Matthew's. Bishop Broughton tried to compromise but made it clear that he would support Stiles if sufficient proof were forthcoming "of your adhering to obnoxious tenets, in opposition to all my remonstrances." 86 A reviewer in Dr. Lang's Colonist hailed the book as the work of a "noble and honourable" man "uninfluenced by any considerations of temporary advantage" or by "those base and sordid motives, which...frequently actuate the candidate for holy orders". Nevertheless, the Colonist agreed with Bishop Broughton and the Reverend H. T. Stiles that "passages ... which allude to our Saviour" are "highly injudicious, if not improper, and in a measure opposed to the 15th Article of that Church which Mr. Bowen had some idea of entering." 87

Bowen did not recant but protested to the Colonial Office that he had been denied his civil right as a contributor to the Church. Glenelg replied requesting the new Governor, Sir George Gipps, to "acquaint Mr. Bowen that I must decline all interference whatever on a subject so entirely foreign to the proper duties and beyond the competency of Her Majesty's Executive Government." 88 Broughton later restored church membership but the connexion remained uneasy especially when Bowen broke Anglican canon law by marrying a sister of his

85. G. M. C. Bowen, The Language of Theology Interpreted, pp. xvi-xvii.
86. Colonist, 25 May, 1837.
87. Ibid, 8 December, 1836.
88. Glenelg to Gipps, 20 June, 1838. H.R.A., 1, xix, p.450

The spirit of the age was against Broughton's type of conservatism but the colony was not ready for Bowen's or W. A. Duncan's type of Romantic liberalism. Broughton had something of the tragic vision which transcends the individual and demands of men a knowledge of good and evil as something more fundamental than conventional right and wrong. Bowen shared something of this tragic view but was before his time in colonial Australia where most of those who were inclined to religion sensibly and simply "went to church with the denomination ... into which they had been born". Duncan, on the other hand, sensed, if he did not state clearly, the dangers of liberalism leading towards an economic individualism uncontrolled by any genuine sense of community values. In Australia, as in England, utilitarian and material values were setting the pace for progress against the doubts and hesitations of men like Broughton, Polding, Duncan, Bowen and the Harpur brothers.

Colonial society, in the 1840's, was too engrossed in the immediate and the everyday to spare much serious attention to poets, priests or philosophers who offered glimpses of the transcendental and asked men to set themselves against the background of eternity rather than the here and now. Even the religious-minded minority were immersed in the defence of class interests or the assertion of economic aspirations. Except for an idealist here and there they had no Wakefieldian vision of a civilized community transplanted from the old world to the new; no Owenist or Fourierist blue-print for


building a new community in a new land; no sense of religion as faith in a set of community values transcending respectability on earth as a stepping stone to heaven. By the 1840's it was true to say, as A. G. Stephens said later, that "the sceptical and utilitarian spirit" had been "established among the notable Australian characteristics", a spirit that "values the present hour and refuses to sacrifice the present for any visionary future".  

To sum up, the average sensual man, in Australia as elsewhere, remained sceptical towards religious enthusiasm or excessive piety. For him and his like, the purpose of living was to live and living entailed the everyday struggle to provide for a family plus sufficient leisure to enjoy the immediate pleasures of the flesh. This, rather than what A.G. Stephens regarded as a mentally enlightened disregard for "outworn creeds", accounted for the colonial utilitarian attitude towards "sky pilots" or "pie in the sky". Yet, for almost all, including those who were indifferent to or denied revelation, Christianity remained part of the ineradicable background to their lives. Many men and most women continued to regard clergymen and churches essential to society, not only to provide a sound moral upbringing for their children but to sanctify the climatic events of their lives: birth, marriage and death. Thus, as John Barrett observes, "The colonial clergymen persisted, not because they were saints and martyrs, but because a sufficiently large number of people wanted them to persist". For many people, too, the clergy were part of the nostalgia still felt for the "old country" they had left but not forgotten.


Chapter Seven

Utilitarian Dreamtime

(i)

Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the nation by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties, by leaving capital to find its most lucrative course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment, by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law, and by observing strict economy in every department of the State. Let the Government do this: the People will assuredly do the rest.— Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Southey's Colloquies", Edinburgh Review, January, 1830.

Those proud Islanders whom many unduly honour, know no watchword but gain and enjoyment. Their zeal for knowledge is only a sham fight, their worldly wisdom a false jewel, skilfully and deceptively composed, and their sacred freedom itself too often and too easily serves self-interest. They are never in earnest with anything that goes beyond palpable utility. All knowledge they have robbed of life and use only as dead wood to make masts and helms for life's voyage in pursuit of gain. — Friedrich Schleiermacher, Speeches on Religion .... 1799.
On 26 January 1842, the colony's fifty-fourth anniversary, gas lamps glowed along Sydney's main streets for the first time, replacing the faint glimmer of the few ill-trimmed oil lamps that hitherto had marked street corners in a city the Sydney Morning Herald soon came to regard as equal to "a good second-rate seaport at home". Before the advent of gas town-dwellers mostly depended on "one or two aristocratic lamps in front of the doors of the elite of the shopocracy" or, as a poetically-inclined writer in the Chronicle put it, they had to wait on the fitful light provided when "pale Cynthia trimmed her silver lamp ....". In those days, respectable folk kept indoors at night, leaving the town's dark streets and blind alleys to "Sailors without ships, soldiers without discipline and women without principle".

Now, with gas lighting the streets, water promised soon from Lachlan Swamp to city houses, steam boats on the harbour, local manufactures improving in range and quality, and Caroline Chisholm labouring under what Sir George Gipps regarded as an "amiable delusion" that something should be done for girls "wandering about Sydney without friends or protection", the shabby elegance of Macquarie's raffish Georgian Sydney was beginning to acquire a Victorian air of respectability and progress. The new Government House, with its "tall chimneys of elaborately carved stone, white turrets and numerous windows" set the pattern though no doubt Sir George himself regarded it as an example of conspicuous consumption in precarious and changing times. Certainly, he clung as long as he could to the rambling old building off Macquarie Place which had served as Vice-regal residence for more than forty years, to the despair of a succession of Governor's ladies.

1. Sydney Morning Herald, 8 February, 1851.
2. Chronicle, 14 February, 1840.
3. Ibid.
Designed by E. Blore, Esq., of London, and erected under the superintendence of M.W. Lewis, the Colonial Architect, the new Government House was an "elegant stone edifice, in the style usually termed Elizebethan or Tudor Gothic". It provided His Excellency with "spacious and lofty" State rooms for his official functions, including a Ball Room 150 feet long and 28 feet wide, "exclusive of orchestra", where his aide-de-camps were no longer likely to repeat the error they had made in the old Government House of tapping a man like Henry Macdermott, merchant and fiery politician, on the shoulder and asking him to leave, as happened at Gipps's first Queen's Birthday levee in 1838, because Macdermott, ex-Sergeant-Major of the 39th Regiment, had intruded into the equivalent of the Officers' Mess. Gipps, for all his stubborn stuffiness, was soon alert enough to colonial social nuances not to make that sort of mistake again. Unlike Macquarie, he was not the man to ask ex-convicts to sit at table with him but, among the citizens and their ladies who admired the staircases "formed of highly wrought Australian cedar" and "the chimney pieces of colonial marble" in the new Government House, were quite a few whose antecedents were less reputable than the non-commissioned ranks of the British army.

When Gipps left England in 1837 Queen Victoria had already promised to be good but she was not yet crowned and Samuel Smiles, that great counsellor of those who wished to be gentlemen without having been born rich or blue-blooded, was only twenty-five. Nevertheless, the climate of opinion that marked Victorian England and made Self-Help (1859) and Lives of the Engineers (1861-62) such popular successes was already abroad in New South Wales. ".... in Australia," a returned emigrant wrote later, ".... worldly success is so immediately and so visibly the result of any reform in

conduct .... the missionary of reform may expect a degree of success beyond that which greater zeal and ability can obtain for the preacher who labours among the vicious part of our poorer population at home ...." In other words, despite a good deal of evidence to the contrary, many colonists shared a utilitarian conviction that worldly success and personal freedom were the just rewards of respectability and hard work. Certainly, rich Emancipists were often foremost in good works and had given momentum to the drive for secular and improving education by establishing Sydney's most successful college of higher education—William Timothy Cape's Sydney College.

The classically-designed buildings of Sydney College, opposite Hyde Park; the colonnated Post Office in George Street ("six Doric columns support an appropriate entablature and pediment"); the handsome banks (two colonial and two Anglo-Australian) and the reassuring new offices of agricultural companies, trust companies, loan companies and investment companies were even more characteristic of the colony's changed status than Mr. Blore's Byronic Government House. Besides banks and investment offices, Sydney now had an Australian Gas Light Company, an Australian Sugar Company, a Sydney Fire Insurance Company, a Marine Insurance Company, textile mills and other manufactories employing about two thousand people (including country flour mills), while a newly-formed railway company's £500,000 project for the construction of forty miles of railroad in New South Wales was among the 1263 private bills for the construction of railways lodged at Westminster in 1845, when the English "railway mania" was at its height.

Despite superficial appearances, Gipps's Sydney was basically different from the oppressive provincialism of George Eliot's Middle-march or the world of Flaubert's Emma Bovary, all more or less contemporaneous. The rough seaport, for all its chaste arch-

Architecture, well-mannered design and orderly layout, housed a mixed population not conspicuously chaste, well-mannered or orderly. Colonial social nuances were probably as subtle as the provincial morese of England and France but from the nature of things they could not have been so stifling. A society in which many of the rich and eminent had to keep their wives in the background provoked sniggers rather than envious awe among new-comers. Nor were newcomers beyond reproach. Lieutenant George Hillyar, in Henry Kingsley's novel The Hillyars and the Burtons, was not the only aristocratic sprig to emigrate under a cloud. All in all, the facts of life could not be kept decently shrouded in the colonies as they were in English provinces while Sydney was not yet big enough to provide the anonymity common to London and Paris.

By the 1840's, Sydney's fine public buildings, spacious gardens, elegant shops, libraries, art and music studios, grammar schools and churches did not raise sufficient facade to hide mean streets, bad drains and vacant allotments. Besides several first-class hotels and a reputable club for gentlemen, 219 licensed premises (forty of them in George Street) served a rising population of 40,000 people. In addition to spreading "salubrious suburbs" at Chippendale, Camperdown, Newton, Glebe, Balmain and St. Leonard's, there were slums equal to anything in London and disreputable areas rubbed shoulder with respectable business quarters. In March, 1838, according to the Australian, "a nest" of "infamous brothels" formed part of Druitt Street, proving "the greatest nuisance to the respectable portion of the neighbourhood .... forming a line of communication with similar establishments in Wallis's lane, where thieves and street-walkers of the lowest possible grade resort...."

Shops and offices were brightly lit by Argand and Colza lamps and before 1841, when gas lighting was introduced, publicans

8. Australian, 16 March, 1838.
were required by law to keep a light burning outside their establishments. Meanwhile, the newspapers kept an eye on public amenities. "Of what utility is it to the public," demanded the Australian, "that the government night carts are obliged to go out at mid-night, if the carters are allowed to empty their filth within fifty-yards of the public road?" Three days later, the same newspaper drew attention to "a serpentine drain across the road, some two feet and more in depth .... a little to the northward of the 'Butcher Arms' public house, situate in Kent street ....?" By 1846, according to Colonel Mundy, matters had not greatly improved. "The lighting, and still more, the paving of the Sydney streets, are a disgrace to the city and its corporation, as well as to the people who tolerate the ill-performed duties of the latter well-paid body," the Colonel complained. "The trottoirs are full (and were to the last day of my residence in New South Wales) of the most ingenious traps, dangerous to the limbs, if not to the lives of the passengers. The sewerage of the town is also shamefully bad, though no city possesses a site more favourable for that essential. Most of the drains are on the surface, and during the long periods of drought the accumulation of filth becomes beyond measure disgusting...."

By this time, Sydney occupied a space of more than two thousand acres, including fifty-six acres reserved for recreation and exercise. More than seven thousand houses straggled along streets which followed the ridges of a naturally rugged terrain and there were many gaps between the houses "where all sorts of rubbish might be shot .... from a load of soot to a proscribed cat or the decimated fraction of a litter of puppies". The biggest barracks in the British Empire still occupied twelve acres in the heart of the town but by the end of the 1840's, military headquarters had moved

10. Ibid, 16 March, 1838.
13. H.M. Ellis, Francis Greenway (Sydney, 1949), p. 27.
to Major George Barney's elegant new Victoria Barracks in Paddington.

Tattered posters and rude graffiti disfigured the long ten-foot-high wall that bounded the western side of George Street, from Hunter Street to the Post Office. However, Joseph Fowles rejoiced that "the straggling and dilapidated erections" that still covered Barrack Square would soon be replaced by "elegant and useful edifices adapted to civil purposes, and the site pierced by the thoroughfares so much required for the circulating current of commercial activity". The eastern side of George Street, facing the barrack wall, was lined with stores and shops "fully equal to those of a principal street in an English city" on land worth £20 a foot that had once been exchanged by the block for a bottle of rum.

Mrs. Meredith, who had an eye for such things, considered George Street to be the Pall Mall of Sydney, "full of good shops, exhibiting every variety of merchandise" where, despite the hot dusty summer glare, "the fair wives and daughters" of the city's citizens enjoyed their daily airing. She added, "... no 'lady' in Sydney (your grocers' and butchers' wives included) believes in the possibility of walking, [consequently] the various machines upon wheels are very numerous; from the close carriage and showy barouch or britzka, to the more humble four-wheeled chaise and useful gig .... in the afternoons, when the ladies of the place drive out whole strings of carriages may be seen rolling about or waiting near the more 'fashionable emporiums', that being the term in which Australian shopkeepers especially delight".

Mrs. Meredith disposes of the oft-repeated statement that the colony had hardly any middle class; an assertive rising middle class would seem nearer the mark, people who built wide verandahs to protect their comfortable houses from the strong sunshine of

15. Ibid, p.22.
their adopted home.

The distinctions in society here remind me of the 'Dockyard people', described by Dickens, that keen and kindly satirist of modern follies. Thus—Government officers don't know merchants; merchants with 'stores' don't know other merchants who keep 'shops'; and the shopkeepers have, I doubt not, a little code of their own, prescribing the proper distances to be observed between drapers and haberdashers, butchers and pastry-cooks.... English customs and fashions are carefully followed, and frequently outdone by the more wealthy and (if I may be allowed the phrase, in speaking of commoners) aristocratic of the colonists. Their extravagant mode of living, combined with the mania for speculation, has contributed to the late and still existing embarrassments of the colony. Many of their houses are elegant villas, with rooms of noble dimensions, expensively furnished with almost every luxury to be found in a gentleman's residence in England, and environed by beautiful gardens, where every description of fruit, both European and tropical, is cultivated ... The smaller houses of merchants, and various professional and official men, have much the same style of those in suburban streets in England, standing alone or in pairs, all protected from the sun by verandahs from six to twelve feet wide, with pretty gardens in front, often fenced by high hedges of gay geraniums.7

Mrs. Meredith found this pride of place "ridiculous and uncemoming" in a town where a large proportion of the population were ex-convicts and their families or descendants. "You may often see a man of immense property, whose wife and daughters dress in the extreme of fashion and finery, rolling home in his gay carriage from his daily avocations, with face, hands, and apparel as dirty and slovenly as any common mechanic." She concluded that the "good people of Sydney have yet many wise things to learn, and many silly ones to unlearn, before they can attain that resemblance to the higher middle classes at home which is their anxious aim ...." Yet, after showing the lace of her own middle-class petticoat below the

17. Mrs. Charles Meredith, Notes and Sketches, pp. 52-3.
hem of her neat English dress, Mrs Meredith had the good sense to admit that pride "of a right kind" might be the best agent a new country could possess provided it showed "a wise and liberal, not .... an ignorant and sordid spirit ...." 18

(ii)

In 1839, the Reverend John Lillie told an audience at the Hobart Mechanics' Institute that the development of the steam engine heralded "an era in the history of our species ... working a mighty revolution in the social and economical condition of the world". The social and economic condition of New South Wales was itself undergoing a momentous process of change linked to the "mighty revolution" Lillie forecast. William Augustine Duncan, the Scottish journalist and Catholic convert whose arrival and journalistic career almost coincided with the Governorship of Sir George Gipps, documented the changes in his newspapers the Australian Chronicle and the Weekly Register. Summing up the period in his reminiscences, Duncan stressed the impact of the British Government's new immigration policy on the dissolving penal ethos:

Free immigration was pursued with such vigor during the first three years of his [Gipps'] administration [1838-1841] that the entire face of colonial society became at once changed and those who had been for some time established in the colony were amazed to find themselves suddenly surrounded by a population totally different in manners and habits to that which they had been accustomed.20

Despite the fact that 1840 was the peak year of Australian convictism, with 56,000 men and women in penal servitude, including those in Van Diemen's Land, it was also the peak year of assisted immigration. Between 1838 and 1848 the Australian population

18. Mrs Charles Meredith, Notes and Sketches, pp. 51-2.
more than doubled, from 155,197 to 389,893\(^2\), most of the increase taking place in New South Wales where the percentage of convicts in the population dwindled in the same decade from 37.7 per cent to 3.2 per cent. Trade figures alone indicate that the colony was making rapid progress as a link in the chain of empire. "The foreign goods included tea from China; rice from the East; coffee, pepper, and spices from the Dutch East Indies; tobacco from the United States and Brazil; pitch and tar from the United States and Scandinavia; cigars from Havana and Manila; sugar from the Philippine Islands; and wine from Madeira and Tenerife. From the United Kingdom the colony was supplied with almost all its manufactured goods." There was also flax from New Zealand, wine and raisins from the Cape, sugar and cigars from India.\(^2\)

The chief articles of export from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were wool, oil, sealskins, and timber. By 1839, Australia was exporting ten million pounds of wool a year to England and had topped the market for quality in all save the specially fine lines which were still (but not for long) a South German monopoly.\(^3\) "These were the years when the system of 'squatting' was in its hey-day, when the interior was being occupied regardless of the mandate of the Government at Sydney, and when flocks were rapidly moving over the rivers and plains of the far inland. Already, they were up the Murrumbidgee to the Murray and overland to Port Phillip; already, Monaro was full and the mountains attacked; already, New England and the Liverpool Ranges were meeting the flat-footed invaders in the north; and what had been accomplished was as nothing to what was in sight."\(^4\)

Sydney was not the only colonial capital ready to blossom into Victorian grandiloquence. The site of Melbourne was first occupied in 1835 without Government approval but Sir Richard Bourke bowed to

24. Ibid, p. 46.
the inevitable and authorized its existence as a township in 1837. The Assistant Surveyor-General Robert Hoddle went down from Sydney and laid out the new township on a simple gridiron plan with three main east-west streets, four "little" east-west streets or "lanes" and seven main north-south streets. The plan not only provided exceptionally wide main streets for purposes of "health and convenience" but offered the quickest way of disposing of new land and as Port Phillip grew speculators reaped large gains in unearned increment. The first land sales took place in June 1837, when Hoddle auctioned a hundred city lots at an average price of £38. The two he bought himself — for £54 — were worth £250,000 when he died in 1881. There were quicker returns than this. Three allotments bought for £136 at the first sales fetched over £10,000 three years later.

In September 1839, the Port Phillip Gazette welcomed Charles Joseph La Trobe as Superintendent with the usual colonial hyperbole: "He comes to us as our good genius to assist to develop our resources, and to place us high in the scale of Colonies — Colonies! nay, he comes to found a mighty empire!" The sentiment was exaggerated but the Gazette and citizens of Port Phillip were soon agitating for separation from New South Wales. When Dr. J. D. Lang made his first visit to Port Phillip in November 1841 he found the people he met regarded "the position of the district as a remote and ill-governed dependency of New South Wales .... as a great and intolerable grievance." Southern settlers first petitioned for separation as early as June 1840 but had to wait until August 1850 before the Australian Colonies' Government Act finally conceded separate identity. By then the "straggling village" had grown into a gold-rush boom-town and six years later the inhabitants of "a city of magnitude and importance" were asking themselves:

27. J.D. Lang, Separation of Victoria (Sydney, 1870).
... who shall define the limits of its future dignity and splendour? The prophetic eye beholds its wide and spacious thoroughfares fringed with edifices worthy of the wealth of its citizens and corresponding in architectural pretensions with the greatness of the commercial transactions of their occupants. 28

The penal taint clung to Van Diemen's Land long after it had begun to fade in New South Wales. Convicts still made up 38 percent of the population in 1843 and a good percentage of the remaining 46,000 people on the island were of convict descent. Nevertheless, under the benevolent autocracy of Sir John and Lady Franklin (1836-1843), Hobart Town flourished as an "Athens of the Southern Ocean; where men educated in the English classics tradition formed a tight, elite community served by slaves and visited by traders; with leisure and isolation and time to contemplate the things of quality." 29 Hobart was also the Australasian New Bedford of the whalers, Australian, American and foreign, offering a free life and the chance of big money to native-born Tasmanians, "tall, straight, and handsome," as an Irish exile found them, with a "soft, luxurious, voluptuous languor which becomes the girls... better than the men ...." 30

Hobart in the 1840's had excellent quays, well-built houses in regular streets, mail-coachmen and guards dressed in red, as in England, shops as fine as any in Sydney, a variety of clubs and social institutions, two theatres, three inns fit for "gentlemen", and "innumerable grog-shops frequented by the lowest of the low". 31 Adelaide and Perth, lacking convict labour, were far less developed. By 1838, the far-seeing Colonel William Light, South Australia's first Surveyor-General, had laid out a handsome city that remained mostly on paper with an extensive "green belt" to divide city and suburbs. City lots, sold originally at from £3 to £12, were already fetching from £40 to £65 each and a year after the survey one was sold for £650. 32 Much-abused by short-sighted and avar-
icious colonists. Light died in October, 1839, "cared for by a woman he could not marry, in a city he had founded but could not live to enjoy", writing his own epitaph in the last paragraph of his Brief Journal: ".... I leave it to posterity .... to decide whether I am entitled to praise or to blame ...." In 1838, Swan River Colony had a population of only two thousand and less than five thousand in 1848. Fremantle and Perth were still struggling villages in a sea of sand.

The almost universal accusations of materialism made in contemporary accounts of the burgeoning colonies were probably as much due to travellers and commentators reading each other's books and articles as to the actual state of society. All the factual evidence suggests that during the 1830's and 1840's New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land enjoyed a cultural upsurge which, as in most such cases, was confined to that small percentage which in any British society is seriously interested in literature and the arts. Certainly, British Philistinism was not limited to the colonies as Matthew Arnold was soon to make abundantly clear although no doubt he would have found that many colonial improvers did not pursue sweetness and light, preferring "that sort of machinery of business, chapels, tea-meetings, and addresses from Mr. Murphy, which makes up the dismal and liberal life" of the enlightened British bourgeoisie. Yet, even David Mackenzie admitted that "there is a general thirst for reading throughout Australia" although he sniffed with true Scottish pedagoguery at the kind and quality of the books read — light and frivolous "works of the imagination" rather than "celebrated works on divinity, history, and science ...." 35

In mid-1844, the editor of the Colonial Literary Journal declared it "a matter of congratulation, that we are able to boast of the support extended to our literary societies". 36 The fact that

35. David Mackenzie, Ten Years in Australia, p. 44. Quoted Nadel, p. 88.
Australia, like America, could not yet match "the genius of Britain" was no cause for shame, the Journal insisted, decrying "the wholesale slander [that] has become a matter of emulation in the mother-country; each writer striving to out-lie his predecessor ... poisoning the minds of our friends in England, to give a death blow to our moral and intellectual character here". Surveying the literary institutions of New South Wales the Journal continued in a vein often repeated in later years:

This system of villifying everything colonial, has been carried to a ridiculous extent. In the present day, we have only to allude in terms of commendation to any colonial production, and it is immediately scouted as being unworthy of notice; while, at the same time, we are reminded of some British author, whose transcendent abilities have consigned our humble efforts to a merited oblivion.... We do not believe there is a town or province in Europe possessing the same number of inhabitants—leaving out of consideration altogether the many and great disadvantages under which this colony labours—that can boast of more extended benefits accruing from literary institutions, than can we of New South Wales. This fact speaks volumes for the colony; it is an earnest of future celebrity: we hail it as such; and in this respect, we are proud, and not without reason, of this our adopted country.37

Certainly, a small isolated community on the utmost perimeter of the civilized world could not be dismissed as wholly materialistic when it supported sufficient churches and clergymen to compare favourably, on a population basis, with England;38 when professional actors and actresses played Shakespeare as well as the latest London dramas and farces in well-equipped theatres; when musicians of London reputation like Isaac Nathan and William Vincent Wallace, conducted opera, oratorios and music festivals; when bookshops stocked classic and standard authors as well as the latest sentimental novels, Scrapbooks, Annuals, Offerings, Gems, and "Flowers


of Loveliness"; when talented artists like Charles Rodius and Conrad Martens could make a living, albeit Rodius was reduced not only to doing portraits of the living but likenesses after death, "capable of supplying affection's broken link ...."42

It was a time when newspapers and periodicals competed for the work of local poets in preference to "selections"; when there were sufficient serious readers and adult students to support a Subscription Library, a Commercial Reading Room, a Church of England Book Society and a number of Mechanic's Schools of Art; and when local printers were prepared to collaborate with local authors in the publication of more than forty volumes of verse (an average of one a year) between 1810 and 1850, eight works of fiction (compared with eighteen Australian novels by London publishers), fifteen volumes of essays or reprinted lectures and sermons, and seven works of scholarship in classical or modern languages.53

As Geoffrey Serle reminds us, "the chief importance of early Australia in intellectual and cultural terms was as a field for science".44 Geographers, botanists, zoologists and geologists were intensely interested in the strange new southern continent and naturally enough many educated and cultured officials and settlers were concerned with scientific investigations either as amateurs or professionals. The first colonial secretary, Tory Alexander McLeay, was a naturalist of distinction whose collection of beetles and butterflies was said to be the finest individual collection in the world.

Sydney's Philosophical Society for the Advancement of Scientific Knowledge (founded 1821) numbered among its members the extraordinarily accomplished colonial Surveyor-General Major (afterwards Sir) Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, wellknown overseas as a translator of Camoens' Lusiad. Mitchell was widely read "in several languages" and "proficient in several sciences"; besides being an amateur sculptor of some talent. His published journals of Australian exploration had literary merit as well as scientific value.

43. E. Morris Miller, Australian Literature, passim.
44. Geoffrey Serle, From Deserts the Prophets Come... (Melbourne, 1973), p.3.
The eccentric and cantankerous naturalist and explorer George Caley, who died in 1829, added greatly to knowledge of New South Wales through his botanical collections. John Gould's *The Birds of Australia* (1840-48) pioneered systematic ornithology in Australia and is nowadays a collectors' piece for its artistic as well as its scientific virtuosity. John Gilbert, killed on 28 June 1845 near the Gulf of Carpentaria when aborigines attacked Ludwig Leichhardt's expedition to Port Essington, did extensive and valuable work in ornithology and zoology in Van Diemen's Land, Western Australia and Northern Australia. Although Gilbert published nothing of importance in his lifetime, Gould acknowledged the value of his work which was revealed by the discovery in 1938 of his diary for 1844-45 and letters to Gould. Leichhardt created a legend and left a mass of scientific and descriptive material in his manuscript diaries, letters, notebooks, letters and published works.

The explorer Charles Sturt, though he could not match Mitch­ell in quotation, wrote a fluid and vivid prose and was sufficiently a man of science to be made a Fellow of the Linnean and the Royal Geographic Society. George Grey's *Journals* (London, 1841) not only contained a good deal of valuable scientific information but showed greater regard for the aborigines than Mitchell. "To have fired upon the other natives when they returned for the wounded man," he says, speaking of an occasion when the expedition was in great dan­ger, "would, in my belief, have been an unnecessary piece of bar­barity." Edward John Eyre, hailed in after years as a monster of cruelty for his rigour as Governor of Jamaica in putting down an in­cipient negro rebellion, was notable in Australia for his humane approach to the aborigines. Appointed in 1841 as resident magis­trate and protector of aborigines at Moorundie, on the River Murray, he was remarkably successful in dealing with his charges.
Tasmanian-born Edward Micklethwaite Curr, son of a Van Diemen's Land pioneer and himself a pioneer squatter in the Port Phillip District, was one of several squatters anxious to preserve the aborigines in "the recollection of man". Educated in England and France, young Curr arrived at Port Phillip in 1841 to take over one of his father's stations near the present town of Heathcote. "To me a squatter's life was a great change from my...experiences," he wrote long afterwards; "my not very delightful occupations at this period being helping to dress the sheep for scab and foot-rot, a little bullock-driving, learning to find my way about the bush (an art which had been sadly neglected in my education), getting used to the ways of my men, and in the evening reading Youatt's book on 'The Sheep' ...." Nevertheless, he found time to gather material for a monumental four-volume *The Australian Race; its Origins, Languages, Customs* (1866) besides publishing his reminiscences and such practical manuals as a book on *Pure Saddle Horses* (1863) and *An Essay on Scab in Sheep* (1865).

The original Philosophical Society of New South Wales, which had hoped to encourage "fundamental research and speculation", soon lapsed but Sir John and Lady Franklin, with the aid of the Establishment and the clergy, had better luck in Van Diemen's Land despite Mrs. Charles Meredith's observation:


dith's "pretty Tasmanians" would allow. Before long the respectable middle-classes of the island were toasting, "Lady Franklin and the literary and scientific interests of the Colony". Writing to her sister Mary, the Governor's lady remarked:

I must owe this compliment which I little deserve to the patronage of the Revd. Mr. Lillie, the head of the Scotch church here, a very clever person & who possesses perhaps the most general science of any body in the island. With him, the Revd. Mr. Ewing [head of the Orphan Schools], Mr. Bedford the Surgeon & Mr. Gunn [Franklin's secretary and an amateur botanist] I hope with Sir John at their head to make next winter a réunion every fortnight or month at our house, for the purpose of discussing scientific subjects. It is thought that a Quarterly journal may be got up by these 4 gentn. descriptive of the natural history of V.D.L. & condensing some of the scientific news from home ....

The result of all this activity, plus £100 a year Sir John devoted from State funds for the purposes of science, was the birth of the Tasmanian Society for the Study of Natural Science (forerunner of the first Royal Society outside the British Isles) and the Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science. Both were an immediate success. Among those who "talked lectures" were John Gould, the ornithologist, Joseph Dalton Hooker, son of the famous botanist of Kew Gardens and author of the first scientific description of Tasmanian plants, and Captains J. C. Ross and R. N. Crozier, of the Royal Navy's investigation ships Erebus and Terror. The Society and the Journal also stimulated the "collection and publication of knowledge", an activity which the acting colonial secretary G.T.W.B. Boyes considered "pleasant labour".

Colonial medical men were keenly interested in the utilitarian sciences although many of them mixed romantic unscientific speculations with their utilitarian application of the latest medical prac-


48. G.T.W.B. Boyes, Diary, 1829-52. Quoted Peter Bolger, Hobart Town, p. 27.
tice. They shared the common nineteenth century interest in somnambulism, animal magnetism, phrenology and spiritualism. Lecturers at Sydney's and Hobart's Mechanics Schools of Art kept largely middle-class audiences informed on these matters as well as up-to-date on the spate of genuine scientific discoveries and speculations which marked the century. Dr. William Bland, an innovating and eminent surgeon as well as an active Whig politician and philanthropist, owned the largest collection of phrenological busts in the colony while Dr. Arthur à Beckett, one of the numerous à Beckett clan who contributed so largely to Australian cultural activities, was one of several distinguished medical men who spoke of these and kindred subjects in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart.

(iii)

Among the institutions contributing to the intellectual elan of colonial Sydney the Press was the most energetic and probably the most influential medium of communication. Between 1824, when Wentworth and his associate Robert Wardell founded the Australian (1824-1848) without official permission, something like 170 newspapers were started in New South Wales and nearly fifty were in existence when the Gold Rush began. By this time, Macaulay was already referring to the Press as the fourth estate and The Times, with a circulation of 40,000 copies a day, was at the height of its influence although opinions differed on whether the Press formed public opinion or reflected it. Colonial opinion on this issue was divided. The Reverend John McGarvie, Presbyterian editor of the Sydney Herald until Methodist minister Ralph Mansfield replaced him in 1841, was torn between two allegiances, pulpit and Press. "Times are widely different from the last century," he confided to his diary. "Then the church and pulpit were the vehicles of knowledge, now it is the daily Press. Men are less evangelic for

Religion. They hear a Sermon, but read six newspapers weekly, the Bible never. The voice of the people was echoed by the Minister, now the Editor is the organ of politics and liberty."

John Dunmore Lang's *Colonist* (1835-40), the *Sydney Gazette* (1803-1842) and Edward Smith-Hall's *Monitor* (1835-1842) had all ceased publication by the mid-forties and the conservative Sydney Herald (changed to *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1842) had become a daily, and the colony's leading newspaper with a circulation of 3,000. Smith-Hall, the "revolutionary scribbler" of Darling's day, passed to the *Australian* and championed the cause of the squatters. The *Monitor's* and *Australian's* opposition roles were amply filled by William Augustine Duncan and Father John McEncroe who launched the Catholic-orientated bi-weekly *Australasian-Chronicle* (1839-1848). Father McEncroe had been editor of liberal-minded Bishop John England's *United States Catholic Miscellany* in Baltimore before coming to Australia and took over the editorship of the *Chronicle* when Duncan's liberalism and disdain for rich Emancipists offended the newspaper's Catholic Emancipist backers. Duncan then conducted his short-lived *Weekly Register* (1843-45) which vigorously supported his own version of liberalism and helped develop a nascent colonial literature.

During the 1840's, nineteen or twenty new weekly or bi-weekly newspapers were started in Sydney and New South Wales but only five or six lasted more than twelve months. The most important was Robert Lowe's brilliant *Atlas* (1844-1848), mouthpiece first of the squatters then of the emergent middle-class, a trenchant expression of bourgeois iconoclasm and pride in being smarter and potentially richer than anyone else. The *Star and Working Man's Guardian* (1844-46) and E. J. Hawksley's *People's Advocate* (1848-55)

advocated policies well to the left of the *Atlas* or Duncan's *Weekly Register*, concerning themselves with economic issues which affronted Lowe's and Duncan's belief in free trade and *laissez-faire*.

The *Guardian* pointed the way to "an ultimate revolution of the whole system of political economy" and condemned "Vampire capitalists" who combined to keep down the wages of working men. Nevertheless, the newspaper clung to Duncan's Catholic belief in a "bold, hardy and independent peasantry" as "the pride of a free country, the death blow to any country whose sole wealth is landocracy". E. J. Hawksley, who like Duncan arrived in the country as a Catholic schoolmaster, attracted the favourable notice of the hierarchy with his polemical pamphlet *The Worship of the Catholic Church is Not Idolatrous* (1833). His Chartist-type radicalism was not so popular with Church authority although he advocated peasant proprietorship under a motto from Alphonse de Lamartine, a troubled Catholic like himself, torn between reason, doubt and faith:

> Political economy has hitherto occupied itself about the production of wealth. It must now occupy itself about the distribution of wealth; so that the labourer may no longer be left without his fair share of the produce.

In Van Diemen's Land Andrew Bent, "this Franklin of the Southern Hemisphere", had a far sterner fight than Wentworth and Wardell to establish freedom of the Press. He cleared the way for the journalistic talents of a brilliant galaxy which included Robert Lathrop Murray, whose *Austral-Asiatic Review* (1828–1845) had an important radical readership in Sydney as well as in Hobart; Henry Melville, occultist and mystic, who published Australia's first novel, *Henry Savery's Quintus Servinton* (1830); Frederick Maitland Innes, Transcendentalist and future Premier of Tasmania; the malicious often-convicted libeller, William Lushington Goodwin, whose

Cornwall Chronicle (1835–1862) spared nobody from Sir John and Lady Franklin to the Launceston port officer he accused of peculation and homosexuality; and the judicious highly intelligent John West, Congregationalist editor of the Launceston Examiner (1842–), later editor of the Sydney Morning Herald.

John Pascoe Fawkner’s Melbourne Advertiser, originally a dozen or so handwritten copies on foolscap, was Melbourne’s first newspaper. Established early in 1838 the Advertiser, which lacked a license, was replaced in February 1839 by Fawkner’s properly licensed and adequately printed Port Phillip Patriot. Fawkner, London-born son of a convict transported in 1801 as a receiver of stolen goods, shared a background of radical dissent not dissimilar from that of his sometime friend John Dunmore Lang although Fawkner disdained churchmanship and was a self-educated humanitarian Benthamite whose Melbourne hotel offered the use of an extensive private library to lodgers considered worthy of the privilege. In the heated discussions that inevitably rose round the hotel dining table when mine host was present Fawkner sometimes lost his temper and ordered a guest to leave the table. According to Garryowen ....

Fawkner indulged in an incessant chatter upon the few public topics of the time, and his views occasionally took very peculiar turns, and his temperament was not the most tolerant, he would brook no contradiction; Fawknerian dicta should be gulped down with the eatables and drinkables, and if a wry face were made, and expression of dissent uttered, or a negative headshake vented at, the knife and fork pantomime ("twirled in the face"), and an invitation ‘to make tracks’ was the result ....

Fawkner’s newspapers were not unlike his table manners, self-opinionated, sweeping, reacting violently to criticism or contradiction. In this they set the pattern for the "new journalism"

54. E. Morris Miller, Pressmen and Governors: Australian Editors and writers in Early Tasmania (Sydney, 1952), passim.
which dominated the 'thirties and the 'forties. Early colonial newspapers had been politically innocuous and attempted to win readers with humorous twists to local items, such as a wedding notice in the Derwent Star (1810): "On Monday, 26th Ult., R.C. Burrows to Elizabeth Tucker, both of Norfolk Island. They had cohabited together fourteen years, verifying at last the old adage — better late than never." Then came the era of personal journalism, typified by men like Wardell, Smith-Hall and George Cavenagh in Sydney, Murray, Melville, Innes, Goodwin and West in Van Diemen's Land, Fawkner, William Kerr, George Arden and Edward Wilson in Port Phillip.

George Arden, who launched Melbourne's second newspaper, the weekly Port Phillip Gazette (1838-51), was a typical example of the "new journalism". Son of a Major in the East India Company's army, he first saw Melbourne in January 1838 when emigrating to Sydney and resolved to return and grow with the town. He arrived back in mid-October and two weeks later, at the age of eighteen, launched the Gazette "to assist the enquiring, animate the struggling, and sympathize with all". Arden quickly made an impact on the infant Melbourne, publishing the first original poetry, the first pamphlet and the first book. He also gave lectures with the expressed purpose of forming a national taste in literature. Drink and bad management lost him the Gazette and he returned to Sydney where he published a magazine and became Port Jackson correspondent for Melbourne's third newspaper, the Port Phillip Herald (1840—), fore­runner of the Melbourne Herald.

George Cavenagh, late of the Sydney Gazette, was responsible for the Port Phillip Herald. Sensing greater opportunities in Port Phillip he migrated to Melbourne with his printing plant and star writer, William Kerr, a Scot who had emigrated to Sydney about 1837.

In Sydney, Cavenagh had carried a horsewhip to protect himself against attack from people he lampooned. He won a libel case against Wentworth, who called him "a disgraced, discredited menial", alleging that he had once been a footman. In Melbourne, Cavenagh was equally outspoken and supported Arden in a campaign against the eccentric and irascible Judge John Walpole Willis, who imposed a savage prison sentence on Arden for alleged contempt of court. Within eighteen months the Herald had the largest circulation of the three Melbourne papers.

In January, 1841, Kerr left the Herald to edit Fawkner's Patriot, turning it into an organ for Melbourne's militant immigrant radicals, much to Fawkner's disgust. The fiery old Benthamite Fawkner was an avowed friend of Emancipist and native-born "Australians" but highly suspicious of "bloody immigrants" and new-fangled ideas. Inevitably, Kerr quarrelled with Fawkner and started the Argus (1846—) in which he attacked the "insatiable rapacity" of the squatters and condemned "this despicable abortion of a government". In 1848, as the result of damages against him in a libel suit, Kerr became insolvent. He remained editor but sold the Argus to Edward Wilson, another fiery radical, who was responsible for the famous daily post-Gold Rush advertisement: "Wanted, a Governor: Apply to the People of Victoria". Kerr, a protegé of John Dunmore Lang, was an ardent Orangeman and did much to foment the Catholic-Protestant feuds that were a feature of early Melbourne.

In addition to reporting news, publishing useful information and lampooning political opponents, the colonial newspapers did as much to encourage local writers as the many short-lived literary periodicals. The most frequent complaint against the periodicals was that they used too large a proportion of material "lifted" from overseas publications whereas the newspapers published local verse.

58. The most important of these were: Literary News (1837-38); New South Wales Magazine (1843); Colonial Literary Journal (1844-45).
and comment. "I am aware," wrote newly-arrived attorney and litt-erateur William à Beckett "that we are in a country where literary predilections meet with little encouragement — yet, small and tardy as that encouragement is, I trust that it will never extinguish, however it may check, a taste for intellectual pursuits". The taste was undeniable although, as à Beckett stressed, "the present age is not the most favourable for advocating the cause of the Muse. In England, the Utilitarian principle is as broadly acknowledged, though not so advantageously pursued, as in New South Wales".

As editor of bookseller Samuel Tegg's Literary News, William à Beckett had ample opportunity to sample the quality of colonial verse and prose. "During the short period I have resided here," he told a middle-class audience at the Mechanics' School of Arts, "I have had opportunities of seeing many verses, from different sources, of Australian birth — and from their tenor and spirit, I do not hesitate to predict, that we have already amongst us the germs of poetic excellence." The examples he cited, Henry Halloran and "my learned friend" William Foster, Commissioner of the Court of Requests, displayed all the facility which in those days many educated men could summon at will drawing on stock classical allusions and well-worn poetic techniques. From these warm ashes, plus a passion for Shelley, a genuine poet like Charles Harpur, whom à Beckett did not mention, sometimes could spark enough fire to light the dry tinder of the local scene:

Not a sound disturbs the air,
There is quiet everywhere;
Over plains and over woods
What a mighty stillness broods.

Even the grasshoppers keep
Where the coolest shadows sleep;
Even the busy ants are found
Resting in their pebbled mound ...


60. Ibid, p. 4.


Henry Halloran, son of prolific Emancipist author and classicist, Dr. Laurence Halloran, wrote verse for colonial newspapers and magazines. A civil servant who ended up as Under-Secretary, he was never more than a minor poet with a classical education and a sentimental bent. Nevertheless, Martin, à Beckett and many contemporary readers thought him more talented than Harpur. This was probably just for he had considerable skill in presenting conventional sentiments in talented imitation of accepted forms. Harpur had truer poetic feeling but sometimes lacked the appropriate technical talent. Halloran, a boxing enthusiast and "Radical Bob" Nichols' fellow-officer in the local Volunteers, shared Martin's initial disdain for Harpur but later became the poet's friend and champion.

By comparison, James Martin's Australian Sketch Book (1838) is full of stock romantic images but, speaking through the mask of Apollo, the young lawyer-journalist Martin skittishly dismissed all the colony's aspiring poets as unworthy of serious notice. He was particularly cruel towards Harpur. In 1838, the year of Jubilee, the poet was a self-styled "Mammon-trapped clerk" in the Sydney Post Office, the butt of his fellow-workers because his Currency Lad defiance of convention expressed itself in Byronic posturing rather than in the popular colonial pastimes, whoring and drink. He might have expected more sympathy from a near-Currency Lad confident that Australia was the destined birthplace of Homer's new.

Instead, the boy-critic warned the twenty-five-year-old poet, "The more you strive in your present state of mental darkness, the more you will render yourself obnoxious and despised ...." Thus admonished, the poet, brought before Apollo for judgment, hurried "chop-fallen and disconcerted" from the sacred presence and, Martin added maliciously, "...it has not yet been clearly ascertained,
whether he followed the suggestions given him by Apollo, or relinquished all claim to fame, and committed suicide, to escape the jeers and mockeries of an unfeeling, a fastidious and a criticizing world. 63

Martin's hint at the possibility of suicide was particularly brutal. Harpur, who had written no classical dithyrambs to celebrate the Jubilee, was in a thoroughly alienated mood when a critical drubbing such as this might have pushed him over the edge. His verse, just then, was full of despair:

More than once,
When soured by days of sordid toil, through which
Advantaged nothing in my future aims,
Or present loneliness, I've thrown me down
To lose in sleep dark thoughts; and sleeping, Fancy
Stealing the colour of my waking mood
Hath quickened it with dreams. Then have I seemed
To wander lost under a starless sky,
Where pitfalls gaped and ragged ruins hung
In threatening indistinctness .... 64

If there was anyone among the colony's native-youth who filled Martin's professed preference for colonials whose whole attention was not given to "the sordid desire of accumulating wealth" it was Charles Harpur. Full of poetic fire and burning with radical sympathy for the poor and despised, including the corrupted and unfortunate aborigines, Harpur had a sensibility quite unusual at that time and place. Unlike Martin, the favoured son of Catholic parents free from the colonial "birth stain", Harpur had sprung from a Protestant Irish attorney's clerk, transported for life at twenty-four for highway robbery, and his de facto wife, sentenced to seven years at the Taunton Lent Assizes in 1805, before she was fourteen, for some childish peccadillo.

The Reverend Samuel Marsden, who encouraged the good in men while endeavouring to scourge out the evil, took the family under

his Evangelical wing. Charles and his brother Joseph Jehoshaphat had the run of Marsden's library for, according to the Reverend Robert Cartwright, the harsh old man at Parramatta, who cherished any wavering light amidst the encircling gloom of "invincible depravity", never refused his books to any who applied for them.\footnote{J. Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur: An Australian, p.22.}

Charles himself claimed that he was "in the widest sense of the term a self-taught man" and described how, "For more than a year of my youth, Shakespeare was nearly my whole reading ...." \footnote{Ibid, pp. 27-28.}

The Harpur brothers were acquainted with Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley and the English Romantics, the American Transcendentalists and the Greek and Roman classics, whether in the original or through translations is not clear. Nor were they alone among Currency lads and lasses in their devotion to literature, as the lives of Charles Tompson, Horatio Wills, Geoffrey Eagar, William Bunn, Daniel Deniehy, Henry Kendall, Adelaide Ironside and others indicate.\footnote{See A. D. B., passim.}

Compared with these and the realistic anonymous balladists such immigrant litterateurs as David Burns (Plays and Fugitive Pieces, Hobart, 1843), Conrad Theodore Knowles (Salathiel, or The Jewish Chieftain, Sydney, 1842), and Samuel Prout Hill (Tarquin the Proud and Other Poems, Sydney, 1843) not only lacked real literary ability but largely ignored the local scene or domestic sentiment. Unless, that is, like William à Beckett's learned friend William Foster, they patronised local readers with reassurance that the birth stain had classical precedent:

Polluted streams will brighten in their course:
Thou' thy foundation's laid in guilt and shame;
That of the world's proud Empress was the same—
Yes! 'twas a robber-horde whose sons unfurled Rome's lordly ensign o'er a vanquished world:
Then, on, 
Australia! as thou hast begun;
And yet on thee shall shine as bright a sun;
But not thro' slaughter shalt thou wade to fame,
Nor ransack cities to exalt thy name:

\footnote{Ibid, pp. 27-28.}
The olive chaplet shall thy brows entwine,
And peaceful triumphs, happy land! be thine.


(IV)

Colonial fiction had a firmer foundation in real experience than most colonial verse except the bush ballads. Henry Savery, convict – author of Quintus Servinton (Hobart, 1830-1), the first novel published in Australia, sub-titled his work "a Tale founded Upon Incidents of Real Occurrence" and claimed the book was "no fiction ... it is a biography, true in its general features, and in its portraiture of individuals". James Tucker's Ralph Rashleigh, already mentioned, was also based on known experiences although literary convention often carried it into the realms of melodrama. Some critics include Tucker among others who celebrate the freedom of the bush and depict the origins of the bush ethos. Barry Argyle seems nearer the truth when he suggests that the bush and bushmen in Ralph Rashleigh are unimportant elements in a narrative which owes more to literary fashion than to approving observation.

Three of immigrant Charles Rowcroft's eight novels are set in Australia, Tales of the Colonies; or, The Adventures of an Emigrant. Edited by a late Colonial Magistrate (London, 1843), The Bushranger of Van Diemen's Land (1846), and George Mayford: An Emigrant in Search of a Colony (1851). All three are what Kenneth Graham calls "pseudo-novels" full of information "about Life in Our Colonies".

John Barnes dismisses them as the work of "a propagandist for emigration" who mixed a string of crowded and often improbable adventures with large daubs "of exotic local colouring ...." Barry Argyle suggested that the settler Thornley and his partner Crab in Tales of the Colonies goes rather deeper than this: it provides an interesting

example of the manner in which the physical and social environment of
the new country exerted pressures which altered "European values based
on inherited wealth and position ...." In their place, the new
criterion was knowledge of the bush and of the new land. Crab, Thomp-
son's social inferior in England, knows more about farming, settle-
ment, and Australia. 72.

Alexander Harris's Settlers and Convicts (London, 1847) and
The Emigrant Family (1849), similar in intent but more realistic
than Rowcroft's novels, are often cited as early examples of the
bush ethos and the ethics of mateship. In The Australian Legend
Russel Ward quotes Harris eighteen times compared with once for Row-
croft (on 'government men'). Settlers and Convicts, from which
most of Ward's quotes come, purports to be the authentic reminis-
cences of "an Emigrant Mechanic" who spent sixteen years in the Aus-
tralian bush. Recent revelations have shown that Harris was not a
mechanic but the well-read son of an English parson who came to Aus-
tralia, like many another, "under a cloud". He was "an unstable
young fellow of good education who .... wandered from home and work-
ed in a few white collar jobs" 73 before returning to England and
migrating to North America where he died in 1874. A self-confess-
ed drunkard and atheist when he came of Australia in 1825 he experi-
ence religious conversion before returning to England in the early
1840's.

Harris contributed to the myth of mateship --- the "mutual re-
gard and trust engendered by two men working together in the other-
wise solitary bush" --- and "celebrated the stirring, downright,
earnest life (be it for good or evil) that so strongly characterizes
the race", a people "with whom it is one of the worst reproaches to
be a crawler" and among whom "every man seemed to consider himself
just on a level with all the rest ...." It is sometimes forgotten
that this last observation was made about the company he met in "the

73. Grant Carr-Harris & Alec H. Chisholm (eds.). The Secrets of
large tap-room of the Market-house" where "a strange assemblage", mostly ex-convicts, consisted of Englishmen, Irishmen, an odd Scotchman, several foreigners, "besides some youngish men, natives of the colony", representing "only ... the very lowest class; such as were derived from the lowest rank at home, and who, whatever advantages they had had in the colony, still continued un-exalted by improved opportunities, unstimulated by hope, and making no efforts beyond what was necessary to supply their mere animal wants ..." 74

Henry Kingsley's The Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn (London, 1859) was published after the period under review but deals with the "old Australian life" before the colonies were transformed by the gold rushes. A succession of Australian critics have condemned Kingsley for failing to "tell the truth" about life in colonial Australia and for making his "gentlemen" heroes superior to other classes who helped pioneer Australia; "that insult to commonsense, that childish slap in the face of honest manhood, the 'gentleman' of fiction, and of Australian fiction pre-eminently", as Joseph Furphy put it. 75 Yet, as Dr. G. A. Wilkes reminds us:

Furphy's criticism, in essence, is that Geoffrey Hamlyn presents a generally misleading version of Australian life, and one specifically distorted in exhibiting the English gentry—incompetent bushmen—in command of the colonial terrain. Some condescension to genuine Australians is implicit. This is of course the typical reproach made of writing of the Anglo-Australian period by critics regarding it from the vantage-point of the 1890's or later. The view is still commonly held that [such] novels ... were influential in 'postponing the re-recognition in literature of the realities of the Australian experience until the generation to which Lawson and Furphy belonged'. Such strictures depend in turn on assumptions about the...real Australia' ... assumptions

74. Alexander Harris, Settlers and Convicts, pp. 5-6.

which are generally silent, so that they may control
the discussion without themselves becoming available
for scrutiny. To equate the 'real Australia' with
the experiences of the 1890's is merely to identify
the stereotype one prefers ....

For better or worse, Geoffry Hamlyn is a romantic novel deriv-
ed from Scott which presents Australia as many Englishmen and Austra-
lians then saw it — the vision of a pastoral Arcady which, as we
have seen, Army Surgeon Thomas Bartlett found so misleading. Long
before Furphy, a Sydney Morning Herald reviewer criticised Kingsley's
"picture" of the colonies because it did not contain "any recognition
of their important social and moral interests, or of the inherent
elements of their national progress". What this and later critics
did not appreciate was that Kingsley, in his muddled way, was re-
acting, as Scott reacted, to the loss of traditional values pre-
cipitated by the industrial revolution and the growth of capitalism.

Geoffry Hamlyn is one source of the romantic Australian iden-
tity developed by Rolf Boldrewood and a host of later writers in con-
trast with the proletarian identity stemming from Alexander Harris
and reaching its apotheosis in the Legend of the Nineties. After
World War 1 these two identities tended to fuse into the "Digger Spir-
it" so that Douglas Pike hardly exaggerates when he suggests that
"mateship" had "its last fling with the A.I.F.".

A basic Australian-ism developed early and Henry Kingsley was
receptive enough to observe and appreciate it. He was aware also
of the double identity which developed concurrently with colonial nat-
ionalism. On the one hand "bushmen", workers and bosses, brought
in the freemasonry engendered by common tasks in a hostile environ-
ment which encouraged mutual respect for the manly virtues of courage,
adaptability, independence and self-respect. On the other, a

76. G.A. Wilkes, "Kingsley's Geoffry Hamlyn: A Study in Literary
Survival", Southerly, No. 4, December, 1972, pp. 244-5.
77. Quoted John Barnes, Henry Kingsley and Colonial Fiction, p.32.
78. Georg Lukacs, The Historical Novel (Boston, Beacon Press
p. 229.
radical middle-class awareness that a new land, with no traditional "ruling class" and free established institutions, offered an "open go" for material advancement, democratic pioneering and social experiment. Taken together, the social and political result was not "proletarian upsurge" or revolutionary militancy but a pragmatic ameliorative middle-of-the-road progress suspicious of theory and latently hostile to social, intellectual and artistic distinction.

Geoffry Hamlyn celebrated the early Arcadian semi-feudal rural virtues of the "New Gentry", many of whom, like Major Buckley and Captain Brentwood, had fought in the Napoleonic Wars which, for their generation, were as apocalyptic as the Great War of 1914-1918 for a later generation. In a less well-known novel, *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, Kingsley developed the theme of successful emigration and assimilation in a new country. Joe and James Burton, sons of a London blacksmith, come to Australia to improve themselves and rapidly like "everyone in a very small community with liberal institutions" find themselves "mixed up with the course of colonial politics". If Sam Buckley wishes to be known as "the Buckley of Clere" James Burton knows that he could never have become the Hon. James Burton, M.L.C., if had remained in England. Joe, his hunchback brother, becomes Minister of Education.

Unlike Geoffry Hamlyn, the *Hillyars and the Burtons* is quite realistic about the "gentry". James Burton observes them dispassionately "standing against the rails in long rows — each one most wonderfully like the other; all cast nearly in the same mould .... every trifling peculiarity of look polished away by inexorable custom" so "exactly in the same pattern that it became ludicrous ...." He shows, too, that Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen did not have to come to Australia to learn about egalitarianism and democracy.

"I think we understand you, gentlemen. I wish you would take your

gloves off sometimes. You have been more courteous to us since the Reform Bill; but certain ill-conditioned blackguards among us say that it is only the courtesy which is engendered of fear, and but ill replaces the old condescending bonhomie which we shared with your pointers and your groom ... no one out of Bedlam supposes that things are always to go on with the same oily smoothness as ... now..." 81

By the time he wrote *The Hillyars and the Burtons* Kingsley had also grown to recognise that the Australian "gentry" were not all exiled Englishmen longing to "go home". Even before the mid-century the "Ancient Nobility", the "New Gentry", the urban-middle class and some at least immigrant "mechanics" like James Burton had come to share the feeling long possessed by Emancipists and the native-born that Australia was home. Lunching with Hannibal Macarthur, Captain Phillip Parker and their ladies at Parramatta in January 1836, Charles Darwin was surprised during the meal to hear "very nice-looking young ladies" exclaim, "Oh! we are Australians and know nothing about England!" 82 James Macarthur, giving evidence before a Legislative Council Select Committee on Immigration, emphasised that he was interested in "the settlement of bona fide proprietors, having a direct interest in the soil, and looking on the Colony as their home, and that of their children". 83

In Van Diemen's Land, Dr. James Ross, schoolmaster and magazine editor, disassociated himself and his short-lived *Van Diemen's Land Monthly* (1835) from those who preferred "to see nothing in Tasmanians but English, Irish and Scottish ... Britons who are the worse for their voyage ..." Rather, he asserted, "the modifying influence of situations and circumstances" had already produced colonial "distinctions". As he saw it, the greatest obstacle to the development of "a high standard of National character" was the colonial obsession with money-making and fortune-hunting, to the exclusion

83. Quoted Michael Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia*, p. 51.
of science and literature.

This feeling that Australia was home is crystallized in Kingsley's Gerty Hillyar, "last remaining daughter of the late James Neville, Esq., of Neville's Gap". Gerty who, from her background might easily have been a daughter of Major Buckley or Captain Brentwood instead of James Neville Esq., did not like England, "a nasty, cold, ugly, dirty place" she called it and wondered why the people in England did not go and live in Australia. "She didn't see why they should not all move over together. It wouldn't do to leave the Queen behind; but she might get to think better of it as soon as she saw how much superior Australia was to England". Four of Gerty's sisters had married rich squatters and were happy where they belonged but Gerty had the misfortune to fall in love with "a great catch ... the fellow would be a baronet with £10,000 a year".

Although a gentleman-born George Hillyar isn't a Christian gentleman according to James Burton's exacting standards. In fact, he is brutal, malicious, avaricious, dishonest, and completely insensitive to other people's feelings although Kingsley endeavours to give him a Byronic afflatus he does not deserve. Suffering under his hauteur and periodic indifference Gerty finds she hates England and sits with a nosegay of Australian wild flowers on her lap "all withered and dead ... but some of the aromatic ones kept their scent still — the dear old bush scent, — speaking of peaceful sunny days among the hot silent forests ..."

Inadvertently or not, Kingsley succeeded in documenting the beginnings of the double identity which emerged from this basic identification with the country of birth or adoption. On the one hand the "bushman", not the stereotype working class bushman of legend but Boldrewood's Bill Hardwick, "as fine a specimen of an Australian as you could find .... He could plough and reap, dig and mow, put up

84. Van Diemen's Land Monthly, September, 1835, pp. 2-3.
fences and huts, break in horses and drive bullocks .... the fastest and best shearer in the district .... a steady sensible fellow .... always welcome when work was needed and a good man valued".

The "bosses" were included in the criterion of competence and absence of show-off. Furphy's Stewart of Kooltopa "the younger son of a wealthy and aristocratic Scottish laird .... in the gall of altruism, and in the bond of democracy", Miles Franklin's Danny Delacey and, in real life, Patsy Durack, who "treated men on their merits and the aborigine Pumpkin as a friend".

The social and physical conditions of outback life in the days when squatters were kings in grass castles, as Mary Durack puts it, forged what Graham McInnis describes as a paternalistic egalitarianism "in which everybody was equal because everyone had his place ....", a free and easy yet dignified familiarity which recognized that the boss was boss but judged boss and worker by the criterion of competence, adaptability, lack of pretence and the standards of ordinary human decency as bastard or a good bloke. The reality was stereotyped in scores of popular ballads and novels, notably in Mary Grant Bruce's best-selling "Billabong" stories in which, besides doing their jobs and treating each other with respect as human beings, bosses and men show the taken-for-granted patriotism by enlisting in the A.I.F. and manfully doing their duty in the particular infantry battalion into which Fate casts them as hundreds of war memorials throughout the countryside still bear witness.

The bush ethos, in this reading, emerges not in bitter class struggle but in a modification of the semi-feudal, Napoleonic War values of loyalty and patriotism celebrated by Kingsley in Geoffrey Hamlyn, the values implicit in the official Australian war histories,

87. T. Inglis Moore, Social Patterns in Australian Literature, p.60.
in J.M.H. Abbott's *Tommy Cornstalk* (1902), Frank Dalby Davison's *The Wells of Beersheba* (1933), Alan Moorehead's *Gallipoli* (1956), Elyne Mitchell's *Light Horse to Damascus* (1971), T.A.G. Hungerford's *The Ridge and the River* (1952), and given international recognition in Kipling's *A Sahib's War* (1901) — "The Ustreljahs" who "spoke through their noses ... tall, dark men, with grey, clear eyes .... very proper men — a new brand of Sahib .... most excellent horsemen, hot and angry, waging war as war, and drinking tea as a sandhill drinks water". It is an ethos of heroism without heroics expressed in the "Digger Spirit", cherished by the R.S.L. and given national expression year after year on Anzac Day.

The reverse of the medal, documented by Russel Ward and celebrated by a school of writers from Lawton and Furphy to Gavin Casey, is equally stereotyped and equally rooted in fact as well as fiction. In this version, the "typical Australian" is always willing "to give it a go" and usually prepared to be content with "near enough". He is a "hard case" and contemptuous of all pretence, especially social and intellectual pretence. He is sceptical about the value of religion and suspicious of intellectual and cultural distinction. He is anti-authoritarian, believes that Jack is as good as his master, and probably a good deal better and sticks to his mates through thick and thin, hell and high water, right and wrong. In his eyes "scabs" and "pimps" are the lowest forms of human existence. Although proud of "good old Aussie" he decries any form of "flag-flapping" and thinks military service should be entirely voluntary.

Rolf Boldrewood, although he leaned towards the semifeudal version of the national identity which he helped create, probably summed up the truth of the matter when he asserted, "Know, O friendly generalizer, that there be tall Australians, and short Australians .... faint or fierce, feeble-clinging or deathless strong" Australians but "no generic native Australian definition". Certainly, as

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T. Inglis Moore observes, the "evidence discredits the radical picture of an early class war in the bush .... in the literature dealing with the pastoral age the general note struck is one of democratic independence shown by the workers towards...the squating class". The origin of paternal egalitarianism and the more radical bush ethos was sensed during the 1840's by a discerning observer who wrote:

"Few places can show so strange a mixture, and yet so complete a 'fusion', of the heterogenous materials of its society as 'the Bush' of Australia. It is curious to see men differing so entirely in birth, education, and habits, and in their whole moral and intellectual nature, thrown into such [close] contact, united by common interests, engaged under circumstances of perfect equality in the same pursuits."

Meanwhile, most Australians, native-born or immigrant, lived in or near the towns, where a more aggressive political democracy developed. Many townsmen were, in Rolf Boldrewood's prejudiced words, "assisted" native-born or immigrants like Janus Stoate "...a Londoner ... a radical socialist, brought out at the expense of the colony" and "so little grateful that he spoke disrespectfully of all the authorities, from the Governor downward, and, indeed ... of respectable people of every rank and condition ...." Boldrewood'spierers, dismissed by later conservatives as "moaning bloody pommies", were largely responsible for the growth of political and industrial democracy in Australia and they were active before the Gold Rushes brought thousands more of their like. Nor were their "betters", the urban middle-class intellectuals educated at Cape's Sydney College, lacking in disrespect for Governors and the Establishment although many of them cherished "respectability" almost as much as bush workers cherished mobility and opportunities to "go off on a spree". Any early

92. T. Inglis Moore, Social Patterns in Australian Literature, p.42.
94. Rolf Boldrewood, In Bad Company and Other Stories, p. 6.
reputation Australia gained for pioneering political or industrial democracy stemmed from an immigrant middle-class urban base and not among bush workers, who were mostly backward in political awareness or trade union organization, or among alienated "larrikins" from the Rocks, Redfern or from Melbourne's industrial suburbs.
Chapter Eight

Arcadian Nemesis

For the pragmatist...all discernate truth is static, impotent, and relatively spectral, full truth being the truth that energizes and does battle. — William James, The Meaning of Truth.
The essential pragmatism of Australian economic and political ideas, governed by the God of Things as They Are, showed itself clearly well before responsible government enshrined it as part of the national ethos. From the beginning, practical men faced practical problems arising from a particular environment largely free from traditional concepts or accumulated institutional rubbish. Furthermore, they were called upon to accommodate themselves to changing circumstances before the appearance of ideological propagandists or the creation of party machines designed to persuade politicians and voters to identify themselves with particular leaders or particular ideologies. Inevitably, in small communities where everybody knew everybody else, personalities counted for much and, as Wakefield observed, encouraged faction, the prevalence of demagogues and the brutality of newspapers in making war to the knife and twisting the weapon in the wounds inflicted. Yet, below the turbulent surface, deep currents of change carried men forward in search of solutions to problems created by climate, distance and changes in productive processes.

The fascinating problem whether particular men adopted particular views for obscure psychological reasons or as a cloak for disguised economic self-interest is a side issue in the context of this particular study. Certainly, the fact that production of wool for export had changed New South Wales from a penal reformatory to a potential self-governing colony helped determine the realignment of rival Exclusive and Emancipist interests into a so-called conservative interest and set the stage for the appearance of an active liberal alliance between small farmers, would-be small farmers, merchants and shopkeepers. But the concrete fact that this happened is more important if not more interesting than the motives which propelled men to think and act as they did.

At this distance, it is tempting to cut through personal and practical complexities and reduce the human reality of diverse interests and reactions to an abstract Marxian formula of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In these terms, a Downing Street intent on preserving the Imperial control of Crown lands and protecting the frontiers of British capitalism serves as thesis; pushing colonial wool-growers anxious for cheap land, cheap labour and no taxation without representation personify the anti-thesis; while self-government emerges as a synthesis which, in turn, sparks off a further conflict between now locally entrenched landed interests and a loose alliance of liberal rural and urban interests, leading to a new synthesis, fully democratic responsible government representing which ever party succeeded in capturing a parliamentary majority.

Something like this did happen but the protagonists were never mere dry economic cyphers and the radicals, who backed the liberals in conflict first with Downing Street and then with a narrowly representative Legislative Council, set a pattern of compromise that persisted. The result was not an ossification of "the proletarian turmoil of the Industrial Revolution" as seen by Louis Hartz in his perceptive study The Founding of New Societies but a deification of an English-model bourgeois state, incorporating radicalism in the myth of an egalitarian Australian Legend. Nor is there much evidence to show that the seeds of Australia's meliorative democracy were set in the bush. Vocal democratic claims were more often heard in urban centres among immigrants than in country towns or among bush workers. The conditions of bush life may have encouraged free-and-easy social intercourse but, as Graham McInnis observes, station life, once it became established, represented a hierarchy "in which everybody was equal because everyone had his place", rather than a democracy in which Jack was as good as his master.

In America, west of the Alleghenies, self-reliant native American frontiersmen set the democratic pattern which brought about the enfranchisement of the masses in most of the founding states by 1828. The tavern porch, the storekeeper's round stove and the backwoods' court-room were forums of democratic debate and nurseries for aspiring politicians, not least among them Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. Thus, American democracy rolled backwards from frontier to town and city where it soon bogged down in a morass of expediency for democracy is never a neat definable political concept for idealogues to administer according to a set book of rules. It, too, is governed by the God of Things as They Are and is best judged by what it accomplishes rather than by what its spokesmen propose.

In American practice, the great flood of foreign immigration which began in the 1840's and reached a peak around 1850, hopelessly compromised frontier democracy. Democratic rhetoric became the stock in trade of eastern political bosses, who adopted an easy frontier camaraderie in their dealings with the immigrant hordes they helped and exploited but replaced the tough hickory grain of the original concept with the stucco of Tammany Hall. Even so, this sort of pinchbeck democracy filled an essential role in its time and place, buying votes with concrete and direct personal service to bewildered newcomers as well as with cigars and back-slapping first-name familiarity. Democratic "bosses" made use of "American-Irish", "American-Germans", "American-Jews" and other refugees from various forms of European oppression or discrimination but they provided a shield against the virulent pogroms preached by "Native American" political parties and posses.

In Australia, democracy flowed in the reverse direction and took other channels: politically-conscious immigrants along the eastern and southern seaboards slowly but surely imposed democratic

ideas on resistant, reluctant or indifferent native-born colonials and squatters. The evolution of democratic ideas and practice was further complicated by the fact that, in Australia, the most forceful and self-assertive of the men who pioneered economic progress and opened the way for political change did not own or command all three of the essential factors of production: land, labour and capital. They "squatted" on Crown land and paid a yearly licence that gave them no security of tenure and no incentive to build homesteads, improve equipment or foster cultural amenities. They also had to cope with a chronically inadequate and surly labour force. Thirdly, they did not fit into the orthodox pattern of capitalist investment. From the beginning, English-controlled banks (the "Anglos" as colonists disparagingly called them) refused to give credit on stock and land. Consequently, the squatters, who produced the mainstay of colonial wealth, mostly had to depend upon local and overseas speculators who demanded ten per cent and higher.

In essence, the ensuing conflict presented itself as a contradiction between an Imperial idea and colonial empiricism. Nor was it confined to the Australian colonies. In brutally materialistic terms the initial dialectic is sometimes reduced to the stark logic of Cape Colony Trekboers who, filled with a burning desire to escape from British control, were at this time seeking a place of their own in the deceptive fever-ridden plains below Delagoa Bay, or on the higher drier tablelands beyond the Drakensberg or in Zululand, where the Paramount power was not the Imperial Parliament but a savage potentate, Dingaan, the Zulu king. The Englishman, declares a Boer leader in Rider Haggard's novel Jess...

.... understands his shop; he is buried in his shop, and can think of nothing else. Sometimes he goes away and starts his shop in other places, and buries himself in it, and makes it a big shop,... They talk of honour and patriotism too, but they both give way to shop...


The logic, like Napoleon's dismissal of the English as a nation of shopkeepers, is too simple. The Imperial idea was much more complex than idealistic sugar-coating on a bitter bolus of economic selfishness that the home authorities attempted to force down the throats of resisting colonists who were anxious to exploit land and labour (Hottentot slaves or convict serfs) in their own interest. In fact, English Prime Ministers, Colonial Secretaries and colonists sometimes shared the afflatus of the founders of the Anti-Slavery Society, Fowell Buxton and James Stephen (the Colonial Office's "Mr. Mother Country");

Can we suppose otherwise that it is our office to carry civilization and humanity, peace and good government, and, above all, the knowledge of the true God, to the uttermost ends of the earth? ²

During the first half of the nineteenth century such an attitude did not have much appeal for cynical Whigs, realistic Peelites or pushing Manchester liberals. For the most part, British Ministers were reluctant Imperialists who found colonies of settlement an expensive administrative nuisance rather than areas of economic exploitation or potential rival "shops". Even when they adapted Wakefieldian principle to Imperial ends they were more interested in ridding the mother country of redundant poor than in providing colonial landowners with controlled pools of neatly assimilable labour. The Imperial drive, in those days, did not come from Romantic Tories or from utilitarian free-traders of the Manchester School but from radical Benthamite Colonial Reformers, inspired by E. G. Wakefield's simplistic notions on land disposal and emigration. The cutting edge of Empire was not located in the United Kingdom at all but among assertive self-confident colonists who shared with English factory owners, shopkeepers, merchants and bankers the gospel of utility and the creed of progress based on "hard work, a practical expertise and down-to-earth ability to produce". ³

9. Emery Neff, Carlyle and Mill (New York, 1926), p. 120.
   Quoted Sandison, p. 3.
The difference between Australian Whigs and English Liberals lay for the most part in the fact that the latter were primarily interested in the economic development of a "Little England" whereas the "Australians" among the colonists were intent on the exploitation of a new Britannia in another world. In those days, before Joseph Chamberlain and a new generation of Imperialists provided British strategists and traders with an aura of pseudo-religious idealism, Liberal free-traders showed a minimum interest in the affairs of colonists who, the harder they worked, the more expert they became, and the more they produced, were all the more likely to drop like ripe fruit from the parent tree. While the colonists, on their part, were more interested in controlling the pace and direction of their own economic and political development, to meet the needs of an expanding market in wool, than in helping to spread bourgeois civilization to every quarter of the globe in accord with Wakefieldian principles.

During the 1840's, the Imperial Government and colonial graziers alike feared the growth of Chartism and American-style democracy. At the same time, just as English urban liberals used the threat of working class discontent to loosen Whig and Tory grip on the political reins, so colonial "Patriots" and "Exclusives" were ready enough to rally popular support behind their agitation to solve what they rightly saw as the essential political contradiction: the pragmatism and experience of men on the spot, who worshipped the God of Things as They Are, versus Downing Street bureaucracy and the Imperial idea loosely based on theories elaborated by Wakefield and the Colonial Reformers with a dash of humanitarian idealism injected by Exeter Hall. British Government and colonial administrators, notably adverse to abstract ideas and high-flown notions, seldom gave explicit recognition to Wakefieldian theory or
Exeter Hall idealism. Nevertheless, from 1831 onwards they consistently dallied with Wakefieldian ideas without, as Wakefield justly complained, making any attempt at a carefully-considered study of the best way to implement them.  

Basically, Colonial Reformers and Exeter Hall humanitarians criticised lack of system in British colonization and despaired at the official and public lethargy that accompanied colonial expansion. They had an accomplice at the Colonial Office in James Stephen, permanent under-secretary from 1836 to 1847, an ardent Evangelical who, while he favoured the extension of colonial self-government, was anxious not to sacrifice the welfare of the many to the few or indigenous coloured peoples to colonial whites. For all his hard-working devotion to high ideals "Mr. Mother Country" was never able to dictate colonial policy, in the manner sometimes suggested. Nor was he a convinced Wakefieldian. Not only did he deplore what he considered Wakefield's lack of truth and honour but held his theories incapable of exact practical application in the mathematical Benthamite fashion Wakefield demanded. Where Wakefield and Stephen agreed was in their mutual determination to exempt colonial land from colonial control in the interests of British subjects always and everywhere.

The drama that developed in Australia was similar in essence, if less intense and bloody, to the dramas Stephen and the Colonial Office faced in South Africa and New Zealand. Wentworth, like the Trekboers, saw salvation from Imperial restraint not only in self-government but in new lands beyond the boundaries, lands and peoples that could be put to productive use unhampered by the fetters of Downing Street. By the early 1840's, squatters had expanded to the bounds of easy settlement and Wentworth was not the


the only one who looked across the Tasman to New Zealand as a poten-
tial new Australia Felix, just as John Batman and the Port Phillip
Association had earlier looked across Bass Strait from Van Diemen's
Land. While, about the same time, Trekboers were persuading
Dingaan, the Zulu King, to put his mark on a document ceding Nat-
al from the Umzimvubu River to the Tugela, from the mountains to
the sea. 12

In 1840, two years after Dingaan had massacred Piet Retief
and his Trekboers,13 Wentworth and a Sydney syndicate bought the prom-
ise of virtually the entire South Island of New Zealand for a few
hundred pounds. Sir George Gipps justly disallowed the transaction
(thereby earning Wentworth's undying enmity) castigating the deal as
disgusting jobbery of the worst kind.14 Defending the transaction in
a two-day appearance before the Legislative Council Wentworth no
doubt felt, as Batman and Piet Ritief had felt before him, that
he was a pioneer helping to extend civilization to the waste places
of the earth, where "niggers" only knew how to grow pumpkins. He
may even have felt, in his Romantic rhetorical way, that he was
playing a part in what Carlyle called "a Mighty Conquest over Chaos",
adding to the "Epic of Empire", an epic written in "sea-moles, cot-
ton-trades ... Indian Empires, Americas, New Hollands ... "15 Even
so, his more immediate intent was utilitarian and self-interested,
concerned with opening new areas for exploitation at a time of drou-
ght, falling prices and mounting financial stringency.

Like the Trekboers in South Africa and the Mountain Men and
Santa Fe traders of America, Wentworth and the "Australians" who
composed the Australian Patriotic Association and its new allies among
the Exclusives were self-interested men who found direction and pur-
pose in asserting themselves against an alien and hostile environment.

p. 140.
14. Michael D. de B. Collins Persse, W. C. Wentworth (Melbourne,
15. Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present (London, 1843). Quoted Walter
They sought to facilitate the forces of production (land, labour and capital) against what appeared to them as the restrictions of outmoded political and economic relations. Americans were luckier than Trekboers or Australian squatters inasmuch that they had the tacit support of a national government eager to fulfil its assumed "manifest destiny" instead of facing the "contradiction" implicit in a distant Imperial government unaware of or indifferent to the problems and opportunities of men on the spot. On the other hand, Australian problems were small compared with those of Trekboers and New Zealand pakehas who had to deal with fierce native peoples. In Australia, nobody supposed the poor corrupted aborigines had any land rights.

Above all, the Australian situation demonstrated the difficulty of establishing real rapport between groups with opposing economic and political interests even when they belonged to the same race and were conditioned by the same cultural background. It revealed also the tragedy implicit when men are unable to make the enormous imaginative effort required to understand peoples and cultures other than their own. Like characters in Conrad's novel *Victory*, Australian squatters and bushmen, in common with South African Trekboers and New Zealand pakehas, considered themselves members of a superior race. They saw nothing more in the native life around them than "a mere play of shadows" which they entirely disregarded in pursuit of what, to aborigine, Maori and Kaffir alike, must have appeared "incomprehensible aims and needs". James Collier, a Spencerian Scot educated at the universities of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, summed up a typical educated Victorian view when he wrote:


There can be no question of right or wrong in such a case. The only right is that of superiority of race, and the greater inherent capability on the part of the whites; the only real wrong on the part of the blacks is their all-round inferiority and their inability to till the ground or even make use of its natural pastures .... Their disappearance was a natural necessity. It came about in obedience to a natural law. It was effected by natural processes, and followed on the lines of the substitution of vegetal and animal species all over the world. 16

So the seeds of racism flourished in circumstances beyond the control of Downing Street and Exeter Hall and quite outside the understanding of all but a handful of ultra-sensitive or exceptionally intelligent men and women in the colonies including, to their everlasting honour, a number of squatters who were able to see the aborigines as human beings in their own right and with their own culture and not as "an animal species" doomed to extinction or potential recruits for an Evangelical Kingdom of Heaven. Neither Wentworth nor Macarthur concerned themselves with the rights of aborigines and in the famous Lee case, when a Government Commissioner cancelled a squatter's licence following ill-treatment of aborigines, Macarthur took the squatters' part in the anti-Gipps agitation that followed. 17 The Liberals Robert Lowe and Archibald Nichie "despised a people they believed deficient in intelligence". 20 Poets Harpur and Henry Halloran deplored atrocities but saw the aborigines in Romantic unrealistic light as "noble savages". The mass of colonists were indifferent or contemptuous.

Among those who sympathised with the plight of the aborigines few had any constructive remedy to offer. The Aborigines Protection

19. Michael Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851, p. 67.
Society in London soon degenerated into a post office for sometimes exaggerated allegations of cruelty. Government policies were "strongly influenced through conscientious humanitarian movements of the day" but the "question of tribal rights was never raised ... it was assumed that they were footloose nomads, lacking all sense of ownership or attachment to particular areas". Polding had a sentimental interest in the picturesque aspects of aboriginal life and would have gathered them under the cloak of Benedictine missionary effort but he regarded Italian Passionist missionaries at Moreton Bay as "ignorant of the world and contracted in their notions". In Western Australia, Spanish Benedictines established a successful mission at New Norcia, north-east of Perth, which still survives.

In New South Wales, Congregationalist Lancelot Threlkeld pioneered the study of aboriginal linguistics although regarding his mission station as a failure because he made no converts. In 1840 he reported that few aborigines remained and Gipps consequently withdrew government support. The mission closed in December 1841. In evidence before a Select Committee on Aborigines in British Settlements in London in 1836 Broughton, who had set out with high hopes, despaired of Australian aborigines ever becoming good Anglican subjects of a benevolent British Empire. Only W. A. Duncan saw the situation in constructive terms as a matter of democratic conscience in a properly representative local government. Responsible government, once established, hardly fulfilled his hopes so far as the aborigines were concerned although he clearly saw the worm in the bud:

"Every person seems to have one object in view here, -the acquisition of wealth. The efforts of all, or rather every one, are directed to this end...into the minds of such men, an enlarged or philanthropic idea seldom finds ad-

mission... they only think of the government, when some misfortune tempts them to curse its inefficiency, in affording them protection for their persons and [their] property ... the cause of these evils is our want of a representative system. Let the people of Australia have only what they demand as a natural and indefeasible right ... that voice in the making of their laws which they demand as a free people, and then they will be seen to shake off that apathy and indifference [to the rights of others] which at present prevails ....

(ii)

To Joseph Conrad, who saw deeper into the paradox of Empire than most, a stealthy Nemesis lay in wait in exotic lands beyond strange seas for "many of the conquering race, who are proud of their wisdom, of their knowledge, of their strength". In Australia, Nemesis overtook many proud, acquisitive and aspiring men in the form of a severe economic slump. It spread more quickly and hit harder in New South Wales than in Van Diemen's Land, where the pastoral boom of the 1830's had been less spectacular. South Australia and Western Australia, not so dependent on wool, were almost immune from the eastern slump although each faced a Nemesis of its own.

The slump, a crisis of growth rather than a symptom of inherent economic instability, acted as a catalyst which clarified the problems of a society on the high road from penal reform to colonial capitalism. Among other things, it ended the political tensions between Exclusives and Emancipists, prompted landowners, squatters and some urban liberals to question laissez-faire orthodoxy, left


a latent glow of class-consciousness among working men and provided initial nurture for seedling political parties necessary for the growth of genuine responsible government. As W. A. Duncan saw it, property is speedily changing its possessors, and new social and political interests are gradually arising out of the general confusion.

The American Consul in Sydney reported in 1842 that the slump originated in the United States and was accelerated in Australia by declining prices. In 1838–39 a severe drought coincided with a 20 per cent drop in wool prices. In 1840 a fall in wheat and flour prices prompted wheat-growers to petition the Legislative Council for protection against imported grain. In New South Wales a sharp increase in the cost of labour followed the end of assignment and the cessation of transportation. These factors set the stage for catastrophe. Excessive imports on speculation from England led to a general price collapse accompanied by severe credit restriction, a dangerous rash of insolvencies and widespread unemployment. By 1843 Wentworth, who himself hovered on the brink of bankruptcy, was moved in his rhetorical fashion to declare:

The Colony is in a state of rottenness throughout. Our harbour is without ships; our city without trade; mechanics without employment; property without value.4

Despite repeated and bitter experience, economists today are by no means agreed on causes or cures for deflation and inflation. In the early days of colonial capitalism deflation seemed so much a visitation from heaven that Sir George Gipps called for a solemn day of fasting and humiliation when the effects of drought and low prices began to make themselves apparent. At St. James, the Lord Bishop of Australia pleaded with the Almighty:


O God, who orderest all things by thy never-failing Providence ... look down upon us, thy unworthy servants, who are suffering from the chastisement of our offences. We have sinned: ... in departing from thee, the living God, by a spirit of self-will and forgetfulness, by an excessive love of the things that are in the world, and by a neglect of thy most holy Word and Ordinances. Spare thy people, O Lord; spare them ...\textsuperscript{30}

In Scots Church, Dr. Dunmore Lang entitled his sermon, "National Sins the cause and precursors of National Judgments"\textsuperscript{31}, while Gipps himself probably had something of the same idea in mind when he told a restive Legislative Council in September 1842 that the quantity of "champagne and bottled porter consumed during the period of ... fictitious prosperity was enormous. Why," he added with an Evangelical disgust equal almost to Dr. Lang's Presbyterian zeal, "the whole country for miles, almost of miles, round Melbourne is strewed to this day with champagne bottles\textsuperscript{32}. Soon, however, Lang was blaming Gipps rather than Providence for the degree and extent of depression. The Governor, he declared, had sparked off the crisis by demanding high interest for Government balances at the banks. As the banks were highly competitive they had to obey this "imperious mandate" and were in consequence forced to enlarge their discounts and to take security for their advances, in the descending scales of Best, Better, and Good, till they crossed the line of safety [and descended to] Bad, Worse, and Worst. [With] these extraordinary facilities for all sorts of monetary operations, the rage for speculation [led to] the most unbounded extravagances of living...\textsuperscript{33}

Sir George Gipps should perhaps be forgiven his testy moralis--

\textsuperscript{30} W. G. Broughton, A Form of Prayer and Fasting to be used upon Friday, the Second Day of November next (Sydney, 1838).

\textsuperscript{31} John Dunmore Lang, National Sins the cause and precursors of National Judgments; a Sermon, preached in the Scots Church, Sydney, on Friday, November 2 1838.... (Sydney, 1838).

\textsuperscript{32} Quoted G. W. Rusden, History of Australia, Vol. 11, p.251.

\textsuperscript{33} John Dunmore Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, Vol. 1, p.292. 4\textsuperscript{th} ed., 1875.
ing. The irrepressible Dr. Leng was by no means his only critic. In far off London, equally testy Lord John Russell, Whig Secretary of State for Colonies from September 1839 to September 1841, shot off despatch after despatch reprimanding His Excellency in terms an irate schoolmaster might have used to rebuke an unsatisfactory prefect. Colonial extravagance, slack control of government expenditure, entire lack of foresight on the part of Gipps himself, his Lordship averred, were largely responsible for the trouble. In particular, Gipps pledged the land fund (which financed immigration) nearly a million sterling to meet the insatiable demand for labour now that the convict source had dried up. When revenue from land sales dropped from £316,000 in 1840 to £90,000 in 1841 the Governor was forced to draw on Government reserves in the banks. Russell regarded these proceedings with horror. His "peremptory instructions" not to issue any bounty-orders beyond the net amount of land revenue applicable ended:

I have not written this despatch without very sincere regret. I am deeply sensible of your claims to the respect and confidence of Her Majesty's Government, and of the difficulties in which you are placed by the pressure of local interests upon you. But it is my duty to record my disapprobation of an unauthorized proceeding which may affect the Revenue of this Country, and which, by unduly stimulating speculation, may be highly injurious even to those local interests which it was designed to promote. I shall endeavour, however, to the best of my power, to counteract the mischievous effects of your improvidence, for which you alone are responsible. 34

Dr. S. J. Butlin has shown that Gipps's policies had not more than a minor effect on the course of the depression. A convinced believer in laissez-faire he relaxed corn duties to relieve food shortages caused by the drought and affirmed his faith in "the principle that

34. Russell to Gipps. Quoted S. H. Roberts, The Squatting Age in Australia, p. 120.

35. S. J. Butlin, Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, 1788-1851 (Melbourne, 1953), passim.
all trade no less in money than anything else should be left unshackled and unrestricted". Lang's complaint was based on the allegation that in 1840 Gipps had helped inflate the speculative balloon by changing the policy of retaining the greater part of government revenue in the treasury by depositing growing receipts from land sales as interest-bearing deposits in local banks thus increasing the amount of money available for speculation. In fact, the amount was small compared with non-bank sources of credit and, as we have seen, fell off rapidly.

Gipps himself blamed speculators and the influx of capital from overseas. Within a few months of his arrival he advised Glenelg, Secretary of State from April 1835 to February 1839, "... capital is I believe flowing into the country faster than, for want of labourers, it can long continue to be advantageously employed". In 1841, when money was tight, he welcomed without enthusiasm the relief offered by the establishment of three new British loan companies although he doubted "that persons ... in the colony can by means of patient industry alone, afford to pay for any length of time, interest at the rate of ten per cent per annum ...". In his despatch to Russell he added a classic warning:

The large debt ... which the colony is by means of these Companies contracting in Great Britain will tend I fear to place it ultimately in the condition which the West India Islands have long been placed, in a condition that is to say, in which all, or by the far greater part of their produce will go to

38. Gipps to Glenelg, 2 June, 1838. H.R.A., 1, xix, p. 431
39. The British Colonial Bank & Loan Company; The Australian Trust Company; and the Scottish Australian Company.
England, to be distributed amongst Annuitants or Mortgages without any return to the Colony. 41

Wentworth agreed with Gipps that the source of infection lay overseas. With bitter venom he contended that "Jews and Companies of Usurers" in England were responsible for "the immense influx of foreign capital ... which encouraged the greatest excitement and [wild]speculation" that led to the 1830's boom and the Nemesis that followed. As early as 1819, Wentworth had argued that colonial income arising from the labours of primary producers was far from undergoing that minute and universal diffusion which are requisite for the maintenance of a constant internal circulating medium. Created in the first instance by the government in payment of the grain, meat, &c. furnished by the settlers, it is immediately handed over by them to the traders to whom they may be indebted, and from these again passes to the importing merchants, on whom they may be dependent for their supplies of merchandise, who in their turn eventually transmit it to their foreign correspondents. 42

In Van Diemen's Land the Sheriff, Thomas Bannister, anticipated Gipps's fear that British policies would drain the colony of capital. Unless the proceeds of land sales were spent internally, he argued, the colony would stagnate, "losing its very life blood in a great portion of its capital being constantly withdrawn from circulation, by being sent away and receiving in exchange but a pauper population ...." 43 In 1843, a Select Committee of the New South Wales Legislative Council echoed similar fears when it declared:

The circulating medium which, like the blood in the animal system, diffused life and activity through every part, has been withdrawn from use, and the Colony is now in a state of inanition. 44

41. Ibid.
42. Sydney Morning Herald, 16 September, 1843. Legislative Council Report.
44. Thomas Bannister, A Letter on Colonial Labour, and on the Sale of Lands in Australasia Addressed to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Hobart, 1833), p. 15.
Thomas Bartlett, surgeon in the 51st Regiment of Foot, also contended that payments to overseas investors drained the colony of capital.

A particular school of political economists, [he wrote] may consider it immaterial in what place the interest of money is spent, but it would not be difficult to prove, that when the interest of a large capital invested in a colony is spent in Europe, it is so much money lost to the small community in which it is raised...It is clear that it would be for the advantage of a colony to pay a larger interest for the use of his money to a resident capitalist than to the absentee proprietor in Europe.

Against all this G. J. Abbott, in his re-examination of the Pastoral Age, argues that local financial operations attending the expansion of the wool industry contributed more to boom and bust than the rise and fall of wool prices or the ebullience and subsequent panic of overseas investors. Established graziers and squatters made handsome profits from the sale of land, station improvements and the natural increase of flocks to crowding newcomers. The newcomers, often as inexperienced as they were adventurous and enthusiastic, found no difficulty in obtaining credit (often on slender security) to buy sufficient sheep to set up as "Shepherd Kings". From the beginning, English-controlled banks (the "Anglos" as colonists disparingly called them) refused to give credit on stock and land but there was no shortage of local speculators ready to oblige at ten per cent and higher.

Private capitalists were foremost in making straight-out loans to rural settlers, rather than the banks which disliked lending to adventurers deep in the bush, partly because rural profits and repayments were dilatory, and also because (before 1843) mortgages on live stock were unprotected legally. Bank directorates preferred to lend to townsmen or else through them as guarantors, men whom they knew as colleagues and shareholders, whose affairs were, geographically at least, more amenable to scrutiny. This meant that the banks were drawn into pastoral investment; indeed they were involved the more irresponsibly because of their indirectness, and by bringing a middleman into the transaction the final rate of interest increased.49

By the early 'forties the squatting tide had flooded most of the economic viable land (i.e. land with permanent water, good natural pasture and reasonably easy access to a point of export) so that more capital was needed to buy land or buy out successful squatters. In March 1841, that shrewd Scot, Neil Black, reported to his partner, T. S. Gladstone of Liverpool, that the back country was filling up and that the increasing number of sheep and cattle must soon have nowhere to pasture. "What shall then become of us," squatter-manager Black mused, "unless a new Fort Phillip is found to carry our surplus stock?"50 The pastoral boom had depended on readily available grazing and easily obtainable credit. The whole structure had been held up by an inflated credit currency which the Sydney Morning Herald, reporting evidence before a Legislative Council Select Committee, described thus:


50. Quoted Margaret Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, p. 132.
The usual mode of business is to open a debtor or creditor account with a town merchant or storekeeper, from whom they purchase their supplies, and through whom they dispose of the chief articles of their produce... So extensive is this system of drawing practised in the interior, that in nearly all rural districts these orders constitute the principle currency, they are the circulating medium, passing from hand to hand just like banknotes.

The result of all this was a succession of "Billy Barlows", the unfortunate newcomer celebrated in an early bush song:

When to Sydney I got, there a merchant I met,
Who said he would teach me a fortune to get;
He'd cattle and sheep past the colony's bounds,
Which he sold with the station for my thousand pounds.
Oh dear, Lackaday, oh,
He gammon'd the cash out of Billy Barlow.

When the bargain was struck, and the money was paid,
He said, 'My dear fellow, your fortune is made;
I can furnish supplies for the station, you know,
And your bill is sufficient, good Mr. Barlow.'

After sundry adventures that fill several more verses, including nine months without rain, Billy Barlow failed to meet his bill so a tall man on a black horse rode up with "a fi. fa. for poor Billy Barlow".

What I'd left of my sheep and my traps he did seize,
And he said, 'They won't pay all the costs and my fees,'
Then he sold off the lot, and I'm sure 'twas a sin,
At sixpence a head, and the station giv'n in.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh,
Quite down on his luck was poor Billy Barlow.

He took me to Sydney, and there they did lock
Poor unfortunate Billy fast 'under the clock,'
And to get myself out I was forced, you must know
The schedule to file of poor Billy Barlow.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh,
In the list of insolvents was Billy Barlow.

Newcomers like Billy Barlow were not the only ones to suffer. In fact, urban merchants and shopkeepers, who had provided the financial backbone — rickety though it proved — for the pastoral boom, suffered most. Early in 1842, the nominated Legislative Council threw out the lifeline that Billy Barlow grasped in the form of an Insolvency Act ("Burton’s Purge") which critics unfairly castigated as a means whereby "the dishonest and improvident could successfully cheat their creditors". Between the passing of this Act and mid-1849, there were 1,923 formal insolvencies in New South Wales, more than 600 in 1842 alone; in 1,198 estates there was no dividend, while a further 650 paid dividends averaging 2/3d in the £. Most of the failures were town dwellers, especially merchants and shopkeepers, although some squatters failed.

During the crisis a number of local banks crashed. On the mainland the Bank of Australia, the Sydney Bank and the Port Phillip Bank all failed in 1843. In Van Diemen’s Land, the Colonial Bank and Archers Gilles & Co. were forced to close and eventually (in 1849) the Derwent Bank had to follow suit. The "Anglos" survived because of their greater strength and the confidence this inspired. The desperate position in which many businessmen and local bank directors found themselves is revealed in the diary kept by Alexander Brodie Spark, former secretary of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce and deputy chairman of the Bank of Australia, a colonist of long standing and high repute who like Billy Barlow was forced into bankruptcy:

God help us, how awful a thing it is at our time of life, to be struck down from eminence

53. Passed 29 December, 1841; operative from 1 February, 1842.
56. S.J. Butlin, Australia and New Zealand Bank, pp. 90-1.
and affluence to utter poverty, and a young family looking up to us for support. 57

The whole period of boom and bust represented what Niel Black saw as "a kind of feverish excitement closely allied to insanity" in which "he who can coolly watch ... and take advantage of the first symptoms of its wearing off may get out of ... well." 58 English and Scottish-based banks and mortgage companies agreed with Niel Black. They could now take their pick among would-be borrowers (at 12½ per cent) and wait for the tide to turn. Squatters were able to survive better than the merchants and shopkeepers who financed them because they had mutton to eat, sheep to boil down for tallow, family backing or reserves of their own. The level-headed among them could see that, despite the fall in wool prices, there was nothing to suggest a catastrophic decline in the demand for wool. Industrial Britain would continue to need the colony's staple, as she needed cotton and other raw materials, for a changing and expanding economy.

As things turned out, the aggregate income from New South Wales wool increased throughout the early 'forties and new British investment in the colony was greatest in 1840 and 1841 although something like panic set in during 1843 when the slump was at its deepest before a slow laborious recovery. During the 'forties wool prices were lower and costs higher but sheep continued to multiply and beyond the boundaries the number of stations increased from 806 in 1841 to 879 in 1843. 59 North of the Murray, the population of the squatting districts doubled between 1841 and 1846 and in the same


59. Australian, 16 November, 1843.
Decade 256

period the amount of wool exported from the whole colony more than
doubled. In the end the crisis righted itself, leaving a confu-
sion of social debris in its wake. Meanwhile, there was no lack
of prophets crying in the wilderness with salvation to offer as well
as sins to bewail.

(iii)

An anonymous contributor to the *New South Wales Magazine* in 1843
ascribed the economic state of the colony to over-confidence on the
part of borrowers, lack of prudence among investors and the prev-
salence of "paper money". The writer did not, however, offer any
specific economic or political nostrums. He simply concluded that
colonists were suffering want in the midst of plenty not from any
natural cause, such as earthquake, plague, pestilence or famine
but from mismanagement on the part of either government or people,
or both. However, there was no shortage of commentators ready
to repair the omission. Among the remedies discussed were a na-
tional bank, tariff protection, land reform, legislative control
over the rate of interest and action to alleviate distress among the
unemployed.

The first positive moves to arouse public and official interest
in means to combat the economic slump were made during the six months
preceding the *New South Wales* elections of 13-17 June, 1843, to fill
the 24 vacancies on the new Legislative Council authorised by Stan-
ley's Constitution Act of 1842. Wentworth and the "Australians"
were prominent advocates of government action while Macarthur used
his favourite method of personal intervention in an effort to get
something done. Isolated voices among the Radicals agreed with the
"oligarchy" on the need for government action although Wentworth was

60. Barrie Dyster, "Prosperity, Prostration, Prudence", Alan
Birch and David S. Macmillan (eds.), *Wealth and Progress...
pp. 55-7.

61 "The Affairs of New South Wales", *New South Wales Magazine,
Vol. 1, No. 5, May, 1843."
inclined to shrug off such support. The Establishment in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land remained convinced upholders of free trade and laissez-faire and in this had the backing of Duncan's Chronicle, Lowe's Atlas and most of the other newspapers, although Duncan was inconsistent on economic and labour matters, his reason approving orthodox economic views which his heart rejected.

Robert Cooper, Radical Emancipist distiller and pioneer entrepreneur, took the first practical step by organising a public meeting on 5 April, 1843, to discuss the economic situation. Cooper was a prospective candidate for one of the two Sydney seats and eventually teamed up with Captain O'Connell, son of Sir Maurice O'Connell, Commander of the British forces in New South Wales, who angled for the Catholic vote although a non-Catholic himself. Their opponents were W. C. Wentworth and Dr. Bland. Cooper's meeting failed for want of attendance. A second meeting on 13 April was little more successful. However, Wentworth and Bland now joined Cooper in signing a petition calling on the Mayor to convene a public meeting although Wentworth made it clear from the beginning that he considered the most practical method of agitation would be for the colony's elected representatives to take action through the Legislature after the election.

At the Mayoral meeting on 8 May there was no responsible support in a rowdy gathering for Cooper's suggestion that the law courts dealing with contract and insolvency matters should close down for six months or a year. Wentworth, who had been involved in the failure of the Bank of Australia two months before, declared his opinion that interest rates should be controlled. Outlining his views on the reasons for the colony's difficulties he said that immense sums of money had gone to pay for immigrant workers, the sudden cessation of transportation had embarrassed wool-growers and
an "immense mania for land speculation" had pervaded the whole community. The meeting ended with a simple resolution calling on the Governor to convene the Legislative Council as soon as possible after the forthcoming elections. Supporting this Wentworth said causes and remedies should be left to the new legislature.62

Unlike Wentworth, Macarthur was not prepared to wait for the first session of the new Legislative Council for action to combat deflation. Writing from Camden Park to the Colonial Secretary, Deas Thomson in May, 1843, he asserted that "unless the Government come forward to support the public credit, the whole community will be involved in bankruptcy and almost irretrievable ruin". As "a thorough and effectual cure ... no mere palliative", he suggested that the Government issue exchequer bills bearing interest at five per cent to persons who could offer "undoubted landed security", the interest to be applied to subsidising further immigration. He added:

In this way, the relief required will be afforded; the interest of money will be brought to its fair level as compared with the rate of profits, and the future means of advancement by the creation of a fund applicable to Emigration will be secured.63

Thomson did nothing, which was understandable in view of Sir George Gipps's and Sir John Franklin's reiterated declarations that colonists should have patience and allow events to work themselves out. Opening the nominated Legislative Council session in 1842, Sir George had urged everybody to wait and see how the economy would shape before despairing for the future.64 A year later, at the first of the elections, he cautioned against any undue hasty assumption that the new partly representative Council, or any other body,


64. H. S. Roberts, The Squatting Age in Australia, p. 124.
could legislate against economic ills. Not long after, if the often-repeated apocryphal story is true, he assured geologist-clergyman the Rev. Branwhite Clarke, who had recovered gold specimens from the Blue Mountains, "Put it away, Mr. Clarke, or we shall have our throats cut!"

In Van Diemen's Land, Michael Fenton, Thomas George Gregson and other landed proprietors agitated for a usury law to ease the burden of debt charges. John West in Launceston attributed the depression to "the enormous rate of interest" and "the boundless extravagance of credit and expense" but persisted in his belief that "Laws for the regulation of commerce are naturally sought by particular interests but ... are generally useless, often vexatious, and sometimes insufferably inquisitorial and oppressive". Franklin agreed. The Lieutenant Governor also considered that it would be impossible to enforce a usury law. He thought the eight per cent suggested by reformers too low in any case.

In the Port Phillip District settlers were equally despondent. "Melbourne is no longer Melbourne," Robert Russell, the Town Surveyor, confided to his private diary on 30 March, 1843. "No money, no credit, no trade, nothing but failures ...." In common with most members of the Establishment he had no solution to offer. "We must learn the dear lesson of experience ... at any cost, and shall be the wiser for it in the future perhaps". Landowners were not so resigned. Many agreed with Wentworth that "an exorbitant rate of interest" had helped precipitate the crisis. They also argued that the southern districts would not have suffered so severely had the whole surplus revenue of Port Phillip been devoted to its development.

In Melbourne, immigrant unemployed "clamoured for Government employment" and in Sydney the Colonial Observer vigorously supported popular protests against a loan being raised to bring out additional workers. Gipps made funds available through the Benevolent Society to feed Sydney unemployed and in Melbourne the Superintendent, Charles La Trobe, "directed some to be set to work on the streets; and others to form a road between Melbourne and Sandridge". In June, 1842, when the Government reduced the unemployment wage from £1 to £18/- a week the men went on strike and, according to Garryowen, the prompt action of Police Magistrate Major St. John averted a serious riot. "Pitching aside wheelbarrows and shouldering picks and shovels, the men formed into line, and marched, about 200 strong, upon the town," reported Garryowen. They crossed the Yarra by punt and marched along Collins Street to the Superintendent's office. Failing an interview there "they grew much excited, and muttering what they would and would not do, passed along William Street towards the Flagstaff Hill".

All would have been well if it had not been for "a man armed with a big cudgel" who exclaimed "in a stentorian voice that 'it was better to fight and die than live and starve ...!'" At this juncture, Major St. John "wheeling his horse round, took the fellow near the butt-end of the ear with the hammer of his riding whip, and 'floored' him". Garryowen, who always made the best of a story, claimed that the "pluck and promptitude" of this act plus "a few conciliatory words well seasoned with promises" persuaded the men to disperse without further incident. There were no arrests and no riots. Twelve months later, the elections were less pacific and resulted in one death and several injuries.

This was not because unemployment emerged as the main election issue either in Sydney or Melbourne. As polling day approached

70. Margaret Weidenhofer, *Garryowen's Melbourne*, p. 49.
sectarian issues obtruded and caused most of the hot blood. Rather oddly, Duncan afterwards suggested that economic issues tended to heal political distinctions between the gentry and the democrats. Michael Roe suggests that what he really meant was that the depression ended any immediate hope of a "People's Party". Instead, a distinct working-class political movement developed but not in time to affect the results of the 1843 elections although by 1848, when the depression was virtually over, the leading newspapers carried advertisements, signed by Radicals Henry Parkes, J.K. Heydon and J.R. Wilshire, advocating the return of Robert Lowe for Sydney at the forthcoming general election.

Lowe, like the English Liberals, had no hesitation about rallying working-class support for essentially middle-class objectives: secular education, government economy, free trade, Laissez-faire and a franchise wide enough to clip the political wings of what was by then his particular h?te noir, Wentworth and the squatters. Rather than cherishing any real understanding of working class interests he deplored the need to "inflame the minds of the masses" against Imperial control and believed implicitly that the only way to ensure the greatest happiness of the greatest number was through utilitarian principles and the axioms of classical economics.

Thus, far from representing working class interests, Lowe and the Atlas provided the catalyst which transmuted the "Australianism" of the early Wentworth and the Emancipists into an emigrant version of English utilitarianism. The result, in the long run, was a middle-class interest which endeavoured to keep an even balance between conflicting versions of an Australian identity: on the one hand, the Romantic individualism of the later Wentworth and the squatters, essentially Australian but rural-orientated and emerging finally as a conservative National Country Party; on the other

74. Michael Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, p. 95.
hand, the Romantic collectivism of a non-Communist left-wing radicalism seeking a largely illusory ideal harmony detached from social and political realities but providing exotic coloured threads in the home spun weave of a largely ameliorative middle-of-the-road democracy.

In contrast to Lowe, Wentworth from the beginning set forth mercantilist arguments based on the facts of colonial development rather than on conventional English economic theory. What he preached in his Statistical, Historical and Political Description of ... New South Wales eventually became the conventional wisdom of free enterprise and labour throughout Australia. Advocating an "imposition of so high a duty on the importation of spirits from abroad, as would amount to a prohibition" he argued:

It would afford employment, and thus impart health and vigour to the agricultural body ......; it would place the means of the colonists on a level with their wants, and by creating a good and sufficient medium of circulation in the place of the present worthless currency, would give rise to other channels of industry, and to the speedy establishment of an export trade...With these irresistible arguments in favour of this measure, it must be evident that the cause of justice and morality would be violated by any further unnecessary delay in its adoption.  

During the 1830's, another "Australian", Sir John Jamison, spoke up for tariff protection and stressed the importance of the state in the colonial economy. "I much fear, if we are not fostered and guided by the assistance of the government, and are left to the slow course of time, to force us into a knowledge of our own interest, that the Colony will long languish and be retarded in its prosperity". In 1842, a West Australian colonist said much the same thing when he advised the Perth Agricultural and Horticultural Society to secure prohibition of agricultural dumping and "obtain

75. Craufurd D.W. Goodwin, Economic Enquiry in Australia (Durham, N.C., 1966), p.4. I am indebted to Professor Goodwin for most of the examples that follow.


77. Sir John Jamison, Report of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of New South Wales, for 1830, by the President (Sydney, n.d.), pp. 64-5.
for its producers such legislative protection as will save them from being obliged to gamble upon the chances of accidental importation.78

Professor Goodwin points out that in the depths of the depression even some ardent free traders came close to endorsing high tariffs. Archibald Michie, Lowe's associate on the Atlas, "was led by his reading of Bacon combined with observation of colonial circumstances almost, but not quite, as far along the road to infant industry protection as was John Rae in Canada".79 Francis Campbell made an Abstract "of all the Corn Laws that have been Passed from Time to Time" and concluded that "local corn laws for the colonies had become vital just at the time they were being abolished in the mother country". Campbell concluded:

It has always appeared to me that Agriculture must either be encouraged by some legislative protection, or we shall be obliged at last to go back to the mast and the acorns, the beans and the lentils of the golden age, without the advantages of its simplicity and innocence.80

James Martin, who early came under the influence of Lowe and edited the Atlas for two years (May 1845 to August 1847), before being elected to the Legislative Council, nevertheless remained one of the few early New South Wales politicians consistently to favour protection as the best means of encouraging the growth of colonial industry. Henry Parkes, who "entered public life on the coat-tails of Lowe",31 carried with him the memory of England's protective Corn Laws keeping up the price of bread for the poor and remained a free-trader for life. The culmination of protectionist efforts to offset the effects of the depression was a customs bill passed by the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1843 but disallowed by Imperial authority for Lord Russell and the Whigs tended to support the

78. Journal of the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of Western Australia, 1. (1842), Appendix, p.v.
80 A Pythagorean (Francis Campbell), An Abstract of all the Corn Laws, which have been Passed from Time to Time, for the Regulation of the Export and Import of Corn... (Sydney, 1844), pp. 7/4.
81. Elena Grainger, Martin of Martin Place, p. 54.
vigorous middle-class Anti-corn Law League founded in 1839 and successful in 1846. In New South Wales interest in protection declined with the easing of the depression but Martin continued one of its few staunch advocates. His criticism of laissez-faire can be summed up in a speech he made after the election of 1848 when Parkes and other Radicals backed Lowe:

The transparent error of the free traders consists in the assumption, that under their system all persons will be fully employed. If such were the fact, then probably it would be a sound principle generally to buy in the cheapest market. But the fact is far otherwise.\(^82\)

Robert Lowe remained throughout a convinced and eloquent upholder of laissez-faire and free trade. Two years before the British Corn Law was repealed he headed a New South Wales Legislative Council Committee which reported against proposed Australian duties. In the Atlas he cited English and French classical economists in support of liberal economic orthodoxy. He had plenty of support. W.A Duncan in the Chronicle and the Weekly Register "endorsed doctrinaire laissez-faire as emphatically as any Manchester liberal". The Sydney Morning Herald, the Australian and the Launceston Examiner were equally doctrinaire and the New South Wales Magazine proposed that the motto on the banner of all colonies should be "Free Trade and Laissez-faire".\(^83\) Henry Carmichael preached against protectionism as heresy against the gospel of the greatest happiness for the greatest number.\(^84\) William Westgarth in Melbourne and Daniel Chapman in Hobart were equally eloquent expounders of current middle-class conventional wisdom.

82. James Martin, Speech Delivered in the Legislative Council, on Tuesday, the 2nd Day of July, 1850, on Moving the Second Reading of a Bill to Abolish all Duties on Brandy and Spirits Distilled in the Colony of New South Wales, from Grapes and Grain of Colonial Growth (Sydney, 1850), p.13.


84. New South Wales Magazine, 1843, p.401.

85. Sydney Morning Herald, 3 April, 29 April, 1844.

86. William Westgarth (1815–1889), merchant and historian; his books included The Colony of Victoria ... (London, 1864); Thomas Daniel Chapman (1815–1884), Hobart merchant, active anti-transportationist; Premier of Tasmania 1861–63.
After the 1843 elections the diversity of economic opinion between "Australians", who advocated old-time mercantilist policies, and "Liberals", who stood for classical economic orthodoxy, came to a head in bitter rivalry between Wentworth and Lowe for domination of a partly-elected Legislative Assembly which consisted of independent members with shifting personal allegiances to the loosely-associated factions which then composed "the House". First, however, we must consider the climate of opinion that preceded representative government in the Australian colonies before highly-disciplined parties became the sine qua non of democratic politics and colonial self-government.
Chapter Nine

Prelude to Democracy

Three different paths, at all times, have seemed to lead to the ideal life. Firstly, that of forsaking the world. The perfection of life here seems only to be reached beyond the domain of earthly labour and delight, by a loosening of all ties. The second path conducts to amelioration of the world itself, by consciously improving political, social and moral institutions and conditions .... there is a third path to a world more beautiful, trodden in all ages and civilizations, the easiest and also the most fallacious of all, that of the dream. A promise of escape from the gloomy actual is held out to all; we have only to colour life with fancy, to enter upon the quest of oblivion, sought in the delusion of ideal harmony. After the religious and the social solution we have here the poetical. —— Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, 1924.
The myth that Australia pioneered an egalitarian social democracy which originated in the bush is so well embedded in the national consciousness that it has come to be regarded by many as an indisputable truism, one of the "universals" which American scholar Louis Hertz envisages as "sinking beneath the surface of thought to the level of an assumption". As an explanation of Australian political development and the growth of nationalism the myth falls far short of the facts. Marxist theory, which locates the social dynamic in economic relationships, is nearer the mark but scarcely encompasses the complexities of human motive and action in Australia or anywhere else. As most contemporary Marxists would readily agree, the economic structure is not the only reality nor are political and legal superstructures entirely conditioned by economic considerations any more than ideologies are conscious deceptions evolved to mask class interests. The concepts of liberty or justice, for instance, go deeper than an unconscious attempt to rationalise or legitimise the existing bourgeois state and legal system.

Certainly, in Australia, utilitarian self-interest ended the long-standing and apparently irreconcilable political rivalry between Exclusives and Emancipists but the antagonism lingered and had deeper roots in human nature than economic self-interest. Material considerations may well have prompted James Macarthur and William Charles Wentworth to join forces in negotiating a transfer of political power from Downing Street to colonial landed interests, while at the same time resisting its extension to "the people", but conservative fear of adult suffrage and fully respons-

1. Louis Hartz, The Founding of New Societies, pp. 3-5.
sible government had a firmer base than mere self-interest. Macarthur and Wentworth shared Alexis de Tocqueville's well-grounded conviction that the principle of equality contained the seeds of servile conformism, social barbarism and economic ruthlessness as well as the prospect of political freedom, a more broadly-based culture, and controlled economic progress. Conservative doubts of fully democratic processes were shared by thoughtful liberals, men like the Reverend John West in Van Diemen's Land, who crystallised what eventually became the social and political credo of the "liberated" Australian colonies:

> It is infinitely important that intelligent and upright men should occupy their true position in public affairs. A reluctance to face the virulent and brutal opposition of low adventurers must be naturally felt by every refined and educated man. The future character of these colonies will depend on the courage and perseverance of the respectable classes. The widest extension of suffrage cannot be long resisted, and qualifications for office founded on property will inevitably break down. But the reputable and intelligent will be able to command the public mind if they think it worthwhile to instruct and conciliate it ... As might be expected the prevailing spirit of the colonies is democratic: the democracy of the middle classes, not the mob. There are no permanent springs of crime: the instinct of order, everywhere powerful, cannot but be strong where society is prosperous.  

In their suspicion of democracy, the respectable classes of New South Wales did not differ greatly from respectable opinion in England. By the 1840's, "democracy" had not yet become sanctified as the indispensible hallmark of the British way of life. To most men of substance, in Australia as well as England, the word carried an aura of rabble-rousing irresponsibility and social gau-cherie. In his Reminiscences, Carlyle recorded the Romantic Tory view. "The last time I saw Southey," he wrote, "... our talk was long and earnest: topic ultimately the usual one, steady approach of democracy, with revolution (probably explosive) and a finis incomputable to man".

Macaulay, utilitarian spokesman for the new liberalism, was equally apprehensive and regarded universal suffrage with "dread and aversion". In his speech on "The People's Charter" (1842) he declared that the first use a democracy would make of its new political power would be "to plunder every man in the kingdom [with] a good coat on his back and a good roof over his head". While Dickens, for all his detestation of utilitarian Gradgrinds expressed the muddle-headed benevolence of moral enlightenment and seldom displayed a clear-headed acceptance of political democracy or any realization of social realities backed by a positive theory of reform.

Democracy, when it became respectable, was bourgeois rather than universal democracy — not letting every man have a share in the government but the creation of party machines designed to capture the executive in the interests of those who considered themselves most fit to govern for the greatest happiness of the greatest number by refraining from interference with the sacred rights of property or the freedom of men to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. The most penetrating critics of bourgeois democracy were not utilitarian radicals, like Andrew Jackson in the United States, who wanted to make every man a capitalist, but Tory Romantics who saw the possibility that universal suffrage might widen and deepen man's acquisitive instinct and reduce religious and cultural values to quantitative rather than qualitative criteria. The transition they loathed was not the transition from monied interest to mob interest (though they feared the latter more than the former) but what they saw as disintegrating values. For them democracy, whether bourgeois or universal, was the dissolvent destroying what Matthew Arnold called "the European system of dominant ideas" based on Christianity and

the classics, replacing it with self-interest and the cash-nexus. In the age of bourgeois democracy, Arnold asked the vital question, though he cast it in prissy terms, ".... who or what will give a high tone to a nation? That is the grave question".

Tory critics found the Manchester Party, Chartism and the United States equally suspect although the Manchester Party had no revolutionary intent and the United States showed little sign of degenerating into mob rule. Even Bourgeois democrats, who aspired to the status of Christian gentlemen, rejected "American democracy" when it flaunted itself with "suspenders" showing, elastic-sided boots on the table and spittoons in every corner. In America, the assertion of social equality too often expressed itself with a crudity that shocked the humanitarian benevolence of Dickens and the shabby-genteel fastidity of Fanny Trollope, Anthony Trollope's erratic mother, as well as the ultra-Tory prejudices of Captain Frederick Marryat who set out, in his Diary of America (1830), "to do serious injury to the cause of democracy". Earlier, Mrs Trollope had gone to America hoping to find a free unshackled England. Soon she discovered that social equality had its drawbacks. Crowds jostled her in the streets, hotel managers sat her servant at the same table and refused to serve tea in her room unless she could prove she was ill. Worst of all, everywhere and anywhere men had the filthy habit of chewing cigars and incessantly spitting without respect of place or person.

Fanny Trollope's acid castigation of democratic habits in her best-selling Domestic Habits of the Americans (1832) caused so much offence in the United States that in popular American usage "to spit" became "to trollope". Dickens, when he began his celebrated journey to America in 1842, lacked the snobbery of Mrs Trollope or Tory prejudices of Captain Marryat although he had


almost certainly read their books and was justifiably irritated at the American habit of pirating his and their books. His eventual distaste for democracy in practice owed something to his predecessors in the same field but probably more to affronted feelings at the lack of privacy which Americans then, as now, denied their distinguished visitors. Certainly, the dry disillusion of *American Notes* and the satirical exaggerations of *Martin Chuzzlewit* reflect raw feeling and show nothing of the analytical awareness of contemporary American political and social trends revealed in what is still one of the most pertinent studies of the seedbed of the future — Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835-40).

Australia, in 1842, had no pretensions of being a democratic state, socially or politically, in town or country, although before the decade was out the Evangelical *Christian Standard* was ready to concede that democracy was inevitable and Edward John Hawksley's *People's Advocate* already carried its bannerhead quotation from Lamartines: "Political economy has hitherto occupied itself about the production of wealth. It must now occupy itself about the distribution of wealth". Early in the century, Governor King in his "Report on the present State of the Colony" (1806) expressed the current Establishment view of "democrats" as dangerous and subversive mob agitators. Grumbling about the quality of the few free settlers he complained that some of them possessed "a troublesome disposition .... strongly tinctured with the democratic spirit of the times". However, he did not doubt his ability, provided the authority of the magistrates was maintained, to frustrate "pernicious .... and improper attempts" to subvert "the peaceable and industrious part of the colony".

More than thirty years later, Bishop Broughton had sufficient

insight to see, although he disliked the prospect immensely, that, "... in all such communities as this, the people have a tendency to [democracy] ... the natural man likes it and there is but little here to curb the natural man's propensities".6

The Lord Bishop of Australia did not mean that the natural man was the bushman. He meant that from the beginning Australians were outside Arnold's "old European system of dominant ideas". Hero man had built from the ground up. The materials he used and the ideas that inspired him were imported from the Old World though he did not have, in anything like the same degree, to divest ideas and institutions of what Carlyle saw as "incredible uncredited traditions, solemnly sordid hypocrisies, and beggarly deliriums old and new".11 Australia was spared the troubles attending what Carlyle called "the deep-lying struggle in the fabric of society", the "boundless grinding collision of the New with the Old".12 The old was sixteen thousand miles across the world and Imperial edicts, testy instructions based on ignorance of local conditions rather than Imperial dictates, took six months to reach from Downing Street to Macquarie Street. The new lay all around, stretching across the Tasman to New Zealand and the Pacific, extending westward and northward into blue immensities that swallowed Romantic dreamers like the lost Leichhardt but offered league after league of deep-bosomed Perosphenean pastures for men to love and rape. The real conflict in Australia was, as Huizinga saw it in America, between man and nature and, initially at least, nature offered a face of easy access and an environing sea replete with possibilities. Both the new world of America and the new world of Australia "exemplified man's desire to improve this world rather than concern himself with hope of the beyond or with reenactment of past glories".13

11. Quoted Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 49
12. Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times" (1829), Selected Writings (Penguin, 1971), p. 84.
The difference between Australia and America lay in the fact that in America a United States Congress, compromise product of a successful nationalist rebellion, was pledged to financial chastity and the protection of local agriculture and industry. Australia, on the other hand, was still a series of separate colonies tightly under the wing of a mother country which, from a colonial point of view, often showed the disposition of a Mother Grundy. Congress placed no impediments on the westward flow of Santa Fe traders, pioneering fur trappers (the Mountain Men), land-hungry frontiersmen eager to dispossess the Indians for what revolutionary Texans had persuaded most Americans to believe was their manifest destiny — to annex Mexican territory beyond the Red River and in California and British territory in Oregon. Although initially hesitant to offend mighty England, by the end of 1844 American politicians and people were prepared, if necessary, to fight Mexico or Britain, or both, for disputed country so that the "area of freedom dominated by a democratic people could be embraced within boundaries that extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific." In contrast, Whitehall and Downing Street were still reluctant to modify their versions of Wakefield's now outdated concepts of restricted settlement in the interests of civilization and a stimulating generative relationship between the price of land and the supply of labour. Thus, in Australia, the "Ancient Nobility", the "new Gentry" and "Squatters" alike felt themselves equally circumscribed by Imperial concepts of land tenure and equally irritated by humanitarian regard for the rights of "lesser tribes without the law", whether they were aborigines, convicts, ex-convicts or "bloody immigrants".

With this background in mind, it is easier to understand the comparatively rapid realignment of political forces in New South

Wales following the arrival of Sir George Gipps and the publication of the Transportation Committee's Report. Politics are essentially a bid for power and the Australian Patriotic Association's agitation for increased local representation in the colonial legislature and more control over Crown Lands and local revenue represented a real political challenge. By contrast, the points at issue between Exclusives and Emancipists had been always local and limited to the peculiar circumstances of a peculiar colony. They embodied no great principle of liberty, of morals, or human progress. Rich Emancipists had been able to fill an initial gap between the mercantile landed gentry and assigned convicts. Their struggle was for social recognition of accomplished economic fact and did not represent one embattled class or interest seeking to replace another. The essential point of difference between Wentworth and Macarthur was not so much disagreement over the rights of Englishmen as over the rights of ex-pimps, petty thieves, dissolute gamblers, forgers, blackmailers, embezzlers and sexual perverts who, once they had paid the penalty the law exacted for their misdeeds, wished to resume their former status or aspire to better.

The principle of equality before the law for freeman and ex-convicts alike went unchallenged in England where criminal and ex-criminals were a comparatively small current in a vast ocean of respectability. Social convention and usage could adjust easily enough to an occasional Wakefield or a returned Sir Henry Browne Hayes. Things were different in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land when convicts comprised upwards of forty per cent of the population with a further large percentage of ex-convicts and the off-spring of convicts. Once these percentages had dropped and there was little prospect of any continuation of transportation on a large scale the heat went out of the Exclusive-
Emancipist rivalry although late into the 'forties Colonel Mundy could still insist, "There is a line of moral demarcation .... peremptorily impassable". Mrs. Charles Meredith was probably nearer the mark when she said, "Wealth, all-powerful though it be,— and many of these emancipists are the richest men in the colony, -- cannot wholly overcome the prejudice against them, though policy, in some instances, greatly modifies it". Colonel Mundy agreed sufficiently to admit that although, "Their place on the social scale is assigned and circumscribed .... merchants and men of business generally meet them on equal terms in the negotiation of affairs in which their wealth, intelligence, and commercial weight sometimes necessarily involve them".

Merchants and men of business who met on equal terms in the negotiation of mutually profitable economic affairs found no difficulty in combining to protect or further their interests politically. The Exclusives had to shift their ground a good deal more than the Emancipists and their supporters. The Transportation Committee's Report (1838) had sounded the death-knell of convictism even if, like King Charles II, it took an unconscionable time a-dying and, unlike Charles, offered no apologies for the trouble it caused. For the Exclusives, convict assignment had been an easy moral burden to bear. Indeed, they could claim with some justification that in the half-century since the first settlement the grant of convict labour and freehold land to enterprising wool farmers had laid the foundation for the prosperous state of the colony Governor Bourke had left for Governor Gipps to inherit. Britain's new policy of disposing of the redundant poor through emigration, allied with the virtual discontinuance of transportation to New South Wales, eroded the old economy. The original Macarthur ideal of a new landed aristocracy in an


16. Mrs. Charles Meredith, Notes and Sketches of New south Wales, pp. 50-1.
Antipodean Arcady where justice was done if masters rewarded good servants and exacted stern retribution from the recalcitrant, as James Macarthur himself did, was no longer possible. New methods were needed to grapple with new times and Macarthur was quick to grasp the bourgeois habit of putting money as well as men and land to work.

(ii)

The depression helped clarify the political attitudes of the various factions that competed for influence in New South Wales. During the formative years after establishment of the partially-elected Legislative Council of 1843 these factions were not, as they were later, "firmly based on patterns of behaviour and systems of allegiance". Nor were they, in the Burkean sense, mere "knots or cabals of men who have got together avowedly without any public principle" having "no connexion with the sentiments of the people". They consisted of politically-minded men loosely held together by common interests or common principles but not bound by party discipline to "some particular principle in which they all agreed".

Certainly common interests rather than common principles held together the most important and the most influential of these groups, the "Australian" or "Patriot" faction in which, after 1841, Exclusive James Macarthur emerged as a leader alongside Emancipist-orientated W. C. Wentworth. The one thing Macarthur and Wentworth had in common, other than their material interest in cheap land, cheap labour, and fine wool, was that they were native-born: a fact that had initially tended to keep them apart rather than bring them together. It did nothing to rally other and poorer "Currency" to their support.


In contrast with the conservative "Patriots", liberals and radicals, immigrant or Currency, were often agreed on principles but lacked a common interest to focus their anti-Patriot attitudes into effective political programmes. W. A. Duncan, who endeavoured through his newspapers to mould an effective opposition to what he considered the Macarthur-Wentworth oligarchy, stands out as an example of the political ineffectiveness of high principle uncommitted to a particular class or economic interest. This has always been the irony of history: high ideals unattached to economic interest or a political party beat seraphic wings on empty air yet, brought down to earth, they are soon besmirched with the dross of material interests.

On the other hand, Utilitarian Robert Lowe, whose laissez-faire principles provided a consistent thread through his many political tergiversations, acted as a catalyst which, together with John West's Anti-Transportation League, helped transmute the colony's inchoate liberalism into an effective political force which in due time reduced the Wentworth-Macarthur oligarchy to political impotence. Wentworth persisted in mistaking the squatters for a genuinely conservative force. Instead, they were inadvertently revolutionary and, having changed the face of society, either went over to the liberals or fought a losing battle in defence of the privileges Wentworth and the "Australians" gained for them.

Lowe, however, saw the squatters for what they were: an economic interest seeking political dominance. He supported Gipps against Wentworth and Windeyer's mercantile measures to rescue the "Shepherd Kings" from the "Money Barons"; joined Wentworth and the Pastorelists' Association against what he considered Gipps's unconstitutional measures; went over to West and the Anti-Transportation league in opposition against the squatters, who wanted cheap
and docile labour, and against the Imperial authorities, who sought to reopen the colonies for the disposal of prison waste. Finally, having enriched himself materially in strict accordance with utilitarian principles, he returned to England to continue a brilliant career with greater prospects on a wider stage.

In England, at the unromantic age of forty, James Macarthur had courted and won the hand of Emily Stone, daughter of a Lombard Street banker. Although sufficiently in love to write delicate and appropriate verses to his lady, the Squire of Camden remained practical enough to appreciate that he had much to learn from his wife's people, who included such successful international financiers as the Barings, representing the spearhead of English social thrust and economic progress. The immediate political struggle lay between Peelite Conservatives and Manchester Party Liberals, not between Whigs and Tories, and the Peelites were sufficiently aware of economic and social winds of change to trim their political sails accordingly. So far as Australia was concerned, manufacturers and high finance were for the future although sheep raising was already big business and called on the same qualities of self-interest and adventurous individualism that were turning England into the workshop of the world.

By the early 1840's, Camden Park was worth £200,000 and James, with his brother William, owned thousands of acres of freehold within the boundaries, sixty valuable freehold acres in Sydney and shared directorships on the boards of several colonial companies. Backed by James's wife's family capital, the Macarthur brothers now turned squatters and economic self-interest soon dictated that they join others with similar interests, Exclusive and Emancipist, in the struggle against Wakefieldian idealism and against a Downing Street intent on charging colonists for Imperial

police supervision of no-longer useful convicts and on preserving colonial lands for future generations of British-born emigrants.

Wentworth, meanwhile, stood more or less where he had always stood: on the Whig principles of Parliamentary supremacy, the Church Act, the development of commerce and the security of property, especially landed property, for he held the peculiar notion that only wool-growers and shipping merchants contributed to the wealth of the colony. Exclusives and the Establishment had mistaken the early Wentworth for a fierce democrat who threatened to lead unruly mobs against privilege and property. In fact, he was a rich, able pushing young man anxious to belong to the party of power but with a family background dubious enough to make it possible for John Macarthur, that aspiring staymaker's descendant, to reject him as a possible son-in-law. Rebuffed by the Exclusives, also a party of new men with new interests rooted in Whig rather than Tory tradition, Wentworth had preferred to be a leader of the socially despised and rejected rather than knuckle down as a lickspittle adherent of the "Ancient Nobility".

While rich or hopefully respectable Emancipists accepted Wentworth's leadership readily enough there is little evidence to suggest that the under-privileged or the disinherited looked up to him for long as the "Liberator". There is plenty to suggest, however, that he wanted no such political backing. As early as 29 May, 1835, he made clear his belief that poverty and ignorance went hand in hand. While he welcomed men of talent, education and experience as members of the newly-formed Australian Patriotic Association he insisted on a membership fee high enough to exclude "ignorant pretenders". This and the draft constitution he prepared for the Patriotic Association prompted his former admirer Charles Harpur, poor enough and educated enough to cherish the Currency title,


to write:

Once he would have the Franchise Low.—For why?
His "brandy-faced" supporters then were poor!
But these grown rich (by any means be sure)
He turned his jacket and would have it high!
Being priced too cheaply by the grasping crew
Of Darling's reign—he was the Many's man!
Now that we've something of sage Bentham's plan
To rest in—hark! he's roaring for the Few! 22

Wentworth was never the many's man although the many delighted
to applaud the rough rhetoric which provoked Governor Sir Ralph Dar­
ing into dismissing him as "a vulgar ill-bred fellow, utterly un­
conscious of the common civilities, due from one gentleman to an­
other ..." 23 Macarthur never succumbed to what the Sydney Herald had
once termed "the force and filth" of Wentworth's advocacy of represen­tative colonial government but he had not been back in the colony
two years before he made his famous declaration, ".... with regard
to what was usually termed the emancipist question, his firm opin­
ion was that the more advisable course would be to allow it to die
away, so that in future years it might be altogether forgotten that
such a stain ever rested on the colony". 24

A year later, the erstwhile rabidly anti-Emancipist Herald
(now under new management and about to become the Sydney Morning
Herald) was sufficiently alert politically to disassociate itself
from its former policies and insist that the distinction between Em­
cancipist and Exclusive must be "... cancelled, and cancelled for
ever". 25 Meanwhile, the Australian, ostensibly the organ of the
liberal-Emancipist interest, showed itself lamentably insensitive
to current political realities by declaring early in 1842 that Went­
worth's day was done. "His opinion is worth nothing. He stands
alone and is altogether discarded." 26 Rather than standing alone Went­
worth now often had James Macarthur standing beside him on the plat­

form signing the same petitions, voicing similar sentiments in different tones: one coarse, bulky, loud, assertive, impatient and insulting; a colonial Danton; the other tall, thin, refined, unassertive, patient to the point of preferring no action to over-hasty action, studiously polite to opponents, a genuine rather than a spurious colonial gentleman.

Both Wentworth and Macarthur saw wool and what Wentworth, in his flamboyant way, called "the Shepherd Kings" as the economic and social backbone of colonial existence, as indeed they were. Both opposed cessation of transportation although Macarthur was quicker to appreciate its moral deficiencies and inevitable end than Wentworth or Bland. Both were prepared to urge the need for government action to combat economic slump, placing practical expediency and what they saw as the public interest on a higher level than reiterated Establishment and newspaper insistence on the virtues of laissez-faire. Wentworth although educated in the school of Adam Smith and the classical economists, was always a Romantic individualist rather than a utilitarian pedant. Macarthur, a student of de Tocqueville, still had his heart in the old regime and felt no sense of sacrilege in falling back on mercantile principles if he saw the need.

Following the decline of the Emancipist-Exclusive feud in the early 1840s, the various new factions did not begin to shape themselves until after the elections of June 1843 with the appearance of Establishment and Opposition groupings in the Legislative Assembly and tentative factions outside. The new systems of allegiance began to show themselves as early as January 1841. Macarthur’s declaration that the birth stain should be forgotten in the common fight for a representative (but not too representative) assembly was made at a public meeting to protest against Lord John Russell’s abortive £10 franchise Constitution Bill (printed in the Australian

27. Russell’s Bill was read for the first time on 6 July, 1840 and abandoned on 14 July after presentation of a petition from the colony protesting against the withdrawal of land revenue from appropriation by the Legislative Council.
on 12 November, 1840) his Wakefieldian land policies and proposal to dismember the colony. While opposition to "dismemberment" helped unite Exclusives and Emancipists, who feared it would reduce the importance of Sydney and damage the economic interests of the landed gentry, public debate and the appearance of counter-petitions, demanding separation for Port Phillip and Moreton Bay, indicated that new factions were forming although, by 1841, the new interests had not clearly emerged.

In the Catholic Chronicle, W. A. Duncan, deeply suspicious of the reconciliation between Macarthur and Wentworth, endeavoured to define new issues and provide a platform that would unite the Irish, colonial radicals and free immigrant workers against what he considered the new oligarchy of rich Emancipists and pure merinoes. In an article written to celebrate the first anniversary of his newspaper Duncan clearly set forth his intentions:

There is in this country no PEOPLE recognised as a portion of the body politic. We hear of the interests of the merchants, of the landholders, of the church, etc., but no one hears of the existence of a PEOPLE in Australia. We know, however, that something of the kind does exist, and we hope to be able to produce such a people, well instructed in their duties and rights, on that day when constitutional government shall be extended to us by our gracious Queen.

As Duncan was to discover to his bitter disappointment there was no such thing as the "people". There were rich Emancipists, several of whom financed the Chronicle and eventually quarrelled with his attacks on Wentworth, who cultivated the Catholic Church as well as Emancipists for political purposes; there were poor Emancipists and Currency Lads, shopkeepers and merchants, landholders and professional men, even one or two artists and litterateurs, rural workers and the ubiquitous squatters. There was

30. Ibid, 4 August, 1840.
nothing, except for a brief space/Sir George Gipps and his policies, to unite the articulate among these diverse interests into the sort of People’s Party Duncan had in mind.

At the meeting on 7 January, 1841, called to denounce Lord John Russell and his Wakefieldian Land and Emigration Commission, "the people" shouted Duncan down when he tried to defend Wakefieldian principles and "dismemberment" as a means of protecting the rights of ordinary immigrants and settlers against "a clique of sheep counts". Duncan pinned his faith on the persistent Catholic ideal of a contented yeomanry and wrote pamphlets advocating good husbandry and cultivation of olives and vines. His efforts were premature and Arcadian compared with the realities of the Australian environment and the contemporary economy although he had unlikely allies, so far as small farms were concerned, in rabidly anti-Catholic John Dunmore Lang and the increasingly pro-squatter Australian although the newspaper was careful to point out that the squatters were "the producers of the great staple export of the Colony — the founders of the public wealth".

A year later, Wentworth, Bland and Macarthur were all active in the appointment of a Committee to petition Robert Peel’s new Conservative Government, with Lord Stanley as Secretary of State for Colonies, for immediate representative government. The Wentworth-Macarthur version of what was good for the colony did not go unchallenged. On 12 February, four days before the first public meeting in the Victoria Theatre, the short-lived Free Press, a newspaper designed to appeal "to the immigrant operative majority of the population of Sydney", urged:

The elective franchise should be universal suffrage rather than limited by any paltry property qualification, which in this colony is no criterion at all of competency to discharge the sacred duty of an elector … [In this way] the numerical preponderance of the immigrant population will be secured.33

33. Australian, 11 May, 1844.
34 Free Press, 12 February, 1842.
Duncan, who insisted that wealth was "the worst of all tests for the franchise", did not go so far as this. "You must allow every intelligent householder a voice in the choosing of his representatives," he insisted, "or you can never govern this colony in security and peace." New South Wales, he added, was peculiar. The so-called gentry lacked the idea of public service which was the rationale of the English aristocracy while wealth was "for the most part the companion of ignorance and assumption, and often brutality and ignorance". This was a palpable hit at the Macarthur-Wentworth alliance of Exclusives and Emancipists but the sentiment did not please his rich Catholic Emancipist backers. Duncan contended: "We should consider a representative government...

which excludes the entire operative class, amongst which we class the small farmers, as infinitely worse than the present system of non-representation." 37

The preliminary meeting to organise public support for the Macarthur-Wentworth petition was held, Duncan complained, at midday when shopkeepers, business men and tradesmen were unable to attend. No such evasion could be alleged against a public meeting called for 16 February. The "people" were there in full voice if not in full strength. J. McEachern raised a furore by talking about the rights of man and suggesting that "some understanding ought to be come to in regard to the proposed extent of the franchise". Macdermott heatedly said he "did not wish to see representation guided only by acres, and sheep and cattle".

James Macarthur, who had previously disowned support for Russell's Whiggish £10 franchise, said he was prepared to leave the details of a new constitution to the judgment of the new Conservative Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Stanley. He refused even

35. Chronicle, 5 March, 1842.
36. Ibid.
40. Sydney Herald, 17 February, 1842.
to consider Macdermott's provocative proposal to discuss the franchise which, other speakers claimed, would hand over power in New South Wales to a "mob of low Irishmen". Amidst uproar the Sheriff, who was in the chair, adjourned the meeting. Such conduct as he had seen that night, he declared, almost made him believe that the colony was not yet fit for a representative assembly.

Both the Australian and the Sydney Morning Herald rose to condemn the "people" and defend the "Patriots". On 22nd February, the Australian declared that the "only foundation of a good government is the principle that property is the directing, and numbers the watching and controlling power ... Democracy in theory is the glittering essence of freedom ... in practice it is the worst of slavery, it is the creed of the slave". While the Herald, on 28 February, the morning of the adjourned meeting, reminded colonists that they were called upon to decide "whether they would have their rights and privileges as Englishmen, or that vile democracy which has led to so much anarchy and confusion in different parts of the world."

At his Episcopal Palace on 17 February the Lord Bishop of Australia wrote to his friend Coleridge in England expressing despair at the direction colonial politics had taken. He condemned the native-born for lack of "loyalty or of veneration for the dominion under which they live .... They soon pick up the shibboleth of democracy; but of monarchy and its concomitants we see nothing and they .... consequently know nothing". He also deplored the pastoralists' preoccupation with worldly matters because among them he had hoped to find his best supporters. "Your riches are corrupted," he told landholders in County Durham a few months later, "or have rotted away," he added, mindful of the inroads economic depression had made on colonial affluence. The only hope, he told Coleridge, was the establishment of a colonial House of Lords which might encourage loyalty and adherence to English ways.

41. Broughton to Coleridge, 17 February, 1842. Microfilm, N. L.
The adjourned meeting at the Australian College on 28 February was attended by fewer of "the great unwashed" and proceeded in a more orderly fashion. MacDermott apologised for his earlier heat and explained that he was a moderate and not a Radical. He favoured not universal suffrage but a more liberal franchise than the conservatives favoured. This was in accord with the moderation Duncan advocated as the best basis for a united approach to the British Government.

We would subvert nothing that is established [Duncan wrote] ... We acknowledge the rights of birth, the rights of office, and the rights of education and talent ... [The people] oppose not the distinctions of Queen, Lords, commons, governor, or judges, or any lawful distinctions: but they do set their face against unfounded assumptions on the part of men who are, in a potential sense, their equals; and many of them, in a moral and intellectual sense, their inferiors.

Macarthur accepted Macdermott's apology for letting his tongue run away with him but insisted that it did not diminish his [Macdermott's] advocacy of the rights of man "a doctrine which might dazzle the vulgar with the semblance of liberty but was really a meteor blaze of a wild and erring ambition of the many to tyrannize over and destroy the few." The meeting elected a committee to draft a representative constitution but excluded Macdermott because Macarthur refused to sit if Macdermott were elected. According to Duncan, Wentworth and Bland, both elected to the drafting committee, encouraged Macarthur to exclude Macdermott:

The [oligarchy] affected to despise these men.... refused to be associated with them !!!! ....

The Colonial Observer, Lang's new paper, was equally bitter: There has been a ringing of changes in the last ten days on the pet phrases, vile democracy, Colonial Jacobinism, Chartistism, etc., etc., ... the plain English of which is: Let the Colonial fran-

42. Colonial Observer, 2 March, 1842.
43. Quoted Margaret Payton, William Augustine Duncan, 1811-1885. Unpublished M.A. Thesis (University of N.S.W., 1969)
45. Chronicle, 1st March, 1842.
chise be raised so high that the future representation of the Colony shall virtually be the same family Compact that it has hitherto been, and the future Colonial constituency be mere horned cattle and pure merinos. As things turned out, the drafting committee was redundant. Lord Stanley had already framed a Bill and submitted it for comment to Edward Macarthur in England. The Bill became law on 30 July, 1842, and details of its provisions reached Gipps on 8 October of the same year. Macarthur had been right in his willingness to leave Lord Stanley with the task of protecting property and privilege against "vile democracy". Twenty-four elected members of the thirty-six provided in the new Legislative Council were to be qualified by possession of freehold worth £2000 or £100 a year; electors by freehold worth £200 or £20 a year, compared with Whig Lord John Russell's proposed £10. Furthermore, the Act empowered the existing nominated Legislative Council to set the boundaries of electoral districts and distribute representation. This it promptly did in the Electoral Districts Act of 1843 which gave 47,000 townsfolk, including the inhabitants of Sydney and Melbourne, six members and eighteen to 66,500 country dwellers. Domination of the new Council by landholders and squatters was assured. "Patriots" were not so happy at other provisions in the Constitution Act of 1842. Stanley not only retained the Imperial grasp on the disposal of Crown lands but earmarked £81,600 a year (a considerable part of the colony's revenues) for official salaries and the provision of public worship. In particular, colonists resented the Land Sales Act of 1842 which the Colonial Office intended as an integral part of the new constitution. This laid down that no Crown lands were to be sold at less than £1 an acre and that only half

47. A.C.V. Melbourne, Early Constitutional Development in Australia, p. 287.
the proceeds were to be spent on migration, the other half in accordance with instructions issued by the Secretary of State. In addition, 15 per cent of the gross proceeds of land sales was to be spent for the benefit of the aborigines.

The seeds of the next big struggle between colonists and the Establishment were planted not in what the Land Sales Act laid down but in what it failed to say. No provision was made for granting security of tenure to squatters depasturing stock outside the boundaries. This despite a minute James Stephen, who sometimes glimpsed the vision splendid beyond the narrow streets and fogbound purlieus of Dickensian London, scribbled on one of the papers he passed to Colonial Land and Immigration Commissioners:

If I might hazard a prediction founded on my experience in analogous Cases it would be that .... the Squatting interest will prove too strong for the Government and the Legislature, and that licences of occupation will slowly but surely ripen into proprietary titles especially now that Parl. has fixed a minimum price at which a large portion of this vast Territory must for many years to come be unsalable...Doctrines about the Sale of Crown Lands at a high or fixed minimum price are mis-applied to the Case of a vast pastoral country like New South Wales. Be that as it may, it seems to me impossible to do anything at present to arrest the danger of [Squatters pleading possession]."?

Mr. Mother Country's words were prophetic but before that particular danger reared its head the colony was faced with its first election for the new Legislative Council and the efforts of the "Patriots" to devise means of easing the impact of the depression on town and country alike.

The Stanley Act became law in July 1842 and the first election was set down for mid-1843. In the same month, and the succeeding month, the old nominated colonial Legislative Council approved bills to incorporate Sydney and Melbourne as cities with elected Municipal Councils, to take effect from 1 January, 1843. Elected municipalities were an Imperial idea pressed on colonists by Governors eager to make property-owners pay for civilized amenities in the burgeoning towns. In Britain, the reformers who prompted the Reform Bill in 1832, changed the direction of advanced education and shook the complacency of the Established Church, also attacked the venality and inefficiency of town corporations that dated back to the Middle Ages. As good Benthamites, they obtained a Parliamentary Commission to condemn the old corporations and in 1835 Parliament enacted legislation to rehabilitate civic institutions and launch what it hoped would be an era of efficient, honest and representative local government.50

The new Victorian towns, which benefitted from this legislation and the humanitarian craze for sanitation that followed, developed into nurseries for democracy and trade unionism as well as avenues for middle class domestic display and the romantic efflorescence of aldermanic taste for pseudo-Gothic architecture.51 This was doubly true of Australia, highly urbanised from the beginning, where no medieval stews hampered civic development although the first inhabitants of Sydney did their best to create the antipodean equivalent. Nevertheless, despite lack of decent roads and proper sanitation neither Sydneysiders nor Melburnians showed any particular enthusiasm for taking over the direction of their own affairs. Gipps

50. Michael Roe, *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers*, Vol. XIV, 1 December, 1966. This paper gives a summary of British municipal history and details developments in Van Diemen's Land for which there is no space here.

tried initially in 1840 when the matter was dropped because of disagreement on whether Emancipists should be eligible as councillors or not.

In South Australia, Governor George Gawler had more success with his Colonial Municipal Corporation Ordinance, introduced in August 1840 on instructions from London. The Municipal election held on 31 October 1840 was the first formal poll held in Australia. The result, as behoved £20 franchise electors in a town where society was "good...cordial and unceremonious," established a respectable corporation composed of public-spirited men of what Governor Gawler considered liberal (i.e. middle-class) feeling with James Hurtle Fisher, "a wily lawyer much given to hair-splitting" and former Resident Commissioner for the South Australian Company, as Mayor. Before long faction broke up the initial cordiality between Governor and Council and between councillors and aldermen.

In 1843, despite his reputed liberalism, George Grey, Gawler's successor, replaced the Council with a Commission. When an elected Council was restored in 1853, James Hurtle Fisher was again Mayor.

The Bill to incorporate Sydney as a city passed the Legislative Council on 20 July and the first municipal election was set down for 1 November, 1842. The Act conferred the right to vote on men of twenty-one and over who occupied premises of an annual value of £25. A similar Act incorporated Melbourne where municipal elections were set down for 1 December. In the same year Perth gained an elected Town Trust which proved "largely ineffective." In Van Diemen's Land, from 1845 on, successive Governors "laboured to establish urban councils in a form acceptable to their subjects and useful to the executive." Two conservative

Governors, Sir John Eardly-Wilmot and then Sir William Denison, endeavoured to reconcile free settlers to the notion of some degree of local self-government against wide-spread resentment at what was said to be taxation without representation. Opposition to the Colonial Office-inspired Municipal Bill (1845) became a major item in the attack on Wilmot's Government and Denison had to rally Emancipist support and what the Colonial Times dismissed as the "Slumocracy" to establish a pro-government Hobart Council on a £10 franchise open to Emancipists and those holding a conditional pardon.

In Sydney, election day "was peculiarly auspicious", reported the Australian, "and cloudless skies appropriately ushered in the first National use of representative privileges. Heaven smiled upon the exercise of our new-born freedom, and seemed to offer a fortunate omen". To reinforce heavenly benignity hospitable candidates added bounty in the way of "eatables and drinkables", especially drinkables. "The festive nature of the day was particularly shown in three wards .... Gipps, Bourke and Macquarie, where all comers, rich and poor, were entertained ...." Among the spectators were crowds of aborigines, "a larger attendance of the sable lords of the soil, than has, we believe, been seen for some years", reported the Australian. "Whether they were attracted by the elections or not, we cannot tell, but we cannot but regret .... the improper and cruel practice of supplying them with spirits...." The Australian added:

It is scarcely necessary to observe that the day was kept as a general holiday throughout the town, and the people manifested a thoroughly English spirit of rational festivity. In a word, the first Municipal election has passed off in a manner which must be highly gratifying to every well wisher of Australia."

60. Ibid.
61. Australian, 2 November, 1842.
The "English spirit of rational festivity" moved a mob of about one hundred "Young scoundrels" to abuse Samuel Lyons, the rich Emancipist auctioner, who denied allegiance to any political faction but reputedly controlled the Australian Patriotic Association's political machine. The rioters broke the windows of his George Street residence and frightened the old Emancipist with threatening language. The result rather than the conduct of the first Municipal election added to conservative misgivings. The leading "Respectables" from among the social élite were almost universally rejected in favour of the middling classes. In his despatch reporting the election result Gipps listed the occupations of the successful candidates: two tanners, two builders, two solicitors, two publicans, three butchers, seven merchants, a miller, draper, cabinet-maker, tailor, druggist and one "esquire".

Among the elected were several reputed radicals, including that "Old Sweat" Henry Macdermott, wine and spirit merchant, moneylender and land speculator. Nevertheless, neither the new Council nor its successors did anything particularly helpful for working men. Although often denounced as "a leveller, a chartist, a Robespierre, a rebel", Macdermott owed this reputation to his fiery temper and sense of social insecurity plus a gift of the gab, rather than to any settled radical convictions. He was impatient at loose talk about the Rights of Man and only doubtfully in favour of universal suffrage. Like his fellow-councillor James Robert Wilshire, who conducted the largest tannery in the colony, Macdermott had intimations of respectability and represented the rising urban "middling classes" rather than the workers or the dispossessed.

Melbourne's first election also favoured the middling classes although there was little choice in a new raw town quite unlike Sydney in origin or social composition. The Port Phillip gentry


were mainly squatters living out-of-town and, according to the Reverend John West, "although a superior class" their habits required time "to recover from the deteriorating action of bush life". On 1st December, the electors returned twelve councillors who, according to Garryowen, were "a fair average representation of the then commercial, professional and industrial interests of the community...." They comprised two doctors, two general merchants, two wine and spirit merchants, a newspaper proprietor, an editor, a brewer, a master-builder, a butcher, and a publican. Five were Scotch, four English, two Ulstermen, and one native-born Currency Lad. "There was no great excitement," recorded H. G. Turner. "In one ward there was no contest, but altogether there were seventeen candidates for the twelve seats. The highest of the successful candidates received only 136 votes, and the lowest 64".

The election of twenty-four members for the newly-constituted Legislative Council of New South Wales took place in June, 1843. Nomination and polling days in Sydney and Melbourne were accompanied by what a Sydney eye-witness described as "scenes of riot and ill-managed merriment .... several houses were broken into and a man was killed on Brickfield Hill". Gipps confirmed this in his official account of the elections. The Sydney election, he reported was marked by "mild riots" and the loss of one life. Wentworth and Bland won the Sydney seat against Robert Cooper and Captain Maurice O'Connell. In Melbourne, "the mob got quite out of hand, despite... the efforts of a dozen mounted police, and the formal denunciations of the Riot Act, which the magistrate proceeded to read ... the riot culminated in the storming of a house in Elizabeth Street, where the proprietor ... retaliated by firing a pistol out of an upper window and bringing down a bystander ...." In both places

64. John West, The History of Tasmania, p. 528.
the violence proceeded not so much from acerbated class feeling or heated political principle as from drunkenness and religious rivalry spurred on by the fact that in Port Phillip Dr. Lang and Catholic Edward Curr were among the candidates.

Lang was at the bottom of the poll for five members to represent the Port Phillip District, nine votes ahead of the sixth candidate, Sir Thomas Mitchell. In Melbourne, Edward Curr and Henry Condell, the Mayor and a brewer by trade, were the only candidates. Lang persuaded Condell to make a last-minute bid against the popular Curr, who expected to be returned unopposed, and canvassed the anti-Catholic vote so successfully that Condell was returned with 295 votes to Curr's 261. In his History Henry Gyles Turner blamed Lang for the "regrettable installation of the wars of 'Orange and Green'" which continued to bedevil southern politics, a state of affairs "inexcusable in a country where civil and religious liberty were the right of all". The result, a few years later, was "the disgrace of martial law upon the City of Melbourne, with soldiers bivouacked around camp fires in Elizabeth Street, to the scandal of the more intelligent members of the community".

The five years of the first representative assembly in New South Wales saw the birth pangs of Australian democracy although neither Wentworth nor Robert Lowe, who between them dominated the House, had democratic aspirations. Stanley's Constitution Act and the local Electoral Act that supported it placed the wool-growers and their mercantile associates in the seats of power. With Wentworth as leader their object was representative not democratic government. Nor did Wentworth enjoy undisputed control of the Legislature without party whips or agreed policies to help him. Consequently, in attempts to win support he often resorted to quasi-democratic methods of agitation and was not always successful.

Lowe, whom Gipps had nominated feeling assured that he would support laissez-faire principles against the wild backwoodsmen Wentworth represented, did not hesitate to call on "the people" for support, not only against Wentworth’s mercantile economics but against Gipps’s alleged unconstitutional methods of raising and disposing colonial revenues. To Wentworth’s chagrin Lowe often succeeded in rallying support against the squatters on the one hand and Imperial authority on the other. He of all men, a newly-arrived immigrant with a keen eye for the main chance, took the watchwords of liberty and progress from the hands of the "Australians" and proclaimed the virtues of representative government not as a guarantee of squatter dominance but as the badge of middle-class constitutional respectability.

Gipps opened the new Legislative Council with a plea for cooperation in the common interest.

The Council [he said] is composed of three different classes of persons — the representatives of the people — the official servants of Her Majesty — and of gentlemen of independence — the unofficial nominees of the Crown. Let it not be said or supposed that these three classes of persons have, or ought to have, separate interests to support — still less that they have opposing interests, or any interests whatever, save that of the public good. Let there be no rivalry between them, save, which shall in courtesy excel the other, and which of them shall devote itself most heartily to the service of their common country.70

It was a vain hope. Before the session was over Wentworth habitually referred to elected members as "the opposition" while Lowe, nominated by Gipps as a support for official laissez-faire, displayed real independence by judging each matter on its merits insofar as these merits appealed to a rational utilitarian fresh

from England and an yet without local prejudices. In a House before party whips and agreed party programmes, Wentworth did not always succeed in securing a majority and Lowe's temperaments struck some as the manifestations of a false heart and an oily tongue. Nevertheless, over the next five years those two men dominated colonial politics. If they did not strive to excel each other in courtesy, as Gipps had wished, they genuinely convinced themselves that the policies they espoused were best in the service of their common country.

The new assembly's earliest efforts were directed against the economic miseries of the time which were, as an irregular amendment put it, "increasing with frightful rapidity, and likely to involve in ruin the whole community". A Select Committee was appointed under Richard Windyer, whom Lang called "the Joseph Hume of the Council", to consider "means of staying further evil consequence to be apprehended from the monetary confusions, lately and still prevalent in the colony". The Committee shirked following Wentworth's lead against high interest rates allegedly levied by "Jews and overseas usurers" but recommended legislation for the introduction of "Pledge Certificates" and "Land Board Notes" backed by the credit of the community. In the debates that followed Lowe "worked hard for the Governor" who withheld the Royal Assent.

Wentworth continued to devote his energies attempting to rescue the squatters from the effect of the depression. Against Gipps and the official party he carried a Lien on Wool Bill, which Lowe approved, a measure which permitted pastoralists, against all English precedent, to raise money by the alienation of "things moveable", in this instance livestock, and wool still on the sheep's back. Gipps allowed himself to be moved into recommending its adoption. According to its champions the law "arrested ruin, protected cap-


72. Richard Windyer (1806-1847), barrister, landowner and politician, who migrated to Australia in 1835 from London where he was parliamentary reporter for The Times. Joseph Hume (1777-1855) with Francis Place, secured the repeal of the Combination Acts which gave workers the legal right of free bargaining.
ital, and encouraged labour ...." Although supported by a petition from Lang, Wentworth failed by 21 votes to 12 to secure passage of a Bill to reduce interest by legislative action.

(IV)

In most of these matters Lowe, who opposed Wentworth's massive oratory with sardonic wit and sneering contempt, was usually able to repay his debt to Gipps without compromising his principles. The situation changed when the depression ceased to provide the compulsion behind colonial political agitation. Lowe remained true to principles rather than to his friend and patron when in April and May 1844 Gipps touched off the most fundamental issue dividing Government and Opposition: the use and ultimate ownership of Crown lands. Gipps's famous Squatting Regulations were in themselves comparatively innocuous. Indeed, they opened the way for squatters to obtain security of tenure by purchasing runs over an extended period. Basically, Gipps tried "to assert and maintain the rights of the Crown to ownership of land beyond the boundaries, as against the growth of a prescriptive right on the part of the squatters through long occupation." There were other and more immediate considerations and these, especially the attempt to extract more money, caused most of the trouble.

In particular, Gipps needed revenue to subsidize immigration which had virtually ceased because the normal source of subsidy, the sale of Crown land, dried up during the depression. The squatters, whom Gipps in his more euphoric moments considered "the real discoverers of the Colony .... the Pioneers of Civilization", occupied huge tracts of land for a £10-a-year licence and peppercorn quit-rents hardly anybody bothered to pay. Here was an


obvious alternative source of revenue, particularly as the squatters were eager for more immigrant labour to replace the assigned convicts they had lost. Wentworth, for example, occupied 15 stations and paid £20 a year. The notorious Ben Boyd held for the payment of a mere £80 a year the equivalent of a small principality.76 Others occupied seven or eight miles of Crown land but owed rather than paid quit rent for one or two.77

Despairing of stimulating a consistent Colonial Office concern for the immediate and practical problems of pastoral occupation, as compared with Wakefieldian theory which he disapproved, Gipps attempted to "devise an acceptable compromise between the rights of the Crown and the long-term interests of the whole community, and the reasonable claims of the squatters". What he succeeded in doing was to ignite the smouldering rage men on the spot felt for Wakefieldian theorists, Exeter Hall humanitarians and the lethargy, indifference and ignorance of the Mother of Parliament. By his own action, the Governor set himself up as the scapegoat for all the accumulated resentments of the colonists, whether "Shepherd Kings", bankrupt or near-bankrupt merchants, impoverished shopkeepers, immigrant mechanics or the unemployed.

This almost universal feeling of exasperation, engendered by the depression and confused with claims for responsible government, probably accounts for the temporary unity of all classes and most interests against Gipps. Barrie Dyster suggests that diverse interests recognized "total community interest, a mutual interdependence (economic, rural and constitutional) in which the licensed grazier and his produce was the sine qua non for the integrity of the fabric, and for the prosperity of each of its constituent parts."78 As G. J. Abbott points out, Dyster over-states the obvious mutual interdependence recognised by the pastoralists themselves in resol-

76. Peter Burroughs, Britain and Australia, 1831-1835, p. 317.
77. Gipps to Stanley, 3 April, 1844, H.R.A., 1, xxiii, p. 509.
78. Peter Burroughs, Britain and Australia, p. 302.
80. G. J. Abbott, The Pastoral Age...
tions passed at the Royal Hotel Sydney on 9 April, within a week of Gipps's first Regulation, the genesis of the Pastoralists' Association which now replaced the Australian Patriotic Association as the spearhead of colonial agitation. Wentworth was the leading figure in both.

James Collier draws a parallel between the squatters' struggle for tenure and the struggle between the fief-holders of medieval England and the Crown as step by step feudal chieftains emancipated themselves from obligation to their suzerains and acquired an absolute legal guarantee for the rights of possession. Certainly, squatters and stockmen hated booted, braided, quasi-military Land Commissioners and their armed posses of mounted police as much as later gold-diggers hated Cold Commissioners and the police. As Professor Roberts points out, "men in the bush were speaking of loaded bullets in their carbines and of holding the ranges by force but this was little more than a braggadocio flourish to the resolutions, "no less injudicious than indecent" Gipps called them, carried with wild acclamation at the initial Pastoralists' Association meeting in the Royal Hotel and at similar meetings in Melbourne and throughout the countryside.

Even Lowe, who supported Wentworth and joined the Pastoralists' Association, declared at a dinner given in honour of Wentworth, "If the Colonial Office perseveres in its present policy, the bloody and expensive lesson of the United States of America will have to be read again .... " Broughton, who rightly saw Lowe as a greater threat to an organic society than Wentworth, feared the worst. "The people ..." he wrote, "already talk of resistance and rebellion." Georgiana Lowe, Robert Lowe's wife, wrote home to say, "If you read the newspapers we send, you will see a great excitement is going on; even rebellion is spoken of." Lang, who like Lowe was more concerned at what he considered Gipps's unconsti-

82. S. H. Roberts, The Squatting Age in Australia, p. 239.
83. Quoted Ruth Knight, Illiberal Liberal, p. 116.
utional methods than with the rights of squatters, wrote to the Press declaring that the colonists were justified in declaring their independence and calling, if necessary upon France or America for help.

All this was merely froth on the great wave of public indignation that virtually swept Gipps from office. In New South Wales, only Duncan and his Weekly Register saw Gipps and the Crown as a people's bulwark against the wool-growing oligarchy but Duncan had no popular backing and his Romantic concept of "the people" lacked any economic base or cohesive self-interest. Broughton yearned for a genuine colonial conservatism devoted to Throne and Church as a barrier against the urban moneyed interest and rural barbarism. Lang, sniping right and left from the perimeter of his own ego, continued to provide a vigorous challenge to squatter ascendancy but there were too few Langites to provide any sort of political impetus to his trenchant advocacy of the people's rights.

As things turned out, the militant Pastoralists' Association, backed by Lowe and the people of New South Wales including the pupative working-class interest represented by the Mutual Protection Association and its newspaper the Guardian, won its fight. On 9 March, 1847, the Imperial Government issued an Order-in-Council which grappled with the colony's major land problem. The old system of restricting sales to the Twenty Counties was abandoned and different leasehold tenures were provided for different areas, i.e., "settled", "intermediate" and "unsettled". In effect, the squatters were guaranteed possession and the pre-empted rights they sought. The order applied, with minor variations, to South Australia and Western Australia as well as New South Wales and the Port Phillip District soon to become Victoria. Thus, the squatters obtained a monopoly over the best lands of Australia and the Imperial Government

84. Ruth Knight, Illiberal Liberal, pp. 120-1.

had set the stage for the next major struggle: the struggle to free the land.

Wentworth and the pastoralists were satisfied except that they now wanted a further extension of representative government so that they could consolidate their gains. Lowe and "the people" of New South Wales saw the matter differently and Lowe, not Duncan or Lang, emerged as the voice of the people. The wheel had come full circle. In the beginning, Wentworth, Bland and the Australian Patriotic Association had appealed to the rights of Englishmen on behalf of all Australians—Emancipists, native-born and immigrant alike. Now Lowe, Parkes, Wilshire and other Liberals and Radicals appealed to the British Constitution against the presumptions of an "Australian" interest represented by Wentworth, Macarthur and the pastoralists who not only wanted to govern the country in their own interests but to bring in convict or coolie labour to help them exploit its vast potentialities.

After completing the abortive Education Report of 1844, Lowe resigned his nominee seat and, with the backing of the Pastoralists' Association, founded his brilliant and vituperative Atlas in which he master-minded the sustained and unscrupulous campaign which virtually drove Gipps from the colony to a premature death. The squatters of Auckland and St. Vincent, inland from Jervis and Bateman's Bay, returned him to represent them in the Council. The partnership did not long survive the passage of the Order-in-Council that established the squatters' pre-emptive rights to the pastures they grazed. Lowe now turned his attention to what he saw as the threat of squatter domination. "I am too stiff-necked to bow down to any oligarchy, however created," he explained, "or, if I must bow down at all I will bow before the nobility of England, who by ancestry, by service, and by worth have some claims to such homage." 86

Lowe saw the immediate need: an urban middle-class opposition to offset the squatters' victory. Like the English Liberals before him, he sought the backing of "mechanics" and "respectable artizans", meaning those who wished to better themselves in contrast with "levellers and socialists". The issue presented itself clearly in the Legislative Council elections of 1848. Lowe allowed Henry Parkes, just feeling his way into the political arena, and a committee of Sydney tradesmen, to nominate him for one of Sydney's two seats, currently held by Wentworth and Bland. His committee urged:

Vote for Lowe and an extension of the Franchise...
Vote for Lowe and education ... Vote for Lowe and retrenchment! You who want no slave-class of Coolies and Cannibals, vote for Lowe and British immigration! 87

Wentworth made no apologies for his adherence to "the democracy of equals" and the squatters. "I am a squatter," he told the electors of Sydney, "and I tell you that your prejudices against the squatters arise from your ignorance of your own interests ...." If it had not been for the squatting class, when transportation was discontinued to the colony, it must have dwindled into insignificance, [we] would have had grass growing in the streets". Although he had once favoured a £5 franchise he could not now support a reduction from £20. "I know these sentiments are not popular but on this subject .... I will speak the whole honest truth, for I will not have it said .... that you returned me under false colours .... But whatever your verdict may be with regard to myself .... I charge you never to forget your tried, devoted, indefatigable friend, William Bland".90

87. Quoted Ruth Knight, Illiberal Liberal, p. 197.
Lowe did not disguise the fact that he favoured "a just and equitable" franchise not universal suffrage. To Wentworth's charges that he had "betrayed every constituency which has yet trusted him" he justly replied:

When I first made common cause with the squatters they were an oppressed class, crushed by the heels of despotic and arbitrary government, who sought to do what no government had a right to do, to tax them without their being represented .... Since that period the times have changed——the circumstances have changed——and the squatters have changed; but I have not changed .... I have been consistent in fighting for liberty, ——the squatters have been consistent in fighting for money."91

As Wentworth delighted in pointing out, Lowe could not claim equal consistency in his attitude to transportation the question soon destined to distinguish the squatting sheep from the democratic goats, as Wentworth might have put it. Initially he shared the squatters' view that economically a resumption of transportation was desirable and inevitable. He dismissed talk of moral contamination as cant and dubbed Evangelical Charles Cowper, who had defeated James Macarthur in the 1843 elections, "Little Ingenuity" for hypocritically condemning transportation on the one hand and importing expires from Van Diemen's Land on the other. Why, he exclaimed, if he "saw the gate of Heaven open before him, he would be incapable of walking in straight. He would be sure to wriggle in like a worm.92 There was a good deal of worm-like wriggling in Lowe's own attitude towards transportation but eventually he came out on "the people's" side.

Lowe was returned a close second to Wentworth, ousting Bland, in an election Parkes declared to be "the birthday of Australian democracy".93 Lowe's idea of democracy was different from that of the

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novice Parkes, or the Star and Working Man's Guardian (1844-46), or the Citizen (1846-47) or Hawksley's about-to-be-born People's Advocate (1848-1855). True, he had been ready to assure "the Mechanics and working men of Sydney" who supported him that they had taken their own case into their own hands and won for themselves a great victory, but had in mind what John West called "the democracy of the middle-classes". He saw himself as one of West's educated "reputable and intelligent" leaders destined to "command the public mind" and "to instruct and conciliate" the masses in the great task of securing the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Within six months of the 1848 elections "the Mechanics and working men of Sydney" who had helped elect Lowe to represent them ("I go into Council your representative, not your delegate," he reminded them sharply) had moved far to the left of the new member for Sydney. In November 1848, Parkes, Hawksley, J.K. Heydon and other Radicals (MacDermott had died in February 1848) formed a Constitutional Association "to oppose wrong, to dispel ignorance, to abridge human misery, to support order, to disseminate truth, to achieve liberty, to maintain justice and to establish national prosperity". Lowe refused to join declaring he considered such an Association "unwise" and calculated to do more harm than good.

The Association-sponsored People's Advocate soon flaunted Lamartine's concern for the distribution rather than the production of wealth and did not disguise its sympathies for "the people" in the contemporary revolutionary upsurge of turbulent Europe. Poet Charles Harpur now declared himself "a revolutionist" and his brother Jehoshaphat, soon to become a land reform editorialist for Parkes' weekly Empire (launched 1850), must have made many people's hair rise when he declared:

94. Ruth Knight, Illiberal Liberal, p. 203
95. John West, The History of Tasmania, p. 528.
It is asked what will we do if the squatters are re­moved or ruined? Why, become squatters ourselves ... The cattle and sheep will still be in the colony, only they will be distributed among the people instead of being confined to a few. 97

One of the Constitutional Association's first actions was to call a public meeting to petition the new Governor, Sir Charles FitzRoy, to "open public works" for the unemployed. Parkes and his friends invited Lowe, Wentworth, Bland and James Martin to attend. Bland and Martin declined politely. Wentworth, who was out of town, tepidly blessed the proposal from afar. Lowe, shocked at this affront to laissez-faire principles, "poured forth his contempt for the weak and unenlightened" who proposed to carry what he had described five months before as "this magnificent tri­umph of the people" beyond what he now considered the bounds of rat­ionality and commonsense. The Constitutional Association survived Lowe's contempt but roused no great public enthusiasm until it di­verted its energies in support of the Anti-Transportation Committee which had Lowe's blessing and came to a successful climax in "The Great Protest Meeting" against the convict transport Hashemy 11 June, 1849, when Lowe thundered:

I can see from this meeting the time is not far dis­tant when we shall assert our freedom not by words alone. As in America, oppression was the parent of independence, so shall it be in this colony... As sure as the seed shall grow into the plant, and the plant to the tree, in all times, and in all nations, so shall injustice and tyranny ripen into rebellion, and rebellion into independence.  [Immense Cheering] 98

Six months later, Lowe and his family were aboard ship on their way back to England. Parkes, in nominating James Robert Wilshire, a prosperous manufacturer and second Mayor of Sydney, to the vacant seat, observed bitterly that in future he would urge

97. Quoted Ruth Knight, Illiberal Liberal, p. 207.

98. Sydney Morning Herald, 12 June, 1849. Quoted Ruth Knight, p. 221.
that candidates be asked "where their home was". Lowe, although he left few friends and many enemies, had done his work well. He and the Atlas had provided the catalyst which steadied the swirling cauldron of New South Wales politics into steady development along the middle-class lines he had envisaged. On the right, Wentworth's vain attempt to embalm pastoral supremacy by creating a "bunyip aristocracy" was laughed out of court. On the left, Parkes, Wils- shire and other Radicals were distracted temporarily by the American-inspired republicanism of Lang's premature Australian League.

Before these developments took place Earl Grey (formerly Viscount Howick) had become Secretary of State for Colonies in Lord John Russell's new Whig ministry. He was responsible for the Order-in-Council of 9 March, 1847, which pleased the squatters. They were less pleased with his Australian Government Act of 1850 which provided for the erection of the Port Phillip District into the Colony of Victoria, the establishment of legislative councils in Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, and an increase of legislative powers in New South Wales. Besides liberalizing the franchise (£20 to £10) the new measure empowered the Council to amend the constitution to provide a bicameral legislature on the British model. In earlier proposals, which aroused no enthusiasm in Australia, Grey had proposed a Federal Upper House with members drawn from all Australian colonies.

In the 1851 elections under Grey's new constitution the reduction of the franchise showed itself in the result: J. D. Lang topped the poll with 1191 votes, John Lamb, a Sydney merchant and opponent of transportation, was next with 1015 votes and Wentworth, who still championed the squatters and favoured renewed transportation, was third with 991. The new constitution had provided three seats for Sydney. Lang attributed his success to the triumph of those

liberal principles which were "the hope of long-oppressed and suffer­ing humanity". He declared from the hustings that Wentworth would have been rejected altogether if more than a thousand Scotchmen had not left Sydney for the recently-discovered goldfields at Bathurst. Lang professed loyalty to the Queen and the British Constitution but added that it was "the right of any colony as soon as it could stand on its own legs to entire freedom and independence". 100

In 1849, Henry Parkes had hailed the second Great Protest Meet­ing against transportation the "glorious 18th of June .... one of the brightest days in Australia's history". A couple of blocks away tattered posters on the graffiti-ridden walls of the Old Barracks facing George Street, proclaimed: "Gold! Gold! Gold! in Calif­ornia!" This announcement was also destined to mark the beginning of one of the brightest eras in Australia's history. Among those who answered the call to California were Edward Hammond Hargraves, an impoverished "proprietor of cows and bullocks" in the Gosford dis­trict of New South Wales and James ("Happy Jim") Esmond, a coach­driver from the Buninyong District of what was to become Victoria. They returned together in the barque Emma which berthed in Sydney on 7 January, 1851.

On 12 February, Hargraves discovered gold on Lewis Ponds Creek in the Blue Mountains and on 7 April his partners, Johnny Lister and William Tom, located Australia's first payable goldfield at Yorky's Corner on Summer Hill Creek not far away. On 5 July, Es­mond went to Alfred Clarke, of the Geelong Advertiser, with a packet of rich specimens he had found near Clunes about 100 miles north-west of Melbourne. When a Geelong jeweller had tested Esmond's samples Clarke sat down and wrote an excited story under the heading: "Gold in the Pyrenees!" The story began: "The long-sought treasure is at length found! Victoria is a gold coun-

101. Quoted Michael Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, p. 95.
try and from Geelong goes forth the first glad tidings of the dis-
ccovery." 102

Wentworth, Lowe, Parkes, in their different ways, had laid
the foundations on which urban merchants and manufacturers, immi-
grant "mechanics" and flooding gold-seekers were to build Australian
democracy. When the gold rushes began the mould was already set.
As I. D. McNaughtan put it, even without the spur of gold, "the
Australian Colonies, with no traditional conservative class and
without established institutions would hardly have left the broad
road from Benthamite liberalism through political democracy towards
'state socialism' though they might well have travelled it more slow-
ly". 103

Lowe had sketched out the blue-print. The thousands of men
and women of all classes, mostly the middling and working classes,
who flowed in from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Europe and
America, provided the raw material for a society which developed
much as Lowe had envisaged it, ranker and rawer perhaps than he
would have liked, nevertheless indubitably an open-ended middling-
class utilitarian democracy, broadening down from precedent to pre-
cedent in the English fashion, a democracy that held levellers,
socialists and moral enthusiasts at arm's length on the one hand and,
with the other, kept equi-distant from privilege, social preten-
sion and intellectual or artistic distinction.

During the Legislative Council debates on his Draft Constitu-
tion Bill of 1852 Wentworth presented the alternatives when he asked:
Did Australians wish for the American or for the English Constitu-
tion? He made his own position clear. He wanted a constitution
that would be "a lasting one — a conservative one — a British, not
a Yankee constitution (Loud and prolonged cheers)". 104 What in fact
he tried to do was to protect the privileges of the landed interest,

104. C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History, 1851-
in his view the steady, educated, dependable and productive interest, by the distribution of seats, the difficulties of amendment and the provision of a hereditary upper house. He quoted Pitt, Burke, and De Tocqueville in support of a colonial titled order of "men of wealth, property and education—men not raised from any particular section of the community, but from every class that has the energy to aspire to rank and honour". If the legislators of New South Wales failed to provide a proper summit for ambition, he warned, they would doom their children to live for nothing better than the money-making schemes of a filthy-lucre-loving community.\footnote{105}

The diametrically opposite view was expressed in a manifesto issued by the Democratic League, convened at a Sydney meeting in 1852 through the efforts of Langite delegates from the western goldfields. They denounced Wentworth's Bill as tyrannical, illegal and unconstitutional and demanded: "Shall New South Wales become a land of serfs, and be governed by an aristocratic oligarchy, or shall it become a nation of freemen...on the broad basis of constitutional monarchy?". They threatened to carry their complaints to England where they felt Gladstone, Lowe and Roebuck would certainly advocate the cause of colonial democracy. Parkes, now a protégé of Lang who was in England, denounced the Bill as a "hasty, iniquitous, and fraudulent attack upon the liberties of the people".

In England, Lang had published a book reiterating the republicanism, federation, independence and American-style democracy advocated in his colonial pamphlets and publications.\footnote{106} He marshalled arguments from James Otis, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine and other champions in the struggle for American independence, against Wentworth's Burke, De Tocqueville and the American conservative John C. Calhoun whose Disquisition on Government (New York, 1850), "after examining the theory of majority rule under equal suffrage,


106. J. D. Lang, Letter to Constituents (Sydney, 1843); The Coming Event; or the United Provinces of Australia (Sydney, 1850); Freedom and Independence for the Golden Lands of Australia (London, 1852).
drew an unglossed picture of the clash of economic interests in the operation of government and sought ways and means of defeating the logic of democracy in the interest of economic privilege". 107

Lang's Australian League, founded to foster a sense of national identity and to promote agitation for complete independence, briefly attracted the interest of Parkes, Wilshire, Harpur and other Radicals but not for long. The immediate step forward lay elsewhere, in the Legislature itself, where a combination of urban middle-class merchants and manufacturers and city radicals (with a small r), mostly men of property themselves, defeated Wentworth's attempt to provide the "Shepherd Kings" with a permanent hold on the government.

The centre view, incorporating the then conventional wisdom, was presented by James Martin, the near-Currency Lad who had edited Lowe's Atlas but clung to Wentworth and the squatters as long as he dared, when he declared amidst rousing applause during the second reading of Wentworth's Draft Constitution Bill:

Heirs of the British Constitution ourselves, it should be our pride as well as our duty to hand down our noble inheritance...in all its full and unclouded splendour to our posterity. But, while preserving its spirit, let us not, be too tenacious of its forms. Let us not, while aiming at conservatism, fall into the wildest democracy. Let our checks and balances be real and powerful, but elastic. So shall we lay the foundation of a nation not only speaking the language and imbued with the literature, but in every way worthy of that great people who first taught the lesson of freedom to mankind. 108

Plainly, there was nothing in this, nor in the Imperial Act to confer a Constitution on New South Wales that followed in due course, to make Wentworth flounce out of the colony which had been "the master passion" of his life to seek illusory escape from


"democratic and levelling principles" that threatened all those "with ample means". All that Russell and Grey had promoted was fully responsible government whereas all that Wentworth desired was narrowly representative government. John West and others saw clearly enough that under fully responsible government qualifications for office founded on property would inevitably break down. West had few doubts that "Divine Providence", incorporated in "refined and educated men", would guide "Mechanics and respectable working men" to resist "the violent and brutal opposition of low adventurers" and "devote themselves to the social and political amelioration of society".

Though the Almighty's will has been sometimes erratic and often corrupted by the natural perversity of human nature this is more or less what happened. The momentous decade which saw the prelude to democracy in Australia saw the first rough intrusion into the pastoral Arcady sought by Wentworth and the Macarthurs, a democracy of their equals. The same decade saw also the growth of a new dream and a different vision of Arcady; the Utopian social harmony imagined by the Harpur brothers and cherished by secular Radicals and liberal Catholics alike, each family with a peasant plot beside some clear flowing stream.

Between these two visions ordinary selfish men laid the foundations of a broad, rough, utilitarian highway along which ordinary selfish men have since steered the street car of state, stopping now and then for men from right and men from left to scramble aboard. All are headed for the same unknown destination bounded, as ordinary selfish men must always be, by the saucer-edge of immediate political and national possibilities. Only those gifted with the Romantic "higher madness" sometimes see visions, from right or left, flickering along distant horizons beyond the saucer's edge — horizons where man's true destiny may lie.

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Note: During the 1840's, Hobart, under the benevolent patronage of Sir John and Lady Franklin, was the centre of scientific activity in Australia. Papers read at the Tasmanian Society for the Study of Natural Science were published in the Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science and the Franklin-inspired Society was precursor of the Royal Society, said to be the first Royal Society established outside the United Kingdom. The transition was painful and involved in local politics. The first Australian medical journal, the Australian Medical Journal, appeared in Sydney in 1846 but died in its second year. Forerunner of the Medical Journal of Australia (1915—) was the Victorian Medical Journal of 1856-95.
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