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The Ethos and Influence

~~History~~ Russel Ward.

OF THE

AUSTRALIAN PASTORAL WORKER

"The entire man is, so to speak, to be seen in the cradle of the child. The growth of nations presents something analagous to this; they all bear some marks of their origin; and the circumstances which accompanied their birth and contributed to their rise, affect the whole term of their being."

- De Tocqueville.

Russel Ward. Russel Ward.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Australian National University,

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PRELIMINARY NOTE ON METHOD

This thesis is concerned not so much with specific historical events, as with the characteristic attitudes and ideas, over a long period, of a large and imperfectly literate social group. Since this group - workmen in the Australian pastoral industry - was given to singing folk-songs, these have been treated as the most important single source of information about the group's ethos. Therefore the first two chapters are devoted, respectively, to defining the nature of Australian folk-songs, and to establishing that the pastoral workers of the nineteenth century did constitute a ballad community in something recognisably like the traditional European sense of that term. Chapters three to eight trace the origins and growth of this community and of its distinctive ethos. Chapter nine shows how this ethos came to have a disproportionately strong influence on that of the whole Australian community, and Chapter ten seeks to answer, tentatively, the question of why this transference of outlook occurred.

While the ballads have been treated as important source material they would, in isolation, give a most distorted and incomplete picture of the life and ideas of those

who sang them. Therefore official documents, newspaper and magazine files, histories, and factual books or manuscripts of travel and reminiscence have also been used extensively. The nature of the subject is such that imaginative works about bush life - novels, verse, and even semi-literate compositions and the memories of old men and women - often throw a vivid light on it, if they are used judiciously.

An attempt has been made to build up from these sources a balanced picture of the origins, growth and influence of the Australian pastoral worker's ethos.

PRECIS

Chapter I

Australian folk-songs have little literary merit, but considerable sociological interest. Some began as quasi-communal compositions of the 'folk'. Some were more or less directly modelled or parodied on earlier British songs, and some began as published, 'literary' verse. So far as can now be known, it seems certain that British and other folk-songs originated in similarly diverse ways. Whatever its origin, a folk-song becomes truly such in proportion as it is adopted and 're-created' by 'the folk'.

Chapter II

The semi-nomadic employees in the Australian pastoral industry followed a way of life which, while being singular in important respects, was also in many ways like that of other ballad communities in other continents. Although they formed a recognisably distinct social group,

the pastoral workers were at all times closely connected with other sections of the developing Australian community. Until and particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century, the manners and mores of the pastoral workers tended to have more influence on those of city-dwelling and other Australians than those of the latter had on theirs.

Chapter III

Convicts, ex-convicts and working people generally became acclimatised more rapidly and readily in Australia than did the more well-to-do free immigrants. For the first forty years of Australian history convicts and emancipists comprised the vast majority of the population; and for the first sixty years these two groups and native-born Australians together comprised a majority. There is much evidence to show that convict and lower class attitudes had more influence on the distinctively Australian social outlook which was emerging, than did the ideas and customs of the more respectable part of colonial society.

Chapter IV

In the formative period of 1841-1851, people of Irish birth or descent comprised well over a third of the Australian labouring classes, and Scots little more than about five or six per cent. Thus Irish attitudes and traditions had a disproportionately strong influence on the developing Australian national outlook. There is evidence that most of the basic characteristics of this Australian outlook had taken definite shape among the working people, and especially among the native-born, before the gold discoveries.

Chapter V

The first pastoral workers were convicts or emancipists. Up to 1851 there were nearly twice as many of these people and of native-born Australians in the squatting districts beyond the boundaries of location as there were free immigrants. In and near Sydney the ratio was little more than one to one. Moreover, the peculiar conditions of frontier life ensured that adaptation to the strange environment proceeded there much more rapidly than it did in or near the coastal cities. Thus early it came about that the working bushman was felt to be the 'typical' or 'true' Australian.

Chapter VI

Census figures and other documents show that the 'swamping' of earlier Australian attitudes by the Gold Rush immigrants was not as great, especially in New South Wales, as has often been supposed. Even in Victoria the immigrants, especially those who remained in the pastoral areas, tended to assimilate themselves to the already existing pattern. However, Gold Rush conditions did greatly strengthen racial prejudice, among bush workers as in Australian society generally; and the leavening of men of some education, which was added to the pastoral proletariat, probably helped to make it more articulately conscious of its peculiar esprit-de-corps.

Chapter VII

There were differences between the pre- and post-Gold Rush bushrangers, but on the whole these were not as significant as the similarities. Before and after the gold discoveries, bushranging stemmed basically from the convict and convict-derived tradition of hostility to the police, and to authority generally. But sympathy with bushrangers was so widespread, also because they were seen, half consciously, as symbols of national feeling, the emergence of which into literary and political forms was

in some ways retarded by the results of the gold discoveries.

Chapter VIII

The pastoral worker of the last decades of the nineteenth century has been described by Lawson, Furphy, Paterson and others. Most of his essential characteristics were inherited from a much earlier period; but fencing of runs, the arrival of more women in country townships, and other changes in outback conditions, brought about some changes in the bushman. He became slightly more temperate, a good deal more self-respecting, and more self-consciously nationalistic.

Chapter IX

Towards the end of the last century many factors combined to reduce the isolation of bush life and so to weaken the bushman's distinctive ethos. But these same factors and others ensured that this ethos, in a rather romanticised form, was then taken over fully as the major element in the general Australian national mystique. This transference had been proceeding throughout the nineteenth century, but it was greatly

accelerated at this time by the growth of the industrial trade union movement, and by the literary men's discovery of the bushman as a symbol of nationalism.

Chapter X

F.J.Turner's frontier thesis provides the best simple explanation of the bush-worker's disproportionate influence on Australian history; but Turner's ideas must be applied judiciously to Australian conditions. Different types of frontier life had different effects in America and Australia. And in the final analysis, perhaps Turner's thesis itself should be seen as a result of nineteenth century changes in economics and in taste.

Chapter I

WHAT IS AN AUSTRALIAN FOLK-BALLAD?

"I'll sing to you a rough old song made by the Lord knows who,
Or very likely by the last bran-new-chum Jackaroo."

"Though some make slight of Libells," wrote John Selden nearly three centuries ago, "yet you may see by them how the wind sitts: as, take a straw, & throw it upp into the aire, you shall see by that which way the wind is, which you shall not doe by casting upp a stone. - More solid things doe not shew the Complexion of the times so well as Ballads and libells."(1) It is the task of this thesis to ask what light is shed upon "the complexion of the times" by Australian folk-songs; to illumine by their aid, not so much what happened in our past, as what men thought and felt about events. To do this it is first necessary to define our terms. What is an Australian folk-ballad? What indeed is a folk-ballad in any country, and how is it to be distinguished from a literary ballad?

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(1) Sir Frederick Pollock (ed.), Table Talk of John Selden, Lond: 1927, p.72.

Since our aim is historical there is no point in labouring a formal literary distinction between folk-ballads and folk-songs, affixing to a particular set of verses one or the other title according as it contains a greater narrative or lyric element. Both kinds equally may embody popular values and attitudes and it is these in which we are interested. For the same reason musical and aesthetic questions can have only an incidental place in what follows. We are concerned with what the ballads express, not with how they express it, except in so far as consideration of the latter may also, occasionally, throw some light on the outlook of the singers. There were and are Australians who find their hearts "moved more than with a trumpet"(2) by the singing of The Wild Colonial Boy,(3) but few among them would seriously maintain that, as poetry, it is fit to be compared with Chevy Chase. This may be partly because we are still too close to our folk-ballads. Five hundred years from now when their language, their stage-

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(2) Sir Philip Sidney, A Defence of Poesie and Poems, Lond: 1911, p.70: "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style." (The ballad of Percy and Douglas is, of course, now usually known as Chevy Chase.)

(3) L.F. Fitzhardinge, official biographer of William Morris Hughes, reports that on his last visit to the very elder statesman shortly before his death in 1952, "Billy" sang The Wild Colonial Boy as he was showing his visitor to the gate. The song was a great favourite with him.

properties, and the customs described, have alike been invested with that romantic aura often conferred by distance in time and space, our descendants (if they and the ballads survive) may conceivably judge The Old Bullock Dray equal in poetic merit to The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin, or The Death of Robin Hood. But from the standpoint of good judges today, most of our material is doggerel, and only a little of it competent verse containing rare flashes of something like poetry. In any case, whether we are dealing with the folk-songs of Australia or Britain or of any other country whatsoever, it is hard to see how they may be defined principally with reference to aesthetic values since, like literary verse, they range everywhere from the great to the egregiously gauche.

Since Bishop Percy published his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry in 1765 most scholarly writing on folk-ballads has been primarily concerned with the question of origins. As ballads obviously differed from literary verse by being a popular art form, known and sung mainly by unlettered, lower-class people, it seemed reasonable to seek their origins in the same quarter: and from this it was but a step to attempt defining them in terms of their supposed beginnings. Percy (4) and Sir Walter Scott (5) had

(4) op. cit., 2 vols., Lond: 1910 edn., Vol.I, Preface and "Essay on the Ancient Minstrels in England", passim.

(5) Minstrely of the Scottish Border, Lond: 1830, "Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry".

been content to ascribe the authorship of the ballads to popular minstrels of the Middle Ages. In their view the ballads were folk-art in the sense that they were composed for the folk by more or less un-lettered popular entertainers, but still each ballad was, originally, the work of an individual. Later writers went much further. The brothers Grimm (6) in Germany and later scholars like G.L. Kittredge (7) in America, asserted that genuine ballads were composed communally. Long ago (how long was not examined very closely) men living in clans, or in small villages, gathered on festive occasions and collectively improvised ballads as an accompaniment to, or an integral part of, communal dancing. The corollary was that any metrical composition not made in this way could not be a true folk-ballad. This definition almost became established dogma, especially in America, during the early years of the present century and it still enjoys wide popular credence to-day although, as we shall see, recent ballad scholarship has shown that it was one-sided to the point of almost complete falsity.

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(6) Quoted by G.H. Gerould, The Ballad of Tradition, Oxford: 1932, pp. 165, 166, 183.

(7) H.C. Sargent and G.L. Kittredge, English & Scottish Popular Ballads Edited from the Collection of F.J. Child, Lond: 1904, Introduction, p. xxvii, et passim.

There are fifty five ballads in A.B. Paterson's anthology of Old Bush Songs[8] first published in 1905, and another dozen or more in the last (7th) edition of 1930. Although Paterson included a few sets of verses which may only very doubtfully be classed as folk-ballads[9] and omitted many more which have been collected since, his will probably always remain the basic collection of texts. And although he published them at a time when the communalist theory of origins was at the height of its popularity, he seems to have been comparatively unaffected by the fashion. In the preface he wrote:

> "Attempts to ascertain the names of the authors have produced contradictory statements, and no doubt some of the songs were begun by one man and finished or improved by another, or several others."

This common-sense view is in accord with that of the earlier English ballad editors but, like theirs, it seems to assume that all folk-songs were composed initially by 'folk' singers rather than by selfconscious, 'literary' poets. It can be shown that some of our folk-songs were in fact composed in this way, although the evidence shows too that the anonymous bard of shearing shed or drovers' camp was often a well-educated man of middle or upper-class antecedents

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(8) Angus and Robertson, Sydney.

(9) e.g. "A National Song for Australia Felix", p.59 ff.; "The Stockman", p.97 ff.; The Australian Stockman, p.114 ff.

who had adopted the outlook of his fellow workmen along with their way of life.[10] On the other hand it is equally clear that many genuine Australian folk-ballads began life as adaptations, or parodies, of British street-ballads or popular music-hall and drawing-room songs of the day, while still others began as published, literary verse. To illustrate what has been said, we shall consider in turn only one or two typical samples of each of the above three categories.

In the Sydney Bulletin of 17th August, 1911, a correspondent signing himself "P. Jeff Wallace" recorded his meeting with an un-lettered folk-poet as follows:

> "Turning out some old luggage that had not seen daylight for many years, I came across the following lay of the bushranging days, which I took from one 'Paddy the Poet' at a roadside pub in Doughboy Hollow,[11] while travelling from Tamworth to Newcastle. It is quite genuine, and, to a 'choon' bearing a mongrel resemblance to 'The Groves of Blarney', jumped, bumped, and somersaulted thuswise: -
>
> Och, for to be taken an' hung like bacon,
> Av Oi'm not mistaken is an awful job,
> Just like bould Paisley, which I think was bastely,
> Or poor young Manns who ne'er a sowl did rob.
> Sure Oi think Cockytoo, sir, would very well do, sir
> For all the deeds of our highway knights -
> They're no worse than our Mimbers, those divil's imbers
> Who rob the people av all their rights.
> Sure, they braved all dangers, those bould bushrangers,
> An' many's the thrap they did double up;

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(10) See Appendix XV.

(11) Since 1894 Doughboy Hollow has been known, officially, as Ardglen.

An' for days and nights, sure, thim hardy wights, sure,
Padrolled the bush widout bite or sup.
But our brave Bin Hall, sir, eclipsed thim all, sir,
And in his last moments his flag unfurled;
And only for the 'possum that jumped across him
The traps wouldn't ha' cotched him in the blessed world.
Sure, tin shots they fired, sir, before they got tired, sir,
And the last one hit Ben all in the head,
Saying, as he expired, 'Boys, I'm glad yez fired, boys,
For I'd never be taken anny other way than dead.'
To conclude and finish, my song Oi'll diminish,
Wid a health to Dunn and brave Thunderbowlt,
Who is an ould stager, Oi'll lay a wager,
Though young Dunn, they tell me, is only a coult.
May they get away, sir, from Botn'y Bay, sir,
To some furrin shore all beyant the says,
Where they'll live on bacon, and not be quakin',
But die quite paceful an' all at aise."

There are good reasons for accepting the authenticity of the song and of "P. Jeff Wallace's" statements about it. Allowing for the lapse of one or two generations, it is in exactly the tradition and style of earlier Irish-convict ballads such as those composed initially by one Frank the Poet;(12) and it seems certain that some songs were composed in this way until a much later period.

In 1953 I was fortunate enough to find a seventy-seven years old bush singer living in retirement with his sister in the Sydney suburb of Auburn. His name was Jack Henry Lee but, in accordance with the old outback custom, he preferred to be known by the nickname of "Hoop-iron Jacky".(13)

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(12) See Cap. IV infra.

(13) J.H. Lee died in the Auburn Hospital in March 1954.

Born at Booligal in the western Riverina, he had worked all his life in pastoral country, mainly as a rouseabout and a bullock-driver, until blindness and advancing years forced him to retreat to the city. He sang many well-known old ballads included in Paterson's collection, but also some others of which I had never heard before. His particular favourite among the latter was the following:

"The Back-Block Shearer

I'm only a back-block shearer
As easily can be seen,
I've shorn in most of the sheds
On the plains of the Riverine;
I've shorn in most of the famous sheds,
I've saw big tallies done,
But somehow or other, I can't tell why -
I never became a gun.(14)

Chorus: Hurrah, my boys, my shears are set,
I feel both fit and well:
Tomorrow you'll find me at my pen
When the gaffer(15) rings the bell,
With Hayden's patent thumb-guards fixed
And both my blades pulled back,
Tomorrow I go with a sardine blow(16)
For a century(17) or the sack.

'Twas in the old shed at Tarwong
Where I first flashed a blade,
But the years have vanished along
With the cheques that I have made,
.....
.....
.....
..... (four lines forgotten.)

---

(14) A champion shearer.

(15) The 'boss of the board' or shearing-floor.

(16) 'Blow' = a stroke with the shears. Hence a sardine blow = a 'nibbling', inefficient stroke.

(17) A tally of 100 sheep shorn in the day.

I've opened up the wine-pipe straight[18]
  I've opened behind the ear,
I've practised all the possible styles
  In which a man can shear.
I've studied all the cuts and drives
  Of the famous men I've met,
But I've never succeeded in plastering up
  Them three little figures yet.

As the boss walked down the board this morning
  I saw him stare at me,
For I'd mastered Moran's great shoulder-cut -
  Of course, he could plainly see.
But I've another surprise for him
  That will give his nerves a shock;
Tomorrow I'll show him I'll have mastered
  Pierce's rang-tang block.[19]

And if I succeed as I expect to do,
  Next time I intend to shear
At the Wagga Demonstration
  That's held there every year
And there I'll lower the colours,
  The colours of Mitchell[20] and Co. -
Instead of Deeming[21], you will hear
  Of Widgeegoweera Joe."

When the song finished I asked Mr. Lee if he knew anything about its authorship. In the case of most of the previous ballads he had sung he had replied that no-one knew - that the song in question was just "an old bush song" that used to be popular "in the sheds" or "on the track"; but he was quite positive about the authorship of The Back-Block Shearer. It was written, he said, by a shearer named Bill

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(18) Made the first stroke straight up the front of the neck.

(19) Types of shearing strokes.

(20) A famous 'gun' shearer.

(21) A notorious contemporary murderer, tried in Sydney and executed 23rd May, 1892.

Tully at "Hungry Jimmy Tyson's Tarwong shed, near Oxley."(22) Shearers, rouseabouts and station-hands there assembled, nightly sang folk-ballads and other songs which were popular during the 'nineties'. One night Bill Tully, retiring with a pencil-end and some scraps of paper, wrote The Back-Block Shearer, which was sung by all hands next evening. During the following weeks until "the shed cut out", alterations and improvements were made by several singers but no-one, Mr. Lee told me, could solve the problem of making "shock" rhyme with "blow" so that the latter word continued, somewhat nonsensically, to be sung as "block".

The genesis of this ballad probably comes as near to fulfilling the requirements of the communalist theory of origins as that of any Australian folk-song. Even so, if "Bill Tully" was the same man as the "W. Tully" who wrote

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(22) James Tyson was one of the exceptional cases of a working man who, by extreme thrift, became a successful squatter. He first made money by selling fresh meat to the Victorian gold-diggers. When he died on Dec. 4th, 1898, his estate, largely in the form of sheep and cattle stations, realised £ 2,364,762 (see Sydney Morning Herald, 5/12/1953)

My article in Meanjin (3/1954) incorrectly named Nimidgee Station as the scene of the ballad's composition.

Silver Cheques,[23] he was a more 'literary' person than the average shearer. The fact that Tarwong station is the subject of the latter poem makes the identity of authorship probable.

There are many examples of Australian ballads which have derived from older British street-ballads or music-hall songs.[24] Thanks to its recording for a gramophone company by Burl Ives in 1952, the best-known to-day is probably the song known as Botany Bay. The received contemporary version goes:

"Farewell to old England for ever,
Farewell to my rum-culls[25] as well,
Farewell to the well-known Old Bailey
Where I used for to cut such a swell.

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(23) M. Pizer's anthology, Freedom on the Wallaby, Syd: 1953, pp. 114, 115. The poem comes from the Bulletin 19/11/1903, but Miss Pizer has not been able to find out anything about the author. The poem describes Tarwong Station at the end of the Great Drought (1895-1902), during which the sheep population of N.S.W. shrank from 57,000,000 to 26,560,000. (See E.G. Shann, Economic History of Australia, 1948 edn., pp. 386, 387.) The second stanza is as follows:

"Once Tarwong mustered a hundred thousand
(The old hands say there were sometimes more),
With plenty of bush on which to browse, and
Carrot and crowfoot in galore.
The whims weren't creaking late and early,
Or jumbucks waiting their thirst to slake,
And the canvas buckets were used but rarely
When whalers fished in the Tarwong lake."

(24) Decca (Y6415).

(25) Boon-companions.

Chorus: Singing tooral, liooral, li-addity,
Singing tooral, liooral, li-aye,
Singing tooral, li-ooral, li-addity,
We're sailing for Botany Bay.

There's the captain as is our commandier,
There's the bosun and all the ship's crew,
There's the first and the second class passengers,
Knows what we poor convicts goes through.

'Taint leaving Old England we cares about,
'Taint 'cause we mis-spells what we knows,
But because all we light-fingered gentry
Hops around with a log on our toes.(26)

Oh, had I the wings of a turtle-dove
I'd soar on my pinions so high,
Slap-bang to the arms of my Polly love,
And in her sweet presence I'd die.

Now all you young Dookies and Duchesses,
Take warning from what I do say:
Mind all is your own as you touchesses,
Or you'll find us in Botany Bay."

Many people now living, both here and in Britain, remember singing this song or hearing it sung in their childhood. In the Riverina during the 1890's, Mr. Lee told me, the last stanza was rendered:

"Now come all you nursemaids and jockey-boys,
Take warning by what I just say -
If you don't give over your row-di-di,
You'll rest in Botany Bay."

And an extra stanza, now forgotten, was sung at Springside

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(26) Convicts sentenced to the tread-mill were sometimes set instead to rolling a log by walking on top of it back and forth across the gaol-yard.

near Orange:

"For fourteen long years I have survived,
For fourteen long years and a day,
Just for meeting a bloke in the alley,
And sneaking his ticker away."(27)

This song is popularly believed to be a genuine folk-ballad of the convict period. Yet it was rare to speak of first and second class passengers before about 1850. Cabin and steerage were good enough terms for those of our ancestors who paid their own passage money.(28) Besides, both the tune and the mood of sophisticated flippancy, suggest the late nineteenth century music-hall stage rather than the hold of a convict transport, or even a London street, fifty or sixty years earlier. On the other hand the accurate reference to the term of transportation, "fourteen years,"(29) and perhaps other lines such as the opening:

"Farewell to Old England for ever,
Farewell to my rum-culls as well,"

recall the authentic note of early transportation street-ballads like Van Diemen's Land with its:

---

(27) Words sung by Mrs. Mary Byrnes, now of Concord, N.S.W.

(28) It seems probable that the terms "first class" and "second class passengers" came into use at sea as a result of their use in rail travel when it became common about the middle of the last century.

(29) Throughout the convict period prisoners were normally sentenced only to terms of seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years (life).

"We had two Irish lads on board, Jimmy Murphy and Paddy Malone,
And they were both the truest friends that any man could own:
The gamekeeper he caught them, and from Old England's strand
They were seven years transported to plough Van Diemen's Land."(30)

Both impressions are correct. The present-day version apparently derives from a music-hall song which formed part of the Gaiety Theatre production in 1885-86 of Little Jack Sheppard.(31) This was a musical comedy based on the life of the titular hero, a famous London pick-pocket who, in 1724 when only twenty-two years old, reached the apex of his career on Tyburn Tree.(32) However, this music-hall song was, in its turn, certainly connected with a London street-ballad, the convict period variants of which,

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(30) From a Liverpool version collected and sung by Ewan McColl (H.M.V. recording, B. 10259).

(31) See Horace Bleakley, The Trial of Jack Sheppard etc., Edinburgh and Lond: 1933, pp. 117-118. Moreover Bleakley's bibliography contains an item (unlisted in J.A. Ferguson's Bibliography of Australia Vol. III): The Life and Exploits of Jack Sheppard, the Notorious Housebreaker and Footpad, Sydney: Printed, published and sold by Edmund Mason, George Street South, N.D. (but circa 1868?).

The Jack Sheppard theme was immensely popular in musical comedy. Frank Fowler in his Southern Lights and Shadows, Lond: 1859, records that during his stay in Sydney the theatrical "pieces which proved most attractive" were "Jack Shepherd"[sic], and some others. This Sydney production too, may have included a version of the song.

(32) Horace Bleakley, op. cit.

as the Springside stanza suggests, may have been brought out by our founding fathers and sung in Australia, as certainly was the case with other transportation street-ballads like Van Diemen's Land.(33) One version of the earlier street-ballad went:

"Here's bad luck to you Mr. Justice Paley,
And also to you, Gentlemen of the Jury,
For seven years you've sent me from my true love,
Seven years, I'm transported, you know.

To go to a strange country don't grieve me,
Nor leaving old England behind,
It is all for the sake of my Polly,
And leaving my parents behind.

There's the captain that is our commander,
The Boatswain, and all the ship's Crew,
There is married men, too, and there's single,
Who knows what we transports do.

Dear Polly, I'm going to leave you
For seven long years, love, and more,
But that time will appear but a moment,
When returned to the girl I adore.

If ever I return from the ocean,
Stores of riches I'll bring for my dear,
It's all for the sake of my Polly,
I'll cross the salt seas for my dear.

---

(33) Mr. Lee, Mr. J. Cashmere of Sylvania N.S.W., and Mrs. M. Byrnes remember versions of Van Diemen's Land being sung fifty years or more ago.

In 1951 leading citizens issued their "Call to the Nation", excerpts from which were displayed prominently for some months on posters in public places. Against an appropriate place on the text of a poster thus exhibited at Goulburn railway station, I saw pencilled two lines from Van Diemen's Land:

"They lined us up like horses and they sold us out of hand,
And they chained us to the plough, brave boys, to plough Van Diemen's Land."

And see Bulletin, 10/3/88, p.14.

How hard is the place of confinement,
That keeps me from my heart's delight,
Cold chains and irons surround me,
And a plank for my pillow at night.

How often I wish that the eagle
Would lend me her wings, I would fly,
Then I'd fly to the arms of my Polly,
And on her soft bosom, I'd lie."(34)

It would be a mistake to think that British folk-songs concerned with transportation were the only ones to bear Australian progeny. Here is a version, collected by Vance Palmer, of what might at first sight be deemed a thoroughly indigenous Australian ballad, The Banks of the Condamine (in some variants, The Banks of Riverine):

"Oh, hark the dogs are barking, love, I can no longer stay,
The men are all gone mustering and it is nearly day.
And I must be off by the morning light before the sun doth shine
To meet the Sydney shearers on the banks of the Condamine.
Oh, Willie, dearest Willie, I'll go along with you,
I'll cut off all my auburn finge and be a shearer, too,
I'll cook and count your tally, love, while ringer-o(35) you shine,
And I'll wash your greasy moleskins on the banks of the Condamine.

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(34) John Ashton (ed.), Modern Street Ballads, Lond: 1888, p.364. Ashton's introduction states that all his texts were taken from "the first fifty years of this century."

(35) The champion shearer of a shed for the season.

Chorus:

Oh, Nancy, dearest Nancy, please do not hold me back,
Down there the boys are waiting, and I must be on the track;
So here's a goodbye kiss, love, back home here I'll incline,
When we've shore the last of the jum-bucks(36) on the banks of the Condamine.

Oh, Nancy, dearest Nancy, with me you cannot go,
The squatters have given orders, love, no woman should do so
Your delicate constitution is not equal unto mine,
To stand the constant tigering(37) on the banks of the Condamine.
Oh Willie, dearest Willie, then stay back home with me.
We'll take up a selection and a farmer's wife I'll be:
I'll help you husk the corn, love, and cook your meals so fine,
You'll forget the ram-stag mutton on the banks of the Condamine."(38)

Judging by the number of versions that have been collected, this song must have been extremely popular. In some of the more recent, the hero is not a shearer but a horsebreaker who has

"To join the jolly horsebreakers on the banks of the Condamine,"

and he explains to his "dearest Mary" that she can't

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(36) The Sydney Morning Herald, as early as 31/5/1844, explained in a footnote to a poem, "Jumbuck is the name given by Aborigines to sheep".

cf. S.J. Baker, The Australian Language, Syd: 1945, pp.66, 315.

(37) Working 'like a tiger'.

(38) Old Australian Bush Ballads (music restored by Margaret Sutherland), Allan & Co., Melb: 1951, pp. 26, 27.

accompany him because

"Your waist is far too slender, your figure is too small,
You could not ride an outlaw if one to you should fall."(39

But from breaking in buckjumpers on the banks of the Condamine in the twentieth century, to battling with Napoleon on the banks of the Nile a hundred years earlier, is only a step backwards for a folk-song. All the Australian variants are clearly derived from a related group of English folk-songs, one version of which was printed as a broadside at the Seven Dials by that prince of street-ballad mongers, Jemmy Catnach. It began:

"Hark! I hear the drums a-beating - no longer can I stay,
I hear the trumpets sounding, my love I must away,
We are ordered from Portsmouth many a long mile,
For to join the British soldiers on the banks of the Nile.

Willie, dearest Willie, don't leave me here to mourn,
You'll make me curse and rue the day that ever I was born,
For the parting of my own true love is parting of my life,
So stay at home dear Willie, and I will be your wife.

I will cut off my yellow locks, and go along with you,
I will dress myself in velveteens, and go see Egypt too.
I will fight and bear your banner, while kind fortune seems to smile,
And we'll comfort one another on the banks of the Nile."(40

This ballad had English as well as Australian relations.

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(39) From the version of Mrs. E. Ware, Kelvin Grove, Brisbane.

(40) Chas Hindley Esq., The History of the Catnach Press, Lond: 1887, p. 239, prints a facsimile of the first part of the broadside.

A seagoing version began:

"Farewell, my dearest Nancy, since I must now leave you,
Unto the salt seas I am bound for to go;
But let my long absence be no trouble to you,
For I shall return in the spring as you know.

Like some pretty little seaboy, I will dress and go with you;
In the deepest of danger I shall stand your friend;
In the cold stormy weather, when the winds are a-blowing,
My dear, I shall be willing to wait on you then.

Your pretty little hands can't handle our tackle,
And your pretty little feet on our topmast can't go,
And the cold, stormy weather, love, you ne'er can endure,
Therefore, dearest Nancy, to the seas do not go."(41)

But The Banks of the Nile was itself descended ultimately from High Germany, an older folk-ballad dating from the War of the Austrian Succession, or perhaps from Marlborough's campaigns. Here is a 'composite' text of High Germany, composed by Cecil Sharp from several traditional versions:

"O Polly, dear, O Polly, the rout has now begun,
And we must march away at the beating of the drum.
Go dress yourself in all your best and come along with me,
I'll take you to the cruel wars in High Germany.

O Harry, dear Harry, you mind what I do say,
My feet are so tender I cannot march away.
And besides, my dearest Harry, though I'm in love with thee,
I am not fit for cruel wars in High Germany.

I'll buy you a horse, my love, and on it you shall ride,
And all of my delight shall be riding by your side,
We'll call at every ale-house, and drink when we are dry,
So quickly on the road my love, we'll marry by and by.

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(41) English Folk Songs collected and arranged with pianoforte accompaniment by Cecil J. Sharp, Selected edition, Volume I, Songs and Ballads, Lond: 1919, p. 62.

O cursed were the cruel wars that ever they should rise
And out of merry England press many a lad likewise!
They pressed young Harry from me, likewise my brothers three,
And sent them to the cruel wars in High Germany."(42)

Of this cognate group the earliest ballad to have survived in print dates back to about 1690.(43)

Perhaps enough has been said about the ancestry of The Banks of the Condamine to give an idea of the extraordinary complexity in continuity which is typical of folk-songs of this second category. It is, of course, by no means certain that the song originated in the form recorded in 1690. There were quite probably antecedent forms which have not survived in manuscript or print. The more closely one looks into to derivation of a folk-song of this kind, the more impossible it is to say exactly where and when it began or, sometimes, where and when it will end.(44) Nevertheless it seems just to say that at the point when the British soldier or sailor became an Australian shearer, or drover, or horse-breaker, the song became a truly indigenous one, whereas Botany Bay remained an English song that can be considered Australian only by adoption.

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(42) ibid., p. 93.

(43) See W. Roy Mackenzie, Ballads and Sea Songs of Nova Scotia, Harvard: 1928, p. 193 ff.

(44) A contemporary (horse-breaking) version of "The Banks of the Condamine" was collected in 1953 by Mr. Geoffrey Wills of Sydney, from Mr. George Conway of the Northern Territory.

A typical example of our third category of songs - those of which it can be said that they first certainly appear, so far as is known, as published, literary verse - is The Broken-Down Squatter. Like The Banks of the Condamine it was immensely popular for it appears, always as an anonymous old bush song, in several printed records,[45] and is still remembered by many old singers. By the end of the 'Nineties', although most versions had not departed very much from the original, some had converted the "broken-down squatter" into a "broken-down shearer."[46] But none of this could have been foreseen by the author who, above the signature of C.A.F., published his verses in the Portland Mirror of 8th July, 1885:

"Come, Stumpy, old man, we must shift while we can,
All your mates in the paddock are dead,
Let us wave our farewells to Glen Eva's sweet dells,
And the hills where your lordship was bred.
Together to roam from our drought-stricken home,
It seems hard that such things have to be.
And it's hard on a "hoss" when he's nought for a boss
But a broken-down squatter like me.

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(45) e.g. A.B. Paterson, op. cit., Vance Palmer, op. cit., Kenneth Mackay, Out Back, Lond. and Syd: 1893.

(46) Mr. J. Cashmere sings a version the chorus of which goes:

"For the stations are broke so they say,
And the squatters are all up a tree -
When the big bugs are brought to the Bankruptcy Court,
What chance for a shearer like me?"

Mrs. M. Byrnes' version is similar.

No more shall we muster the river for fats,
Nor spiel on the fifteen-mile plain.
Or rip through the scrub by the light of the moon,
Or see the old stockyard again.
Leave the slip panels down, it won't matter much now,
There are none but the crows left to see,
Perching gaunt on yon pine, as though longing to dine
On a broken-down squatter like me.

When the country was cursed with the drought at its worst,
And the cattle were dying in scores,
Though down on my luck, I kept up my pluck
Thinking justice might temper the laws.
But the farce has been played, and the Government aid
Ain't extended to squatters old son,
When my dollars were spent, they trebled the rent,
And resumed the best half of the run.

'Twas done without reason, for barring the season,
No squatter could stand such a rub,
For it's useless to squat, when the rents are so hot,
That one can't have the price of one's grub.
And there's not much to choose 'twixt the banks and the Jews,
Once a fellow gets put up a tree,
No odds what I feel - there's no court of appeal,
For a broken-down squatter like me."(47)

Probably because the great depression of the early 'nineties' and the following great drought of 1895-1902 made the poem vastly more apposite to outback conditions than it had been when published, "C.A.F.'s" work became a folk-ballad. The author had the role of folk-poet thrust upon him as it were. But sometimes literary men, more or

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(47) This version was kindly copied for me from the Portland Mirror by Margaret Kiddle. In a letter to Hugh Anderson of Melbourne, Mr. John Flower of Indooripilly, Queensland, writes that this ballad was written by his uncle, Mr. C.A. Flower.

less deliberately, wrote verses calculated to appeal to folk-singers. One of them was "Banjo" Paterson. In his The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses (48) there first appeared a poem entitled A Bushman's Song. It was published separately in quarto by Angus and Robertson on 2/9/96, with music arranged by E.P. Truman. Here is the text:

"I'm travelling down the Castlereagh, and I'm a station-hand,
I'm handy with the ropin'-pole, I'm handy with the brand,
And I can ride a rowdy colt, or swing an axe all day,
But there's no demand for a station-hand along the Castlereagh.

Chorus:

So it's shift, boys, shift, for there isn't the slightest doubt
That we've got to make a shift to the stations further out,
With the packhorse runnin' after, for he follows like a dog,
We must strike across the country at the old jig-jog.

This old black horse I'm ridin - if you'll notice what's his brand,
He wears the crooked R, you see - none better in the land.
He takes a lot of beatin', and the other day we tried,
For a bit of a joke, with a racing bloke, for twenty pound a side.

It was shift, boys, shift, for there wasn't the slightest doubt
That I had to make him shift, for the money was nearly out,
But he cantered home a winner, with the other one at the flog -
He's a red-hot sort to pick up with his old jig-jog.

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(48) Syd: 1895.

I asked a cove (49) for shearin' once along the Marthaguy:
"We shear non-union here," says he. "I call it scab," says I
I looked along the shearin' floor before I turned to go -
There were eight or ten dashed Chinamen a-shearin' in a row.

It was shift, boys, shift, for there wasn't the
slightest doubt
It was time to make a shift with the leprosy about.
So I saddled up my horses, and I whistled to my dog,
And I left his scabby station at the old jig-jog.

I went to Illawarra where my brother's got a farm;
He has to ask his landlord's leave before he lifts his arm:
The landlord owns the countryside - man, woman, dog, and
cat,
They haven't the cheek to dare to speak without they
touch their hat.

It was shift, boys, shift, for there wasn't the
slightest doubt
Their little landlord god and I would soon have fallen
out;
Was I to touch my hat to him? - was I his bloomin' dog?
So I makes for up the country at the old jig-jog.

But it's time that I was movin', I've a mighty way to go
Till I drink artesian water from a thousand feet below;
Till I meet the overlanders with the cattle comin' down -
And I'll work a while till I make a pile, then have a
spree in town.

So it's shift, boys, shift, for there isn't the
slightest doubt
We've got to make a shift to the stations further out:
The pack-horse runs behind us, for he follows like
a dog,
And we cross a lot of country at the old jig-jog."

There is no doubt that this song passed almost immediately into the repertoire of folk-singers on the western plains. Mr. Lee sang it to me in a slightly variant form along with

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(49) The earlier slang-meaning of "cove" was "boss".

The Back-Block Shearer, The Wild Colonial Boy, and other ballads, and was quite positive about its having been a popular "bush-song" fifty years ago. He volunteered the information that it had been written by Paterson, but it was clear that in his own mind this fact made no distinction in kind between it and other "old bush songs." Another old Riverina man, Mr. Joseph Cashmere,(50) confirmed the fact that the song had been very popular. Although he had had a much better formal education than Mr. Lee, being in fact the author of verse published in the Albury Banner and other papers,(51) and although he knew and loved many of Paterson's poems such as When Dacey Rode the Mule, he did not in any way connect A Bushman's Song with its author. To him it was just another old bush ballad which, in a slightly variant form, he sang under the title of The Old Jig-Jog.

For all that it is just possible that A Bushman's Song is not, like The Broken-Down Squatter, simply a piece of published, literary verse which was appropriated by folk-singers. In this and some other like cases the matter may be more complex. In the last decade of the nineteenth century Australian writers had discovered bush 'culture' and many of

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(50) Now of Sylvania, N.S.W.

(51) Mr. Cashmere says he had several articles and verses published in the Albury Banner, the Worker, and the Bulletin, always under the nom-de-plume of "Balgammon".

them, like Paterson and Lawson, drew their main inspiration from it.[52] From writing a poem like A Bushman's Song, based on the ideology current among pastoral workers and in their orally transmitted ballads, there is only a series of almost imperceptible gradations to the position of Louis Esson who, without acknowledgement, refurbished a folk-ballad and published it as his own. His soi-disant original poem, A Swagman's Song, correct but thoroughly insipid, if not downright arch, which appeared in the Bulletin of 2/3/1916,[53] goes like this:

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(52) Vance Palmer, Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, p. 68 et passim.

(53) p. 24. The best and longest version of the song known to me is typed on a sheet of paper pasted into one of the Mitchell Library's copies of the first edition of Paterson's Old Bush Songs. Here, for comparison with Esson's version, are the first stanza and the chorus "as sung by Mr. Jack Eather, Hawkesbury River District, New South Wales, one of Australia's champion blade shearers who shore upwards of 500,000 sheep in the days when shearers were shearers."

"Hurrah for the Lachlan,
Come join in my cheer,
For that's the place to make a cheque
At the end of the year,
When you reach a shady bend,
Your trouble's at an end,
Campin' for the shearin',
In a cosy little bend.

Chorus: With me four little Johnny cakes
All nicely cooked,
A nice little codfish
Fresh from the 'ook,
Little round flour bag
Sittin' on a stump,
Little tea and sugar bag,
Lookin' nice and plump."

"The long day's over, the journey's at an end,
I'm thinking to stay here by the river's bend.
How can I fare better wherever I may tramp?
It's all among the wattles I'll fix my camp.

I've three black fish
On a hook;
I've three johnny-cakes
I must cook;
Three little dilly-bags
Feel quite plump;
And the dashed old flour-bag
Dangles on a stump.

There's no more worry, there's no more wandering,
I'll roll out the bluey as happy as a king.
It's cool here and pleasant, the journey's at an end -
All among the wattles, by the river's bend.

Three little black fish
Just been cooked;
Three little johnny-cakes
Nearly cooked;
Three little dilly-bags
Feeling plump;
And the dashed old flour-bag
Dangling on a stump."
(54)

Nearly twenty years before the Red Page of the Bulletin had carried the following paragraph:

(55)
"Writes 6x8: Here's an old whaler's rhyme well-known on all Australian rivers. Yet no-one knows whence it came -

Little tea and sugar-bag
Looking nice and plump;
Three little johnny cakes
Standing on a stump;
Two little cod-fish
Hanging on the line -
Here's to a whaler's life
And Auld Lang Syne!"

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(54) In the issue of 9/4/1898.

(55) Tramp or swagman. Pastoral workers "on the track" often camped for more or less long periods by some "bend" of one of the western rivers to supplement their food-supply by "whaling" for murray-cod.

There was further correspondence in the issues of 18/5/98 and 9/7/98, giving more stanzas and other versions of the rhyme. One imagines that in such a case there was not necessarily any deliberate intention to defraud. After all, no-one owned the copyright, Esson called the verses, truthfully enough, A Swagman's Song, and he may have felt that the polished version, at any rate, was a truly literary product and his own.

More doubtfully, Henry Lawson's Captain of the Push (56) (though it seems always to have been recited and not sung) may have had the same kind of history. The poem describes humorously how "the captain of the push" (of Sydney larrikins) is bested by the simple-seeming "stranger from the bush". A typical stanza goes:

"'Now, look here,' exclaimed the captain to the stranger from the bush,
'Now, look here - suppose the Bleeders let you come and join the push,
Would you smash a bleedin' bobby if you got the blank alone?
Would you stoush a swell or Chinkie - split his garret with a stone?
Would you have a 'moll' to keep you - like to swear off work for good?'
'Yes, my oath!' replied the stranger. 'My kerlonial oath! I would!'"

Australian servicemen of World War II will remember the innumerable parodies of this stanza, all more or less un-

(56) Poetical Works of Henry Lawson, Syd: 1947, p. 339.

printable, which were and are current. Usually those who declaim them do not associate the verses with Lawson. His Captain of the Push may however have been based on, or at least inspired by, an earlier song which quite possibly achieved folk-status.(57) A popular song-book of 1887(58) prints some anonymous verses written in the same metre, and expressing the same motif. Sung to the tune of The Spider and the Fly, the first stanza went:

"Have you noticed in the city, with the Sydney going push,
How they often stare and giggle at us chaps from down the bush?
They take us out a winding [sic] and then turn up their nose;
They don't like our style of walking and they poke fun at our clothes.
Their own are made to measure, fitting neatly round the leg,
But Bushy's got a tenner where they've only got a peg."

I know of no evidence to suggest that A Bushman's Song may have grown in the same way out of an earlier folk-ballad, except that provided by the poem itself considered in the context of the whole body of Paterson's published

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(57) It is virtually certain that the even more celebrated verses of Jack Moses, The Dog Sat on the Tuckerbox Nine Miles From Gundagai, have a similar history (see Appendix I).

(58) Tibb's Popular Song Book, containing the latest hits on 'Bushy in Town', 'Australia's Oarsman', 'The Chinese and Federation', 'The Squatters' Defeat', 'Australia's Happy Land', 'The Jackaroo', &c., &c., Syd: (N.D. but 1887).

Some of the songs in this collection were or became genuine folk-songs; e.g. The Jackaroo, a variant of which was collected and published later by Paterson in Old Bush Songs.

verse. First, the great bulk of the latter is suitable for declamation but not for singing. In this respect A Bushman's Song and Waltzing Matilda are unique. Both possess a peculiar lilting rhythm which demands to be set to music. With Kiley's Run they are unique in making use of the incremental refrain, a device which, though not peculiar to folk-ballads, is typical of them. Second, and perhaps more significantly, these two poems are also unique among his works in expressing explicitly the strongly collectivist, egalitarian, class ideology of the outback pastoral workers.(59) This outlook, which pervades the whole of Lawson's work, is conspicuously absent, elsewhere, from Paterson's. For him all bushmen, as such, are fine romantic people, whether they are employers or employees. The hostility, especially bitter during the calamitous 1890's, between men and masters, is glossed over or, more usually, simply left out of the picture. Occasional verses dealing with city themes suggest that Paterson was strongly

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(59) cf. my article, "Collectivist Notions of a Nomad Tribe", in Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol. 6, No. 24, May 1955.

conservative in his general political outlook.(60) These considerations make it possible, though perhaps not probable, that A Bushman's Song was derived from or inspired by an earlier folk-ballad: but in the case of Waltzing Matilda there is, as well as the internal evidence of the verses themselves, sufficient external evidence(61) to make such a derivation probable. Paterson seems in fact to have based his version of Waltzing Matilda on a bush song which was in turn derived, like The Banks of the Condamine, from an early eighteenth century British song.

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(60) See, e.g., A.B. Paterson, Collected Verse, Syd: 1953, pp. 173-174: "It's Grand to Be a Squatter". Three stanzas read:

"It's grand to be a socialist
And lead the bold array
That marches to prosperity
At seven bob a day.

It's grand to be an unemployed
And lie in the Domain,
And wake up every second day -
And go to sleep again.

It's grand to be a democrat
And toady to the mob,
For fear that if you told the truth
They'd hunt you from your job."

And cf. idem., Happy Despatches, Syd: 1934, p. 82; and Vance Palmer, Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, Cap. 6

(61) Assembled briefly in my article, "Waltzing Matilda", in an Australian anthology to be published by Cheshire's (Melb.) in 1956. Sydney May supports the opposite view that Paterson was the sole author of the song - in his Story of Waltzing Matilda, Brisbane: 1944 ("improved and enlarged edition, 1955"). This work contains some interesting information but more which is irrelevant or confused.

We are now in a position to see the extraordinary complexities which arise the moment one seeks to define Australian folk-songs in terms of their origins. Some, like The Back-Block Shearer, begin as a quasi-communal composition among the people who sing them; some, like Botany Bay, derive from older British folk-ballads and popular songs; and some, like The Broken-Down Squatter, begin as published, literary verse. It is probable that Waltzing Matilda (at least if the words and the tune be considered as a unit) belongs to all three categories.

This is all very complicated but it is strictly in line with what may be called classical precedent. During the last two hundred years a tremendous amount of scholarly work has been done on the origins and nature of traditional English, Scottish and Irish folk-songs. It would be impossible in this introductory chapter to a thesis concerned with quite other matters to attempt to summarise the conclusions of all this research, but fortunately the task has been done by M.J.C. Hodgart.[62] His book does not seek to propound any new theories about traditional British ballads, but to be "a short summary of a few of the things

(62) The Ballads, Lond: 1950.
The Times Literary Supplement's reviewer (30/6/50, p.408) wrote "Mr. Hodgart has made an extremely useful short survey of the matters which are of most importance in ballad criticism. ... His discussion of the perennial problems of where the ballads come from and how they have fared is admirably fair and concise. ..."

that are known about them.[63] After considering the evidence he concludes that:

> "It is now fairly certain that communal improvisation can take place; ... But it is equally certain that it can hardly have produced the ballad versions we possess, ... they are not a "pure" folk art in their origins or in their development. Their beginnings have not yet been explained by one single theory. It must be concluded that they have a multiplicity of origins, and that the ballad writers took their material from a variety of sources. Their later history shows the mutual influence of oral tradition, print, and learned re-shaping. The ballads can be defined neither by their origins nor by the circumstances of their collection."[64][65]

For all that, the lover of folk-poetry is apt to feel like the plain man at the art gallery, who knows quite definitely what he likes though he finds it difficult to explain why. He knows a real folk-song, whether English or Australian, when he hears one, no matter how literary and self-conscious it may have been originally. In the words of the Melbourne Age's[66] reviewer of Vance Palmer's collection of folk-songs, "Nothing outside the vegetable kingdom emits a stronger smell of gum-leaves than the Australian ballad." And the plain man is right for folk-songs, after all, are in a very real sense the creation of the "folk". It is not their origins, but the changes they

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(63) ibid., p. 9

(64) ibid., pp. 158, 159.

(65) ibid., p. 163.

(66) Sat., March 24th, 1951.

undergo in the course of oral transmission by many singers, which gives them their essential character. As Hodgart says:

> "The only satisfactory definition of a 'folksong' is a song that has been transmitted orally: that is, learnt by word of mouth by one generation from preceding generations, without the assistance of the written word."(6

Strictly applied this definition could hardly be made to embrace British folk-songs since about 1500, let alone Australian ones, for ever since the invention of printing, broadsides and other printed or written versions have played an increasing part in the transmission of popular ballads. But as long as oral transmission remained the major vehicle - as it did in Australian pastoral areas until about fifty years ago - folk-songs retained their essential character. There is no doubt that their commercialisation by the printers of broadsides helped to cause a steady deterioration in their quality. From an aesthetic point of view a nineteenth century street-ballad was usually something utterly different from Edward, Edward (68) or Hind Horn, (69) but there is no fixed point at which a clear dividing line can be drawn. Attempts to do so result in such confessions of bankruptcy as A.L. Lloyd's in his otherwise very stimulating essay,

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(67) Hodgart, op. cit., p. 11

(68) John E. Housman (ed.), British Popular Ballads, Lond: 1952, p. 101.

(69) ibid,, p. 138.

The Singing Englishman.[70] Writing of street-ballads during the depression which followed the Napoleonic Wars he says:

> "ragged men trudged along the gutters and sang ... precisely the same miserable and undistinguished sort of things the unemployed hawked in the gutters and at the bus stops during the depression time of the early 1930's. We will let one specimen suffice as an example, which is no better and no worse than hundreds of its fellows, but ... they are so poor and so lacking in pride or passion or technique, or beauty or even surprise that they do not qualify as folksong at all but as something else, though I am not sure what:
>
> THE MECHANIC'S APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC.
>
> Mechanics now are at a stand,
> And trade in all quarters is bad.
> They're complaining all over the land
> And their children are hungry and sad.
>
> Travel Britain wherever you will,
> You may behold everything dead,
> The tradesmen are all standing still
> And their children are crying for bread.
>
> Then, good people, attend to my rhymes,
> And pity a mechanic reduced;
> For appealing to you in these times,
> I submissively hope you'll excuse."[71]

To anticipate the argument a little one might suggest that The Mechanic's Appeal does "qualify as a folk-song", both because it was probably transmitted mainly orally, and because it probably expressed as accurately as Johnie

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(70) "A Festival Year Re-issue of An Introduction to Folk-Song", A W.M.A. Publication."

(71) ibid., p.48 (my italics).

Armstrong,[72] if not as felicitously, the attitude to the life they knew of those who sang it.

From the sixteenth century traditional country folk-songs were commonly printed by street ballad-mongers along with their own doggerel accounts of the latest murder or shipwreck.[73] Not all of the first kind were as aesthetically pleasing as those which have found their way into anthologies, and not all of the second were aesthetically contemptible. Each style acted and re-acted upon the other. Even as late as the 1890's, and in Australia, one stanza of an indigenous folk-song retained, somewhat incongruously, a traditional phrase from the Robin Hood cycle:

"There's the fox and the bear[74]
The badger[75] and the hare,
And the birds in the greenwood tree,
And there's the pretty little rabbits
So engaging in their habits,
They've all got a mate but me."[76]

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(72) John E. Housman, op. cit., p. 190.

(73) G.H. Gerould, op. cit., p. 241; and Donal O'Sullivan, Irish Folk Music and Song, Dublin: 1952, p. 47.

(74) Koala.

(75) Common bush slang for 'wombat'.

(76) This stanza was remembered and sung by Mrs. M. Byrnes, whose girlhood was spent in a small farming district near Orange. In another stanza (not another version of the same stanza), quoted by "Giles Seagram" [J.H. Driscoll] in his novel, Bushmen All, Melb: 1908, p. 316, the equivalent line has been "naturalised" to "And the 'possum in the old gum tree". Driscoll spent many years as a worker in the pastoral industry in western N.S.W. and northern S.A. .

The essential distinguishing mark of a folk-song is that it should show signs of what Hodgart, quoting Gerould, calls "communal re-creation".(77) Still following Gerould, Hodgart points out that, no matter what its origin,

> "in the course of oral transmission from one generation to another, a ballad does not necessarily degenerate but may in fact, improve, and that many of the best characteristics of ballad poetry are the result of successive variations by a series of folk-singers."(78)

Further Hodgart quotes Cecil Sharp on ballad music and shows that his remarks are equally applicable to the words:

> "the most typical qualities about the folksong have been laboriously acquired during its journey down the ages, in the course of which its individual angles and irregularities have been rubbed and smoothed away, just as the pebble on the seashore has been rounded by the action of the waves."(79)

Of course the waves of popular usage have not had much time to do their work in Australia. Here the recorded folk versions of a song usually differ little from the 'original' - in that minority of cases where there is a literary 'original' available; but in some cases, such as that of The Wild Colonial Boy,(80) the process of communal re-creation has proceeded very far, and in practically all

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(77) G.H. Gerould, op. cit., p. 170 ff.

(78) M.J.C. Hodgart, op. cit., p. 157.

(79) loc. cit.

(80) See Cap. VII, infra.

genuine Australian folk-songs it is possible to see it at work. For instance, even in the case of Waltzing Matilda which has been 'fixed' by Paterson in many thousands of printed copies, the great majority of people still learn the song by ear; and this fact has resulted in turn, in the printing of versions which, though usually ascribed to Paterson, vary quite noticeably from both his texts. (81)

As an example of a song's being improved - at least in parts - by communal re-creation we may take The Old Bark Hut, which was possibly first written, or at least 'fixed' in written form, by one William Perrie, a veterinary surgeon

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(81) The first printed version of Waltzing Matilda known to exist, was that published in 1903 by James Inglis and Co. as an advertisement for "Billy" tea. The words are ascribed to A.B. Paterson. Another version, virtually identical, appeared in the Australasian Students' Song Book (1911). In Saltbush Bill J.P. and Other Verses (1917), Paterson published another, and aesthetically much inferior, version of the song. For versions differing from the above see, e.g., Will Lawson (ed.), Australian Bush Songs and Ballads, Syd: 1944, pp.77-78; and Thomas Wood, Cobbers, Oxford: 1934, p.207; and see Appendix II.

of Dungog, perhaps in the 1860's.[82] One stanza of Perrie's 'original', referring to an old gin-case used as a combination seat and meat-safe, reads thus:

"If you should leave it open, and the flies should find
your meat,
They will not leave a single piece that's fit for man
to eat.
But you mustn't curse nor grumble, as the maggots out
you cut -
What's out of sight is out of mind, in an old bark hut!"[83]

The same stanza, in a version sent to Paterson about forty years later reads as follows:

"If you should leave it open, and the flies should find
your meat,
They'll scarcely leave a single piece that's fit for man
to eat.
But you mustn't curse nor grumble, what won't fatten
will fill up -
For what's out of sight is out of mind in an old bark
hut!"[84]

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(82) Will Lawson, op. cit., p.82. A note to the ballad reads: "These verses were written in the shepherding days - when fences were few and far between - at Dungog, New South Wales. William Perrie was a veterinary surgeon in practice there. The above lines differ in some respects from a former version; but are quoted from the original manuscript - Jas. R. Scott." I have found nothing to disprove the substantial accuracy of this statement. Scott was Deputy Coroner at Cessnock, N.S.W., and Dungog is about sixty miles away in the same (Lower Hunter River) district. Scott's notes (pp.95-96) to another ballad composed in the district, "Billy Barlow", are perfectly reliable (cf. Appendix X). However, some other of Scott's notes, not based on local knowledge, are wildly fanciful. (e.g. his note p. 106 to "Sandy's Fight").

(83) Will Lawson, op. cit., p. 81.

(84) A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, Syd: 1930, p. 15

Another stanza of Perrie's version goes:

"The bucket you boil your beef in must carry the water, too -
They say you're getting 'above your boots' if you should ask for two.
I've a billy-can, a pint-pot, and a knife that scarce will cut;
They all adorn the table in the old bark hut."(85)

In a version sent to me from the Gulf country in 1953, this stanza has become:

"Now the billy I boil me beef in, I carry me water too,
And they would think me very flash if I should ask for two.
There's a treacle-can, a frying-pan, and a poley-handled cup -
They all go on the table in the old bark hut."(86)

The substitution of the indigenous and striking "poley-handled cup" for the correct but 'literary' "knife that scarce will cut" is an unusually inspired example of what is meant by the process of folk re-creation. Changes, though always in this direction, are not always so happy; but we may safely say that the best objective criterion

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(85) Will Lawson, op. cit., p. 80.

(86) Reported by Mr. Gordon Hinchcliffe, a young shearer and station-hand, as being "sung in the cattle camps of the Gulf Country, N.Q."
A "poley" cow or bullock is one without horns.

of an Australian ballad's genuineness is the number of extant variants, or the number of references to its having been sung, which can be found.(87)

Nevertheless, evidence of communal re-creation, though certainly sufficient, is not absolutely necessary, at least with the Australian material, to establish authenticity. This would be so, if for no other reason, because hitherto there has been so little collecting of folk-ballad texts done in Australia.(88) The pioneer collector must, as Child did with the British material, exercise some subjective judgment. After all, the survival of variants, and of references to a song's having been sung, prove first of all its popularity, and only incidentally its genuineness. There are many Australian ballads such as The Wallaby Brigade(89) which survive, as far as is now known, in only one version. It may be forever impossible to prove that this particular ballad was ever sung or recited at all, let alone that it

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(87) cf. Francis P. Magoun Jr., "Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Poetry", in Speculum: A Journal of Mediaeval Studies, Vol. XXVIII (1953), pp.446-467, esp. p. 447

(88) M. J.C. Hodgart, op. cit., p. 12: "Child himself left no definition of the kind of ballad he was looking for, and he never explained the principles by which he selected or rejected ballads and versions. He relied on his ear and his knowledge of folksong." et passim.

(89) A.B. Paterson, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

was passed on orally from singer to singer. Yet it would probably be equally impossible to persuade anyone familiar with the whole field of Australian folk-song that The Wallaby Brigade is not as genuine a folk-ballad as ever was. Its style, mood, and sentiments, and the circumstances of its collection, are decisively characteristic.

Even in America, where a tremendous amount of collecting has been done for fifty years past, recent ballad scholarship is tending more and more to recognise that songs surviving in only one text may be perfectly genuine without having ever been particularly widespread or popular. As Dr. Greenway says:

> "The requirement of persistence - that a song must be sung by the folk for a 'reasonable' or 'fair' period of time - is a guage of popularity, not of authenticity. ..... The requirement of transmissional changes is hardly more convincing than that of persistence.... Like the qualification of oral transmission, the requirement of transmissional changes is valid only as a proof that the folk have taken possession of a song; it should not be considered as a criterion in itself."(90)

A satisfactory and realistic definition of folk-song, continues Greenway, must be:

> "of greater flexibility than traditional interpretations..., yet rigid enough to distinguish folksong from material on the lowest level of conscious art, like popular song.

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(90) John Greenway, American Folk Songs of Protest, Univ. of Pennsylvania: 1953, p. 7.

> It must be built on the solid base that folksongs are songs of the folk; its qualifications should be seen as nothing more than tests by which full folk possession can be determined. ... If an individual is the sole author of a folksong he must speak not for himself but for the folk community as a whole, and in folk idiom. ... his function is not that of a consciously creative artist, but that of a spokesman for the community, an amanuensis for the illiterate, or, to put it more precisely for the inarticulate. It is impersonality of authorship, not anonymity of authorship, that is a requisite of genuine folksong.... the songs must be in the possession of the folk, communally owned, so that any member of the folk may feel that they are his to change if he wishes. ... the folksong should be concerned with the interests of the folk, whatever they may be. ..."(91)

Summing up, we may say that an Australian folk-song may begin life as the composition of a bush folk-singer, as a parody or adaptation of an earlier British folk-song, as a popular or drawing-room song, or as a piece of published, literary verse. Sometimes, as perhaps in the case of "Waltzing Matilda", several or even all of these processes may have gone to its making. But whatever its origins, a certain piece of verse becomes a folk-song when, by reason of its sentiments, or form, or music, it appeals sufficiently to the members of a certain social group possessed of a ballad-singing tradition, to be taken up by them. Evidence of communal re-creation by this group is a

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(91) ibid., p. 8. And cf. Reginald Nettel, Sing a Song of England: A Social History of Traditional Song, Lond: 1954, pp. 246-271. Nettel's conclusions are broadly in agreement with Greenway's.

certain and sufficient, though not a necessary, hallmark of its genuineness. Where this evidence is wanting, the authenticity of the song can be checked by comparing it with the many folk-songs whose status is established. In practice there will always remain some doubtful cases.

Although the theory of communal authorship has been discredited, communal possession and communal transmission of the songs is more central than ever to the definition of folk-ballads. Study of the Australian material leads, independently, to the general conclusion reached by overseas scholarship, that, in the simplest possible terms, folk-songs are simply songs sung by the folk. If we are to avoid complete tautology we must seek an answer to the obvious questions, "Who, precisely, and in Australian terms, are the 'folk'? And by what criteria does this mysterious body claim some songs for its own, while ignoring or rejecting others?" These problems must be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter II

WHO WERE THE FOLK IN AUSTRALIA?

"For I'm a ramble-eer, a rollicking ramble-eer,
I'm a roving rake of poverty, and a son of a gun for beer."

There is no real difficulty in fixing the identity of the "folk" who sang, and sometimes composed, Australian ballads. A glance through A.B. Paterson's Old Bush Songs is enough to establish that most Australian ballads mirror the outlook and the way of life of the semi-migratory pastoral workers of the western slopes and plains - the drovers, shepherds, shearers, bullock-drivers, stockmen, boundary-riders, station-hands and, less emphatically, gold-diggers of the last century. Intensive collection and further study of texts only strengthens the impression that it was these people who made up the ballad-singing community in Australia.

Of course this does not mean that the ballads were never sung by people other than pastoral workers, nor that some songs were not the property of other groups. In particular the British city street-ballad tradition, though much weakened by transplantation, proved surprisingly long-lived in Australia. The street-ballad muse, as in Britain,

was inspired particularly by such events as provide the most sensational newspaper headlines - murders, disasters, and sporting triumphs.[1] The chorus of one still current street-ballad goes:

"There lies young Les Darcy,
Who we know was so ill-advised.
When the sad news reached us,
How the tears stood in our eyes.
His one great ambition
Was to fight at the Golden Gate,
But the Voice that called him from us
Proved to be the sad hand of Fate!" [sic]

Sometimes, as in the case of The Fight on George's River Ground,[2] street-ballads were taken up by station workers and became a part of their repertoire.

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(1) This version was reported to me by Mr. Dan Russell, well-known black-and-white artist. Another version was collected by Mrs. Parker from Mrs. Annie Macdonald, Don Street, Bowen, N.Q., who said she had "been singing it for thirty years and you can still hear a pin drop when I sing it." Darcy was a champion boxer, born at Maitland, N.S.W., who died at Memphis, Tennessee, in 1917.

(2) Will Lawson, Australian Bush Songs and Ballads, Syd:1944 p.105. The ballad celebrated a very famous prize-fight which took place on March 28th, 1871. The original holograph is preserved in a scrap-book kept by its author, M.J. Conlon, and now in the possession of the National Library, Canberra.

Broadsheets were sold readily at 3d. each, some of the profits being added to a purse which was presented to Foley by his admirers at the Masonic Hall, York St., in May, 1871.

There are a few so-called free-selector songs but nearly all of these[3] seem in fact to have been pastoral workers' songs about (and in derision of) the life of the "petty" agriculturalist.[4] The small farmers themselves, because of the nature of their work and of Australian geography, had comparatively few opportunities for social song.[5] The evidence suggests too that when they did sing they were much more prone to preserve, with few changes, purely English, Irish or Scots songs, than they were to make or adopt new songs about the new land. Small farming proprietors are traditionally conservative. In the United States of America traditional British ballads were conserved mainly by such 'peasant' communities as those of the Appalachian or Ozark Mountains - not by the wage-earning cowboys of the west;[6] and so it was here. The following

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(3) e.g. A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, Syd: 1930, "New England Cocky" p. 51, "The Stringy-Bark Cockatoo" p. 82, "The Eumerella Shore" p. 85.

(4) cf. W.K. Hancock, Australia, Lond: 1946, p. 166 "The very soil and climate of Australia seemed to have a grudge against petty individualism ..."

(5) J.R. Skemp, Memories of Myrtle Bank, Melb: 1952, p.75 ff., p. 141 ff..

(6) J.T. Adams gives some reasons why this should have been so. See A.M. Schlesinger and D.R. Fox (eds.), A History of American Life, 12 vols., New York: 1927, Vol.III, pp.141-142.

fragment is from a song popular sixty years ago in the small-farming, hilly community of Springside, near Orange, N.S.W.[7] It is typical in being simply a version of a British folk-song,[8] practically unaffected by its strange environment:

"It's of a rich old farmer,
He lived out there close by.
He had one only daughter,
And on her I cast an eye.
I asked her if she would be pleased
For me to cross the main,
And if she would prove true to me
Till Death would prove unkind;
And we kissed, shook hands, and parted,
And I left my love behind."

Anything less typical of what is usually meant by an "old bush song" would be quite hard to find.

There are also a few ballads which began life as the property of squatters rather than of their employees but these, at least in those cases where variant versions have survived, display a notable tendency to come down in the world. Thus the "broken-down squatter" of 1885 became in some later versions a "broken-down shearer."[9]

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(7) Sung to me by Mrs. Mary Byrnes.

(8) For a contemporary and more complete American version of the song, see John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads, Revised & Enlarged, New York: 1952.

(9) Cap. 1, p. 21, supra.

In other cases squatters' songs, which treat sarcastically of the crudities and hardships of outback life, are taken over by their employees and subtly changed in the process of folk re-creation. The sarcasm remains but is turned back upon the squatter or new-chum who, at the task of assimilating himself to the new environment, is felt to have been less successful than the song's new proprietors. The change is shown particularly clearly in a ballad called in Paterson's collection The Beautiful Land of Australia. The song was apparently (X) composed in 1844 by Lieut. John Henderson of H.M. Ceylon Rifles, an aspiring squatter who landed in Sydney on August 3rd in that year. It is too long to quote in full but the flavour may be tasted in the following few lines:

"My convicts were always drinking rum,
I often wished they were up a gum-
Tree - or that I had never come
To the horrible bush of Australia.

Illawarra, Moneroo, Parramatta, Woolloomooloo, [sic]
If you wouldn't become a kangaroo,
Don't go to the bush of Australia."

The author did not become a kangaroo even metaphorically, but returned to England in time to publish his book in 1851.(10) His convicts and their workmates, not being in a

(10) John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales; with Pictures of Squatting Life in the Bush; etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1851, Vol. I., p. 61 ff..

(X) But not actually. Recently an unique broadsheet of this ballad, imprinted Feb. 23rd. 1842, has been discovered among the papers of Dr. John Goodwin, medico and settler at Scone in the Hunter River valley from 1840 until 1859.

position to follow his example, remained to make the best of the outlandish country - and something rather different of the ballad. When next recorded in 1860 the lines had become:

"My convict rogues were always drunk,
And kept me in a constant funk,
When every night to bed I slunk,
I wished myself out of Australia.

Illawarra, Woolongon, [sic]
Parramatta, Mittagong,
Famous subject for a song, (11)
Thy charms, O bush of Australia!"

The squatter's nonchalant disdain has already given way to what his "convict rogues" doubtless felt to be a more appropriate attitude towards them. In the late version collected by Paterson (12) the 'rogues' have become 'men', their master's capitulation is even more abject, and the irony of the chorus is directed, at least by implication, not so much at "the bush of Australia" as at those who failed to come to terms with it:

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(11) Mrs. Vidal, Bengala: or Some Time Ago, 2 vols., Lond:1860, Vol. I, pp. 135-137. The novel describes squatting life from the point of view of a cultivated English visitor before the Gold Rush. In it the song is sung by "a great acquisition - young Mr. Henley, from England - looking about him, you know ... to see what a settler's life is." Nevertheless it already shows signs of folk re-creation. If re-written by the authoress simply for the purposes of the story, the changes in sentiment and style would scarcely have been of this kind.

(12) op. cit., pp. 22-25

"My convict men were always drunk,
They kept me in a constant funk.
Says I to myself as to bed I slunk,
How I wish I was out of Australia.

Booligal, Gobarralong,
Emu Flat and Jugiong.
If you wish to become an ourang-outang,
Then go to the bush of Australia."

Finally there are extant several early ballads which belong to convicts as such rather than to migratory bushmen, to small farmers, or to town workmen. However, it will be found useful and natural to consider these convict ballads as directly ancestral to those of the pastoral workers for, as we shall see, convicts and ex-convicts comprised the majority of station-hands up till about 1845; (13) and for many years after that date these 'old hands', as they were called, continued to exert upon the outlook of bush workers an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. The three variants just quoted from The Beautiful Land of Australia are eloquent though indirect testimony to the nature and extent of this influence.

The convict songs merge into those of the pastoral workers which form the main body of material with which we are concerned. Comparatively and absolutely town street-ballads, farmers' and selectors' songs, and songs of the squatters were few. Comparatively also they derived much

(13) See Table VII, Cap. V, infra.

more directly from traditional British ballads, both as regards their actual texts and the outlook they embodied. Each group represented scanty remnants of a dying tradition which barely survived transplantation from the mother country. None, with the partial exception of the street-ballads, gave rise to an indigenous Australian tradition of any importance. The case is very different with the 'old bush songs' which constitute the overwhelming bulk of all folk-ballads sung in Australia in the last century. Such ballads as The Wild Colonial Boy, The Old Bullock Dray, The Overlander, The Dying Stockman and The Ramble-eer are typical.(14) The last-mentioned may be quoted here as it shows, more clearly and directly than most, the consciousness of essential unity, and the distinctive ethos, possessed by the semi-nomadic pastoral workers who formed the 'folk':

"The earth rolls on through empty space, its journey never done;
It's entered for a starry race throughout the kingdom come.
And, as I am a bit of earth, I follow it because -
And to prove I am a rolling stone and never gather moss.

Chorus: For I am a ramble-eer, a rollicking ramble-eer,
I'm a roving rake of poverty, and son of a gun for beer.

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(14) Versions of all these songs are given in A.B. Paterson, op. cit.

I've done a bit of fossicking for tucker[15] and for gold;
I've been a menial rouseabout[16] and a rollicking shearer bold.
I've 'shanked' across the Old Man Plain, after busting up a cheque,
And 'whipped the cat'[17] once more again, though I haven't met it yet.

I've done a bit of droving of cattle and of sheep,
And I've done a bit of moving with 'Matilda'[18] for a mate;
Of fencing I have done my share, wool-scouring, on the green,[19]
Axeman, navvy. Old Nick can bear me out in what I haven't been.

I've worked the treadmill thresher, the scythe and reaping-hook,
Been wood-and-water fetcher for Mary Jane the cook;
I've done a few 'cronk' things too, when I have struck a town,
There's few things I wouldn't do - but I never did 'lambing down'.[20]

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(15) Food.

(16) A general labourer or 'hand' on a station, particularly one employed about and in the shearing-shed in the season.

(17) 'Cried over spilt milk'.

(18) 'Swag' - bundle of belongings rolled up in blanket or piece of tarpaulin and carried on the busman's back. The earliest use of the printed word 'Matilda' known to me is in the Sydney Bulletin, 19/5/1888, p.8.

(19) Spreading wool out to dry on the ground after it has been washed.

(20) To 'blue' or squander on debauchery a cheque of one's own, or (of shanty-keepers and others) to despoil another of his money, often of a whole season's earnings. cf. C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, Syd: 1945 edn., pp.150-151: "When sheep are lambing, men are sent into the paddocks to see that everything goes smoothly. The process is called 'lambing down'. By a gentle metaphor the words have been transferred to the assistance which in the old days it was customary for publicans to give to men who came in to get rid of a cheque. The man handed the cheque over the bar. ... A little later he lost consciousness." And cf. a piece of popular verse, of the sort which could have become a folk-song - "Lambed Down", by "Jerry", Bulletin 3/8/1889.

The subject of this thesis is the life and outlook of the community of which the "Rollicking Ramble-eer" felt himself to be a worthy member. In nineteenth century Australia this particular social group developed a surprisingly high degree of cohesion and self-consciousness but, in isolating it for the purposes of study, some distortion may be inevitable. In fact, of course, pastoral workers were constantly influencing, and being influenced by, other sections of colonial society. A convict often spent months or years on government constructional work in the city before being assigned to the service of a country settler, or he might be returned to the city after some years 'up the country'.(21) Small farmers and selectors often sought work as shearers on the western runs to supplement their income,(22) and many a city wage-earner did the same for a few seasons, especially during bad times when work was scarce on the sea-board.(23) Bullock-drivers, especially before railways began to creep farther and farther into the interior after about 1870, regularly flogged their teams from the colonial capitals and coastal ports to outback stations and back again. They carried

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(21) F.K. Crowley, Working Class Conditions in Australia 1788-1851, Melb. Ph.D. thesis, 7/11/1949, p.3.

(22) Francis Adams, The Australians, A Social Sketch, Lond: 1893, p.160 ff..

(23) W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening, Syd:1909, p.83 et passim, and cf. John Freeman, Lights and Shadows of Melbourne Life, Lond: 1888, p.35: "Summer is the 'slack season' in the padding kens [cheap lodging houses], as many of their patrons then go 'on the Wallaby track' and do not return to Melbourne till the winter sets in."

news, gossip, manners and songs, as well as stores, wool and hides.[24] Drovers brought not only cattle and sheep to the city markets but also exotic styles of dress, speech and behaviour, wherewith to impress respectable citizens and newly arrived immigrants.[25] And many a bushman from the interior settled down in the agricultural areas or the city, after a happy marriage or old age had terminated his roving habits. As Alan Marshall writes of his father:

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(24) E. Marin La Meslee, L'Australie Nouvelle, Paris: 1883, p.133, and Chas. Macalister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South, Goulburn: 1907, pp. 50, 51: "A chief house of call for us country folk then [in the 1840's when Macalister as a lad, was bullock-driving between the Goulburn district and Sydney] was the old Blackboy Hotel, at the corner of George and King Streets. A kind of theatre or people's music-hall was kept in connection with this hotel, where the leading comedians and singers were Jim Brown and 'Micky' Drew; but as the platform of the Blackboy 'theatre' was somewhat free and easy, sometimes a strong sailorman, just off a six months cruise, would favour us with "Nancy Lee" or other jolly sea-song; or an ambitious carrier or drover would 'rouse the possum' by giving some long-winded ditty of the time."

(25) See versions of the popular ballad, "The Overlander" in The Queenslanders' New Colonial Camp Fire Song Book etc., Brisbane: 1865; the Native Companion Songster etc., Brisbane, 1889; and in A.B. Paterson, op. cit.

And cf.: F. Lancelott Esq., Australia As It Is etc., 2 vols Lond: 1852, Vol.II, pp.91-93, esp. "In Melbourne, prior to the gold discoveries, half a dozen of these hardy, sun-tanned teamsmen might frequently be seen together, enjoying their nobblers, or bottled stout, while waiting for loads; some with gold rings on their fingers, others with thick moustaches, or long beards, all rough and jolly as sailors, and more free and independent than princes. They earn much money, but many, the unmarried especially, spend their all in the grog shop."

> "after he started work he drifted round from station to station horsebreaking or droving. His youth and early manhood were spent in the outback areas of New South Wales and Queensland, and it was these areas that furnished the material for all his yarns. Because of his tales, the saltbush plains and the red sand-hills of the outback were closer to me than the green country where I was born and grew to manhood."(26)

In some ways it is most difficult of all to consider the pastoral workers apart from their employers, those who came to be known in and after the late 1830's as squatters. Right through the nineteenth century there is abundant evidence of class hostility between pastoral employers and employees. It culminated in the disastrous and bitter strikes between 1890 and 1894. This hostility was itself a very important factor in conditioning the distinctive ideology of the pastoral employees and yet, except in the case of absentee landlords who multiplied exceedingly towards the end of the period,(27) it was always qualified and conditional. The differences between master and man were economic and

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(26) Alan Marshall, I Can Jump Puddles, Melb: 1955, p. 5.

(27) B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, Melb: 1941, pp.384-388; N.G. Butlin, Historical Studies, Melb: May, 1950, "Company Ownership of New South Wales Pastoral Stations", and cf. "Times Special Correspondent", Letters from Queensland, Lond: 1893, pp.70-72.

often political, but in some cases (28) not social. At least in the earliest pioneering stage, before the squatter's wife arrived to define more rigidly the barrier between 'the house' and 'the huts', conditions forced a certain degree of understanding between the occupants of both. (29) Moreover, although

(28) e.g. H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life in Australia During a Residence of Eight Years in the Interior, Lond: 1848, p.96 ff.: "He was a native-born white, and had been a stockowner all his life. His parents had given him a few cows and brood-mares at his birth, and he was now, by dint of time and industry, the owner of many thousands of cattle. But though fully possessed of the means, he had no wish to alter his style of living for the better, or to rest in any way from his hard and laborious employment. ..."

See also A.B.Pierce, Knocking About etc., Yale and Lond: 1924, pp.94-95. But Pierce says that this type of squatter was "small and fast-disappearing" circa 1870; and Sydney Bulletin, 15/7/1882, p.9, implies the same thing. Margaret Kiddle's study of the Western District of Victoria shows that the same tendency, from the first settlement, was even more marked there. The process is partly explained by the natural disposition of second and third generation squatters to acquire education and manners suitable to their station in life. E.M. La Meslée (op. cit., p.96) describes a splendidly refined young man, just back from three years at Oxford, whose father, a wealthy squatter, had begun life in Australia as a penniless outback shepherd.

(29) James Backhouse, A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies, Lond: 1843, p.434; and S. Sidney, Gallops and Gossips in the Bush of Australia, Lond: 1854, p.58: "Now, living in the Bush, and especially while travelling, there is not the same distance between a master and a well-behaved man, although a prisoner, as in towns..."

climate, economic factors, and the effects of land legislation[30] generally combined to make it difficult for a poor man to become a squatter, it was by no means impossible. Many an unknown workman like James Tyson or Sidney Kidman, by superior industry, temperance, or skill in cattle-duffing, became a 'shepherd king'; and, especially in times of drought or depression like the early 1840's or 1890's, many a squatter was reduced to working for wages at one of the bush trades.[31] The truth seems to be that the working hands, while feeling strongly opposed to their masters in general and in principle, were prepared to take each individual squatter as they found him.[32] Also, as the work of the dispossessed squatter's son, A.B. Paterson, no less than that of Furphy shows, "there was a region, or so it seemed, where the thought and feeling

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(30) B. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., p.59; and E.G. Shann, An Economic History of Australia, (Austn. edn.): 1948, pp.207-211, and p.233, "And it came to pass that demagogues dispersed the public estate and pastoralists gathered up the freehold thereof."

(31) John Henderson, op. cit., Vol. II, p.244 (concerning the depression of 1841-44): "Many most distressing cases came within my own knowledge; and when we hear of such things as of an old military officer reduced to the necessity of letting himself out to hire as a bullock-driver; or of a shepherd suing his master for a year's wages ... the pass at which things had arrived may be imagined." cf. for the depression of the early 1890's, The Broken-Down Squatter, supra, p.21

(32) Joseph Furphy, Such Is Life, Syd: 1948 edn., p.205 ff.

of the station was identical with that of the shed."[33] The region was that in which the interests of both conflicted with those of absentee squatters, pastoral companies, banks, and other institutions domiciled in the cities or in Great Britain.[34] The rather complex relationship between masters and men was thus described by an English visitor in 1903:

> "It is sometimes said that in Australia there are no class distinctions. It would probably be truer to say that in no country in the world are there such strong class-distinctions in proportion to the actual amount of difference between the 'classes'. ... The 'classes' collectively distrust and fear the 'masses' collectively far more than is the case at home. ... Individually, it is true, relations are for the most part amicable enough between capitalists and workmen; and the lack of deference in the tone of employees, their employers, being unable to resent, have grown to tolerate, and even perhaps in some cases secretly rather to like. ..."[35]

These connections between the pastoral workers and members of other social and economic groups will be dealt with more fully later. They have been mentioned here because a general survey of the field to be studied should include some indication of its boundaries: but the field itself is the life

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(33) Vance Palmer, Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, p.109; and cf. A.B. Paterson, Collected Verse, Syd: 1953, pp.41-43 "On Kiley's Run"; and John Manifold, "The Banjo" in Overland, Nos. 1 and 2, 1954. Manifold greatly exaggerates this side of Paterson's feeling.

(34) See footnote 27 supra.

(35) Percy F. Rowland, The New Nation, Lond: 1903, p.119 ff.

and outlook of the pastoral proletariat which constituted Australia's principal ballad community. In examining these it will be necessary, even at the risk of some artificiality, to concentrate upon those things which distinguished the pastoral workers from members of other groups, rather than upon those things which were common to all.

Up to about 1900 the prestige of the bushman seems to have been greater than that of the townsman. In life as in folklore the man from 'up the country' was usually regarded as a romantic and admirable figure. The attitude towards him was reminiscent, in some interesting ways, of that toward the 'noble savage' in the eighteenth century. The evidence suggests that he had more influence on the manners and mores of the city-dweller than the latter had on his. The tide turned somewhere between 1900 and 1918. Even to-day the tradition of the 'noble bushman' is still very strong in both literature and folklore; but at least since the publication in 1904 of On Our Selection, it has been counterpoised by the opposing tradition of "Dad and Mum, Dave and Mabel". True, Dad and Dave were not pastoral

workers, bushmen proper,[36] but poor selectors, 'stringy-bark cockatoos',[37] who were sneered at by the men from farther out long before it became fashionable for townsmen to regard them as figures of fun. True it is too that A.H. Davis's ("Steele Rudd's") original people were real comic characters, and not the semi-moronic, burlesque puppets which they have since become in popular imagination.[38] Nevertheless their appearance in literature fifty years ago was symptomatic of a real change in Australian attitudes towards the 'bush'. Since the early days of federation the capital

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(36) cf. "A Clergyman Thirteen Years Resident in the Interior of N.S.W." [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is etc., Lond: 1867, pp.9-10: The author remarks on the comparative ease with which an emigrant can settle down in agricultural districts nearer the coast and then continues:- "The squatting, or grazing, cattle-breeding, wool-growing parts of the country - Australia proper - have many characteristics in common, and the observations of the writer have a wide general application in regard to those districts. ..." Also F. Adams, op. cit., pp. 12-13: "In another hundred years the man of the Interior - the veritable 'bushman' - will be as far removed from the man of the sea-slope as the Northern Frenchman from the Southern, as the Castilian from the Andalusian. ..." et passim.

(37) See my article "Australian Folk-Ballads and Singers", in Meanjin, 3/1954, pp.378-379 et passim.

(38) See review article in Sydney Morning Herald, 20/9/1953, and introduction to On Our Selection, Syd: 1954 edn.

cities have grown rapidly both in prestige and in their relative share of state populations, and bushmen are now usually willing to be mistaken for city-dwellers where formerly the reverse was the case.(39)

If the ballad-singing pastoral workers were such a distinct social group as has been suggested above, we should expect them to exhibit certain characteristics common to other ballad communities. As Hodgart writes:

> "The ballads are closely associated with a particular way of living and thinking; in one sense, the folklore is the poetry. ... The ballads are a record of social history, and many of them reflect a distinctive type of community and a distinctive set of social values."(40)

What features of this "particular way of living and thinking" are common to all, or at least to many, ballad communities, however widely separated by time and space?

The Scottish borderers, the singers of the Robin Hood ballads, the Serbian mountaineers, and the American ballad-singers of the Southern Appalachians, to go no further, were all members of relatively poor communities, and all were, at best, imperfectly literate. All were more or less cut off, by distance or by poor communications, from the centres

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(39) Manifestly this statement is not true of the squatter who usually likes to be known as such for economic and social (in the vulgar sense of that word) reasons. But the typical squatter to-day is as much at home in the city as he is in the bush, and his station homestead is an example of urbs in rure.

(40) The Ballads, Lond: 1950, p.34, p.131.

of urban civilisation and from the powerful central government which it usually implies. In all, traditional customs and usages had as much or more force than the official law of the land.(41) In spite of their poverty, and partly because of their comparative isolation, all these communities enjoyed a certain degree of economic and cultural independence. All were situated in frontier areas,(42) and all exhibited more or

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(41) cf. Anthony Trollope, Australia and New Zealand, Melb: 1876, p.68: "We all know the difficulty which is felt in Ireland as to getting evidence against the perpetrators of agrarian violence. There is the same difficulty in these colonies with reference to the cattle-stealer. ... The law is severe, but is too often inoperative..."

By contrast, the traditional custom of issuing rations from station stores to passing travellers was so universally observed that it was believed by bushmen to be the squatters' legal obligation. I was solemnly assured of this by itinerant bush workers in the 1930's. And see Bulletin 5/10/1889, p.8. [The writer spent an evening with twelve sundowners in the rouseabouts' hut. They had just refused work at wages lower than those approved by the Shearers' Union.] "It was the honest impression of every one of their Serene Highnesses that a squatter's pastoral license [sic] contained a provision binding the feoffee to supply to each and every professional knight-errant, on demand, the traditional pannikin of flour. So that, you see, the sundowner claims his tribute by imagined authority of law as well as by indefeasible divine right."

(42) Throughout this thesis the word is used in a common American sense, that elaborated by F.J. Turner.

less strongly the masculine attitude to life which frontier conditions evoke. We shall see that the Australian ballad community exhibited all these characteristics.

Following Entwistle,[43] Hodgart also writes that:[44]

> "the early background to all European ballads is apparently roughly the same, a 'small, stable, and self-sufficient' community."

Australia's ballad community of semi-nomadic pastoral workers seems, at first sight, hardly to fit into this formulation. But it was small absolutely in numbers, and small relatively to the total Australian population: and though its members ranged finally over the vast territory extending from the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range to the edge of the Nullarbor Plain in the south and to the Indian Ocean in the north, their scanty numbers and migratory habits made them a much more compact, stable and self-sufficient community psychologically speaking, than were or are the dwellers in a single street of Melbourne, Sydney or even Ballarat. This peculiar parochialism extending over many hundreds of thousands of square miles is one of the first things that strikes the observer of outback life even to-day. C.E.W. Bean explains the material reasons for it in the following passage:

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(43) W.J. Entwistle, European Balladry, Oxford: 1939, p.7

(44) op. cit., p.131

> "It is curious how difficult it is for a man who has committed a crime to escape in that country. When we were out there a man was killed far back near one of the stations. The man who did it never tried to get away. It seemed strange at the time when one considered that he had practically all Central Australia to flee to. But what is the use of Central Australia to a criminal? He must camp at some of the tanks or water-holes, or stay at some of these lonely hotels, if he is to get across the country at all - it is a choice between that and death in the scrub. Everyone that sees him will remember him for years. 'Recollec' that cove with a red beard we came on camped by the railway peg near Nine Mile Tank last Autumn twelvemonth?' they'll say. 'Well, that's the bloke they've got for killing those sheep at X-'s.' If he rides a horse, as he must to move quickly across country, he is in worse plight still. They mayn't remember him; but they'll never forget the horse..."(45)

The passage should not, of course, be misunderstood as implying a general disposition among bushmen to help the police in their work. As Bean himself makes very plain elsewhere,(46) communal feeling was almost always directed against the representatives of the law.

Hodgart seems to attach some weight also to Entwistle's contention that the earliest and, therefore in some sense

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(45) C.E.W. Bean, Dreadnought of the Darling, Lond:1911, p.288.

(46) op. cit., pp.93-94. "They wanted evidence for the trial [of a psychopathic shepherd who had tried to join the bushranger 'Thunderbolt' in 1864]... . So they sent a policeman in uniform down the river to subpoena Barrett and Jem and some of the tank-sinkers - and I never saw such a scatter in all my life. He was bush-signalled by some means or another. I happened to be over to see Mr. Bloxham at Toorale a day or two after, and he said he only had one or two men left there. The rest had all vanished. They heard there was a policeman coming and they melted a day or two before he arrived. There was a lot out back in those days that didn't want to live too near to the police. But it wasn't only the whites. All the blacks at Gundabooka left in a body - and I suppose some of them had got to Toorale and told the blacks there, for they all went too

the most typical, ballad communities were aristocratic in structure.[47] Yet even Entwistle[48] concedes that:

> "the criterion of aristocracy is personal prowess; allegiance is given to a leader who joins birth to valour."

And Hodgart points out that the classical Danish ballad community of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was an aristocratic society of a peculiar kind - one:

> "in which there is no considerable gap, in way of life or in taste, between the leaders and the people."[49]

The same criterion would apply to the folk of the Scottish border and to that of the Serbian mountains, but not to the rural community which possessed the Robin Hood ballads, nor to the hill folk of the Southern Appalachians, any more than to the Australian ballad folk.

Hodgart also suggests that "the absence of didacticism" and the "minimum of orthodox moralising" in the ballads "perhaps distinguishes them as an artistocratic type of folk-lore."[50] Cecil Sharp even seems to hint that the people commonly known in America as "hillbillies" are really disguised aristocrats, when he writes that "they have the easy, unaffected bearing and the unselfconscious manners of the

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(47) loc. cit.

(48) Quoted, loc. cit.

(49) ibid., pp.131-132

(50) ibid., p.135

well bred."(51) If these qualities are sufficient hallmarks of an aristocratic background, then we must bestow the accolade alse upon many of our founding fathers, the convicts - or at least upon their heirs and successors, the old hands, currency lads, and lower class assisted immigrants who constituted the bulk of the labour force in the pastoral areas. Their songs are as free as anyone could wish from orthodox moralising, though, like those of all ballad communities, they contain a singular morality of their own; and their easy, unaffected bearing and natural good manners impressed most observers. As early as 1849 'Alexander Harris' wrote:

> "The Australians, we must here remark, are growing up a race by themselves; fellowship of country has already begun to distinguish them and bind them together in a very remarkable manner. ... The utter, yet not discourteous nonchalance of his [a Currency Lad's] race, however, would have been regarded by a stranger as his most distinctive characteristic."(52)

Twenty two years later George Carrington, an Oxford man who spent several years as an itinerant worker in north western Queensland, wrote:

> "While I was in Brisbane I had seen little, if anything, of the working men, and had no expectation that I should ever be driven to associate with them. Now I was brought suddenly to their level, and I was astonished to find what an intelligent and companionable set of men they

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(51) Quoted, ibid., p.138.

(52) "An Emigrant Mechanic" [Alexander Harris?], The Emigrant Family: or, the Story of an Australian Settler, 3 vols., Lond:1849, Vol. I, pp. 3, 6.

were for the most part. As far as I have been able to judge they are far above the ordinary level. There is a total absence of that crawling deference to those who happen to have money in their pockets and good clothes on their back, which may often be found in those of England and Ireland. Here I found realised much that I had been accustomed to consider high-flown and nonsensical: I could now understand the true meaning of the nobility of labour. When I say that the working men of Queensland are, as a body, far superior, both in their mental and physical capacity, to the same class in England, I am saying very little. A sense of independence conduces to the one superiority, and better food to the other. But besides this there is a leaven of education and information pervading the whole class which is very remarkable. Books and newspapers are eagerly sought after and read by most of them, whatever their employment. This is more remarkable when you get further into the Bush than it is in the towns. ... These men, by constantly mixing and rubbing together, communicate their ideas to one another, ... "(53)

We shall find much more evidence that the typical bushman was a man of "easy, unaffected bearing" prone to treat equally unaffected people (54) with that consideration which

(53) "A University Man" [George Carrington], Colonial Adventures and Experiences, Lond:1871, p.33 ff.

(54) e.g., Hon. David W. Carnegie, Spinifex and Sand, a Narrative of Five Years' Pioneering and Exploration in Western Australia, Lond:1898, p.156: "I must confess with sorrow that nine out of every ten young Englishmen on the goldfields, of the same class, would not only be too haughty to work, but would more readily take to billiards, cards, and borrowing when they found themselves in low water - and no man sinks lower than an English 'gentleman' who has gone to the bad, and no one despises him more than an Australian miner, or is more ready to help him when he shows signs of trying to help himself by honest work." cf.ibid., p.12: "That we worked with a will, the remark made to me by an old fossicker will go to show. After watching me 'belting away' at a solid mass of quartz without speaking, 'Which,' said he, 'is the hammer-headed end of your pick?' Then shaking his head, 'Ah! I could guess you were a Scotchman - brute force and blind ignorance!' He then proceeded to show me how to do twice the amount of work at half the expenditure of labour. I never remember a real digger who was not ready to help one, both with advice and in practice, and I never experienced that 'greening' of new chums which is a prominent feature of most novels that deal with Australian life." And cf. Lord Robert Cecil's Gold Fields Diary (ed.E.Scott), Melb:1935, pp.25-26.

is the mark of true 'breeding'; but to adduce this fact as evidence of his aristocracy is surely straining beyond all conscience the meaning of the word. However there may be something in the notion that absence of moralising in art, and of affectation in manners, is a sign of an aristocratic or of a plebeian society before either has been much tainted by middle-class philistinism. As English middle class influence increased throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the English folk-ballad, of both the rural and street varieties, steadily degenerated artistically.(55) The Mechanic's Appeal to the Public shows how artistically deplorable a nineteenth century ballad can be, but the same note of officially conventional moralising mars most British folk-songs of the period.

This particular false note at least is absent from The Wallaby Brigade, a song which exhibits clearly the peculiar, but truly felt, morality of the Australian ballad community. It also shows that the squatters, whether or not one regards them as aristocratic, were not an integral part of that community - at least in the sense in which the lairds were a part of the Border community in late mediaeval Britain. If, in some other sense, one regards the squatters as belonging to the outback community, it is still clear that, compared with

(55) cf. A.L. Lloyd, The Singing Englishman, Lond:1951, p.41 ff.

the situation on the Scottish Border, the roles of the two classes have been reversed. In most British ballads the deeds and values of the aristocratic leaders form the focus of interest. In most Australian ones it is the experiences and values of the ordinary bush worker which occupy the centre of the stage:

(56)

The Wallaby Brigade.

"You often have been told of regiments brave and bold,
But we are the bravest in the land;
We're called the Tag-Rag Band, and we rally in Queensland,
We are members of the Wallaby Brigade.

Chorus: Tramp, tramp, tramp across the borders,
The swagmen are rolling up, I see.
When the shearing's at an end we'll go fishing in a bend
Then hurrah! for the Wallaby Brigade.

When you are leaving camp, you must ask some other brother tramp
If there are any jobs to be had,
Or what sort of a shop that station is to stop
For a member of the Wallaby Brigade.

You ask if they want men, you ask for rations then,
If they don't stump up a warning should be made;
To teach them better sense - why, 'Set fire to their fence'
Is the war cry of the Wallaby Brigade.

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(56) In bush slang "going on the wallaby" was yet another synonym for 'tramping the country', "carrying one's swag", "humping one's drum", "humping bluey", or "waltzing Matilda." "Swag" of course was once thieves' slang for booty from a robbery. Among the 'old hands' in the bush it came to mean the bundle of personal belongings an itinerant worker carried on his back. Usually these were wrapped tightly in a sheet of canvas or blanket ('bluey'), so as to look not unlike a 'drum'.

The squatters thought us done when they fenced in all their run,
But a prettier mistake they never made;
You've only to sport your dover[57] and knock a monkey[58] over -
There's cheap mutton for the Wallaby Brigade.

Now when the shearing's in our harvest will begin,
Our swags for a spell down will be laid;
But when our cheques are drank we will join the Tag-rag rank,
Limeburners[59] in the Wallaby Brigade.[60]

Although the squatters were, to a considerable extent, the natural enemies of the Australian ballad folk while the lairds were the natural leaders of the Scottish Border community, there are other ways in which the two communities were strikingly alike. As Hodgart writes:

> "[The Borderers] did not cultivate the land to any great extent, since they were always likely to lose their crops when the English made a raid. Their chief property was cattle and they lived by stealing cattle. So did the English borderers and therefore 'robbery

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(57) Bush slang for hand shears, or for a sheath knife - probably from the name of a Sheffield firm of cutlers.

(58) Slang for 'sheep'.

(59) From the context it seems likely that 'limeburner' was another synonym for 'swagman', perhaps from the cloud of dust raised by his tramping across the plains.

(60) This version from A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs.

assumed the appearance of fair reprisal'. They were under little control from the central government. To religion they seem to have been indifferent."(61)

These statements apply largely to the Australian ballad community's "particular way of living and thinking." Its life was based upon an even more exclusively pastoral economy than was that of the Scottish borderers, although there were different reasons for the backwardness of agriculture. Sheep and cattle-stealing, though conducted usually with less violence and éclat, were well nigh universal throughout the nineteenth century (62) among outback employees, and for long were scarcely less prevalent among their masters. Large scale 'duffing' became more difficult and dangerous with the fencing of runs and the progressively more settled con-

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(61) op. cit., pp.133-134; and cf. Robert D. Barton, Reminiscences of an Australian Pioneer, Syd:1917, pp.70-71: "The young Australians were, I think, strictly honest as regards money or valuables; you could leave your hut or house with everything open for days, perhaps weeks, and when you returned you would miss nothing, except, perhaps, that someone had made himself a pot of tea or got a feed, which, of course, they were all entitled to, and never refused. But, from my earliest recollections, the branding of other people's calves was not looked upon as a crime; ... and the killing of cattle for meat on the place was almost invariably done at somebody else's expense. However, that condition of things gradually changed, but a great many men never realised the change ... and continued their depredations, which were then called cattle-stealing."

(62) See e.g., Edward Curr, An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land, etc., Lond:1824, p.161, "Many persons, in calculating profits on sheep, allow a deduction of twenty five per cent for robberies; this may probably be an exaggeration, but..."
['A. Harris'], Settlers and Convicts, Melb:1953 edn.; pp.185-186.
A. Trollope, op. cit., p.68

ditions which followed the Gold Rush.(63) It is notorious that on both sides of the Scottish border the King's Peace could impose itself but feebly. The ineffectiveness of government control on both sides of the border between New South Wales and Victoria was strikingly demonstrated as late as 1880 by the career of the Kelly Gang.(64) In the 'sixties Ben Hall's gang of bushrangers had successfully defied the law for over three years. The rapid slaughtering of the Aborigines was another index of the in-

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(63) Stock-stealing became less common when "the fencing and subdivision of the country brought all the stock under closer supervision, and so added very much to the risk of lifting either cattle or horses." (Andrew Crombie, After Sixty Years or Recollections of an Australian Bushman, Brisbane:1927, p.131.

(64) It is curious that this border area, or rather the country immediately to the north of it, the Riverina, was the geographical 'centre of gravity' of the Australian ballad community. Riverina place names occur more frequently in the ballads than names from any other district, and perhaps than from all other pastoral districts put together. For this and other reasons it is apt that Joseph Furphy should have chosen "this central point of the universe, Riverina Proper", for the locale of his great novel with its "bias, offensively Australian." (Such Is Life, Syd:1948 edn., p.330 and "Publisher's Note".)

effectiveness of law and order beyond the Great Divide.(65) Practically every contemporary visitor to the interior deplored its inhabitants' almost complete indifference to religion.(66)

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(65) There is no data to provide an accurate general picture of what happened to the aborigines in the earlier period, but the notorious massacre at Myall Creek (Hunter River District) in1838 casts a horrible light on contemporary practice. Seven stockmen seized about 30 aboriginals, men, women and children, whom they suspected of spearing stock, and murdered them in cold blood. The seven were taken to Sydney, tried and executed. Public opinion was outraged, not by the murders, but at the punishment of the murderers. Even the humane 'Harris' was stirred to protest: "From time immemorial it had been the custom for influential settlers to head parties like this, against the blacks. ... They were hanged for doing what they had been taught was perfectly lawful by the masters; and some of those masters magistrates of the territory. .. The law was in effect punishing men for remedying its own neglect. ... From this time forward the mischief increased. ... The blacks became more outrageous; and great numbers of them fell victims to the vindictive spirit which this ruthless proceeding [i.e. the trial and execution of the white murderers] kindled in the breasts of the stockmen." ('A. Harris', op. cit., pp.220-221; and cf. G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes, or etc., Lond:1855 3rd edn., p.108). As time went on the police took over, from the squatters and their men, a greater share in the extermination of the native race. (See Cap. VII infra.)

(66) J. Backhouse, op. cit.; And 'A. Harris', Testimony to the Truth; or, the Autobiography of an Atheist, Lond:1848, are two books whose main concern is religion, and hence the irreligiousness of outback life. For the later period see e.g. Geo. Carrington, op. cit., pp.141-142, and see Cap. V infra. Although traditional British ballads were little concerned with Christianity, they contain echoes of many pagan superstitions and magical beliefs. This, of course, is not the case with Australian ballads and they are the poorer for it.

The similarity between the Australian ballad community and that which produced the Robin Hood ballads is even more striking, partly because both lacked an aristocratic leadership. Hodgart writes:

> "Whatever the reality of Robin Hood and whatever his date, the ballads about him do at least contain a vivid folk memory of guerilla warfare under heroic conditions, of outlaws banded under a leader to whom they have sworn allegiance, killing the king's deer and defying the central authority; and they contain, perhaps, a memory of dispossessed Saxons resisting the Norman usurpers, in a combination of class and national warfare. Robin Hood, as Child says, lives by 'levies on the superfluity of the higher orders, secular and spiritual ... but harms no husbandman or yeoman and is friendly to poor men generally, imparting to them of what he takes from the rich.' The Robin Hood ballads are Yeoman minstrelsy and not aristocratic as the Danish ballads are, yet they express much the same code."(67)

Like Robin Hood - Ben Hall, Frank Gardiner, Johnny Gilbert and other bushrangers were supposed by the ballad-singers to have robbed the rich but helped the poor. So strong was this tendency of folklore that even Morgan, who seems to have been a brutal psychopath,(68) figures in the ballad about him as a 'verray perfigt gentil knight.' In the first stanza the anonymous bard is rendered more than usually incoherent by the strength of this delusion:

> "Throughout Australian History no tongue or pen can tell
> Of such preconcerted treachery - there is no parallel -
> As the tragic deed of Morgan's death; without warning
> he was shot,
> On Peechelba Station it will never be forgot."

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(67) op. cit., pp.132-133.

(68) George E. Boxall, The Story of the Australian Bushrangers, Lond:1899, pp.258-268, and Charles White, History of Australian Bushranging, 2 vols., Syd:1903, Vol.II, p.148ff

Only with the penultimate stanza does the singer master his feelings sufficiently to do some rough justice to his theme:

"Oh, Morgan was the travellers' friend; the squatters all rejoice
That the outlaw's life is at an end, no more they'll hear his voice.
Success attend all highwaymen who do the poor some good;
But my curse attend a treacherous man who'd shed another's blood."(69)

Like Robin Hood and his merry men also, the bushrangers and their friends were under little effective restraint from the distant central government. Like his struggle theirs was felt to be, in a real sense, "a combination of class and national warfare", of Australian native (often Irish-Australian!) working-class patriots against the upper-class representatives of the alien, or at least remote and unsympathetic, British Government. And just as the Robin Hood ballads contain a folk memory of Saxon resistance to the Norman invaders, so the Australian songs contain a memory of hatred for the convict system, and a very present passion of hatred for its instruments and symbols, the police.

This tradition is still strong to-day. A semi-editorial article in the Sydney Morning Herald of July 19th 1953 declared:

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(69) This version from A.B. Paterson, op. cit., pp.44-45.

> "One of the ugly features of Australian city life is the refusal of bystanders to help, in fact their inclination to hinder, a policeman in trouble. There have been some bad cases in Sydney. Melbourne is no better, judging by an incident last week. A man who turned out to be an escaped mental patient had kicked one policeman unconscious and was struggling with another. A gathering crowd yelled. 'Why don't you give him a go, you big mug?'
>
> Only onlooker to intervene was a New Australian, Steve Ovcar, who secured the escapee's hands with a tie. Said Ovcar afterwards, 'People are terrible here. They just watched. They were all against the policeman.'" (70)

A report in the Adelaide Advertiser of a few months later modified the picture slightly:

> "The attitude of the police to the public in such matters as traffic control did much to establish the regard in which the Police Department was held in the community, Mr. John Bonython, a director of the Advertiser, said yesterday. ... Mr. Bonython said that the public's attitude to the police in S.A. was such that he was sure a recent incident in Sydney where members of the public failed to assist two constables who were being attacked, could not happen here. ..."

Many South Australians may feel that Mr. Bonython was overstating his case. Inter-colonial and inter-state population movements have gone far towards establishing a general Australian ethos which, in this as in other ways, naturally derives mainly from traditions which became established in the oldest and most heavily populated colony, New South

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(70) loc. cit., 12/12/1953.

Wales.[71] Nevertheless the fact that no convicts and relatively few Irishmen emigrated directly to South Australia explains some real differences in outlook[72] which are still discernible, especially in Adelaide and the thickly settled agricultural districts near it. But the dry, pastoral interior of the state is separated from the station country of New South Wales and Queensland by nothing but a line on

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(71) cf. R.W. Dale, Impressions of Australia, Lond:1889, p.32: "The development of the typical Australian character has at no time been subjected to any violent disturbance. Among the people of New South Wales I thought that I found those qualities of life and temperament which distinguish all the colonies from the mother country; and I did not observe those secondary characteristics which belong to the special types exhibited in Victoria and South Australia." et passim.

And R.E.N. Twopeny, Town Life in Australia, Lond:1883, p.99: [Discussing larrikinism Twopeny wonders in vain how it can be combatted in] "communities whose sympathies are so essentially democratic as those of Victoria and New South Wales - for in Adelaide the police has still the upper hand."

(72) J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847, 2 vols., Lond:1848, Vol.II, pp.290-291: "Comparatively few persons who have been convicts have crossed to this colony... and they form such a small proportion of the entire population, that they have little, if any, bad effect on society. ... Coming amongst a free and moral population, generally... they lose the swagger, the bold coarse front, and drunken habits, general in New South Wales, and seek to identify themselves with those around them."

the map. Since occupation of the interior began over a hundred years ago, almost every observer (73) of outback life has been forcibly struck by the extreme mobility of the pastoral population, and especially of the wage-earning part of it which formed, from our point of view, the ballad community. This mobility has naturally resulted in a diffusing of attitudes and values throughout the interior regardless of state boundaries, and it is to be doubted whether Mr. Bonython's remarks are as true of South Australian station-hands as they are of the solid citizens of Adelaide. The songs of the bushmen graphically reflect both their nomadic habits and their disrespect for policemen and the law they were employed to enforce. As one version of The Overlander has it:

"No bounds have we to our estates
From Normanton to Bass's Straits;
We're not fenced in with walls or gates -
No monarch's realms are grander.
Our sheep and cattle eat their fill,
And wander blithely at their will
O'er forest, valley, plain or hill,
Free as an Overlander.

.....

(73) e.g. 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, p.22: "As full two-thirds of the labouring population of the country are in perpetual migration. ..." And see Cap. V infra.

We pay no licence or assess,
Our flocks - they never grow much less -
But gather on the road I guess,
  As onward still we wander.
We vote assessments all a sham,
Nor care for licences a flam,
For free selectors not a d--n,
  Says every Overlander."(74)

And The Murrumbidgee Shearer reads in part:

"Come, all you jolly natives, and I'll relate to you
Some of my observations - adventures, too, a few.
I've travelled about the country for miles full many
                                        a score,
And oft-times would have hungered, but for the cheek
                                        I bore.

I've coasted on the Barwon - low down the Darling, too,
I've been on the Murrumbidgee, and out on the Paroo;
I've been on all the diggings, boys, from famous Ballarat;
I've loafed upon the Lachlan, and fossicked Lambing Flat.

.....

Oh, yes, my jolly dandies, I've done it on the cross,(75)
Although I carry bluey now, I've sweated(76) many a horse.
I've helped to ease the escort of many's the ounce of gold;
The traps(77) have often chased me, more times than can
                                        be told.

.....

(74) This version from the Native Companion Songster, Brisbane:1889. Normanton is a township near the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria. "We pay no licence or assess" - a jeer at the squatters. Under the N.S.W. Occupation of Crown Lands Act (1861), pastoralists in "Second Class Settled" districts and in "Unsettled" districts could lease their runs for five years, upon payment of a licence fee the amount of which was calculated from an "assessment", made by a government official, of the number of sheep or cattle the run could carry. (See C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900, Syd:1955, pp.120-124.)

(75) Engaged in criminal activity.

(76) To "sweat" a horse was to steal an animal, ride it until it was knocked up, and then abandon it. A regular practice with bushrangers, but one by no means peculiar to them.

(77) Policemen.

So you can understand, my boys, just from this little rhyme,
I'm a Murrumbidgee shearer, and one of the good old time."(78)

Nineteenth century observers were no less struck by the essential unity of the outback pastoral workers than they were by their mobility. Anthony Trollope travelled extensively in the outback and spent some months, in 1871 and again in 1875,(79) staying on sheep stations, including that of his son Frederick, in Western New South Wales. To him it seemed that:

> "the nomad tribe of pastoral labourer - of men who profess to be shepherds, boundary-riders, sheep-washers, shearers, and the like - form altogether one of the strangest institutions ever known in a land, and one which to my eyes is more degrading and more injurious even than that other institution of sheep-stealing. It is common to all the Australian colonies, ..."(80)

Trollope thought that these itinerant workmen were degraded by their customary right to receive free rations and shelter for the night in station 'huts', but he was not blind to their virtues. As 'Harris' had noted of them half a century earlier when the convict element still predominated among them, though they might cheat and rob respectable people,

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(78) This version from A.B. Paterson, op. cit.

(79) Marcie Muir, Anthony Trollope in Australia, Adelaide:1949, pp.30, 96.

(80) A. Trollope, op. cit., p.69.

they were honest and loyal to each other.[81] Also they were still, as in 'Harris's' day, very capable at performing practical bush tasks - and very prone to vary long periods of hard work by short bouts of tremendous drunkenness. As Trollope further wrote:

> "The bulk of the labour is performed by a nomad tribe, who wander in quest of their work, and are hired only for a time. This is of course the case in regard to washing sheep and shearing them. It is equally so when fences are to be made, or ground to be cleared, or trees to be 'rung'. ... For all these operations temporary work is of course required, and the squatter seldom knows whether the man he employs be married or single. They come and go, and are known by queer nicknames or are known by no names at all. They probably have their wives elsewhere, and return to them for a season. They are rough to look at, dirty in appearance, shaggy, with long hair, men who, when they are in the bush, live in huts, and hardly know what a bed is. But they work hard, and are both honest and civil. Theft among them is almost unknown. Men are constantly hired without any character but that which they give themselves; and the squatters find from experience that the men are able to do that which they declare themselves capable of performing. There will be exceptions, but such is the rule. Their one great fault is drunkenness, - and yet they are sober to a marvel. As I have said before, they will work for months without touching spirits, but their very abstinence creates a craving desire which, when it is satisfied, will satisfy itself with nothing short of brutal excess."[82]

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(81) 'A. Harris', op. cit., p.24, "... if there were many things in these men which I could not approve, there was much more that I could not but admire. There was a sort of manly independence of disposition, which secured truthfulness and sincerity at least among themselves. If the penalty for the practice of that truthfulness toward the superior classes had been fixed too high, I felt that allowance ought to be made for it in estimating their character."

(82) A. Trollope, op. cit., p.202.

It is the contention of this thesis that a just understanding of the distinctive ethos of the "nomad tribesmen" is of cardinal importance for the understanding of many aspects of Australian history, both in the last century and subsequently.(83) The pastoral industry was, and still is, the country's staple. Its nature, the nature of Australian geography, and the great though decreasing scarcity of white women in the outback, brought into being an itinerant rural proletariat, overwhelmingly masculine in composition and outlook. In the United States the cattle industry, during the stage of 'the open range', produced in the cowboys a not dissimilar social group, but its existence was brief and,(84) relatively to the total population, its numbers were small. Throughout the nineteenth century as a whole the typical American frontiersman was a small individualist agricultural proprietor or farm labourer, not a cowboy or ranch hand.(85) In Canada and New Zealand, too, the farmer was the typical frontiersman. In South Africa the pastoral industry,

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(83) See my article in Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, No.24, Melb: May, 1955, Vol.6, "Collectivist Notions of a Nomad Tribe."

(84) From about 1866 till 1885. See W.P. Webb, The Great Plains, Oxford: 1931, pp.205-207.

(85) See Cap. X infra.

though not relatively as important as in Australia, was the staple; but the working hands were Hottentots or Bantus, whose culture was so different from that of their Boer and British masters that any useful comparison between their life and influence, and those of the pastoral workers in Australia, is scarcely possible. For these reasons it is not too much to say that those whom Trollope designated the "nomad tribe" constituted a singular social group possessing an ethos which, though similar to those of certain other ballad communities distant in time and place, was also unique.

This thesis will attempt to give an historical account of the development of the 'nomad tribe' and of its distinctive values and outlook. In discussing the American frontier Turner observed that "the similarities of institutions are less important than the differences".(86) In this thesis too, emphasis will be placed upon those inherited and acquired qualities which distinguished bush-workers from other people, rather than upon the many more numerous and obvious traits which they shared with Australian townsmen or with their congeners in Britain. Among the influences which shaped the

(86) Reported by Carl Becher in his essay "Frederick Jackson Turner", in American Masters of Social Science (ed. H.W. Odum), New York: 1927, p.300.

life of the outback community the brute facts of Australian geography were probably most important. Scanty rainfall and great distances ensured that most of the habitable land could be occupied only sparsely and by pastoralists. In combination with nineteenth century economic conditions, climatic factors ensured too that the typical station should be a very large unit employing many casual 'hands', but owned by a single man or company of substantial capital. If Australia had been occupied by the French or any other western European people, it is likely that much the same kind of pastoral proletariat would have been shaped by the geographic and economic conditions. Still, there would have been important differences.

As it happened, the interior was occupied by British people who naturally brought with them much cultural luggage. Moreover, in the early period of the 'squatting rush' when the nomad tribe was forming, the vast majority of its members were British people of a certain type. At first convicts and ex-convicts tended the flocks of the advancing 'shepherd-kings', and at least until 1851 these pioneers predominated in influence and prestige with their fellows if not in numbers.(87) The germ of the distinctive 'outback' ethos

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(87) See infra.

was not simply the result of climatic and economic conditions, nor of national and social traditions brought with them by the 'government men' who first opened up the 'new country' beyond the Great Divide. It sprang rather from their struggle to assimilate themselves and their mores to the strange environment. We shall find much evidence to suggest that the main features of the new tradition were already fixed before 1851. A considerable number of the gold-seekers, and of the later immigrants who found their way to the western plains, differed from most of their predecessors in having a middle-class background. They influenced the 'bush' ethos in certain ways, but in the upshot its main features were strengthened, modified in certain directions perhaps, but not fundamentally changed.

Although the pastoral proletariat formed a recognisably distinct social group it was obviously not, as has been noted above, completely isolated from the rest of colonial society. From 1813 when Blaxland, Lawson, young Wentworth and their convict 'hands' struggled back across the Blue Mountains, there was a constant coming and going of men, manners, and ideas between the coastal cities and the hinterland. But the strength of outback influence is indicated by the very phrase used, in the first half of the nineteenth century, to describe Sydney roughs. These rowdy, 'flash'

plebeians took some pains to stress the differences between themselves and respectable immigrants.(88) Many were Australian born and all liked to behave in what they considered truly 'currency' or colonial ways. This involved their imitating 'up-country' manners, for the bushman was axiomatically more 'Australian', that is, more different from the simon-pure Briton, than the flashest currency lad in the whole of Sydney Town. Life in a bark hut on the Bogan necessarily changed a newcomer's manners and ideas more rapidly than life in a George Street cottage. Hence the roughs of early Sydney, affecting outback styles of dress and behaviour, were known as the 'Cabbage-Tree Hat Mob.'(89)

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(88) See Cap. IV infra.

(89) The cabbage-tree palm (Livistona australis) grew only in the rain-forests between the Great Dividing Range and the Pacific, being very common in Illawarra district which was the earliest 'frontier' area. The heart or bud at the growing tip of the palm was a substitute for cabbage among the early settlers and cedar-getters (see 'Harris', op. cit., p.26), and the pinnate fronds were woven into broad-brimmed, flat-crowned, 'cabbage-tree hats'. When the 'squatting rush' to the interior began in the late 1820's, this indigenous hat had already become standard wear among bushmen and, like the stockwhip, a potent symbol of 'outback' values. Thus the cabbage-tree hat migrated with the frontier to the western plains, many hundreds of miles from the nearest source of the raw material from which it was made. Plaiting these hats was a favourite pastime among shepherds, whose occupation was an extraordinarily lazy and lonely one. They remained standard wear for stockmen and others until nearly the end of the nineteenth century, though by about 1880 a cabbage-tree hat might cost up to five pounds. (cf. Andrew Crombie, op. cit., pp.109-110.)

From the beginning then, outback manners and mores, working upwards from the lowest strata of society and outwards from the interior, subtly influenced those of the whole population. Yet for long this was largely an unconscious process recorded, as we shall see, in folklore and to some extent in popular speech, but largely unreflected in formal literature. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the occupation of the interior had been virtually completed, it was possible to look back and sense what had been happening. Australians generally became actively conscious, not to say self-conscious, of the distinctive 'bush' ethos, and of its value as an expression and symbol of nationalism.(90) Through the trade union movement, through such periodicals as the Sydney Bulletin, the Lone Hand, or the Queensland Worker, and through the work of literary men like Furphy, Lawson or Paterson, the attitudes and values of the nomad tribe were made the principal ingredient of a national mystique. Just when the results of public education acts, improved communications, and innumerable other factors were administering the coup-de-grace to the actual bushman of the nineteenth century, his idealised shade became the national culture-hero of the twentieth.(91) Though

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(90) cf. Vance Palmer, op. cit.

(91) See Cap. IX infra.

some shearers are now said to drive to their work in wireless-equipped motor-cars, the 'noble bushman's' influence on Australian life and literature is still strong. In the next chapter we shall consider some of the most important elements which contributed to the nativity of his tribe.

Chapter III

THE FOUNDING FATHERS

"I'll give the law a little shock - remember what I say:
They'll yet regret they sent Jim Jones in chains to Botany Bay.

England has her Angles, Saxons and Jutes, and America her Pilgrim Fathers. Probably the central American republic of San Salvador, with a population approximately equal to that of Melbourne, romanticises the memory of certain sixteenth century conquistadores: but we Australians often display a certain queasiness in recalling our founding fathers. Even to-day many prefer not to remember that for nearly the first half-century of its existence White Australia was, primarily, an extensive gaol. Yet recognition of this fact is basic to any understanding of social mores in the early period when an Australian social tradition was forming. In this chapter we shall find reason to think that convict influence on Australian society was very much more important than has usually been supposed. The following table gives the number of convicts, of ex-convicts or emancipists, of colonial-born or 'Currency' persons, and of free immigrants

in the New South Wales population in 1828, 1841, and 1851: (1)

Table I

	Convicts	Emancipists	Currency	Free Immigrants
1828	15,668	7,530	8,727	4,673
1841	26,453	18,257	28,657	43,621
1851	2,693	26,629	81,391	76,530

(1) In this and following tables the figures for 1828 are taken from T.A. Coghlan (N.S.W. Govt. Statistician), General Report on the Eleventh Census of N.S.W., Syd:1894, pp.71-73. Those for 1841 and 1851 are from the Census Returns in Votes and Proceedings of the N.S.W. Legislative Council, 1841 and 1851.

All figures refer to the colony of New South Wales, excluding Van Diemen's Land and the Port Phillip District, but including what later became Queensland. The 1841 figures exclude also the 2130 persons on board colonial vessels on the day of the census, since no particulars about them, other than their whereabouts, were recorded.

Of his 1828 figures Coghlan observes that the muster of that year, from which he drew them, was thought to have been particularly inaccurate, and that it was difficult to allow justly for the number of convict 'bolters' at large in the bush.

Commenting (op. cit., p.91) on the 1851 census, Coghlan writes: "It is important to remember that the act did not permit of any direct questioning in regard to civil condition, and some of the emancipists probably took advantage of this provision to return themselves as either Born in the Colony or Arrived Free." The number of emancipists given is certainly too small, as it was also in the 1828 and other earlier censuses. (cf. J.D.Lang, Historical and Statistical Account of N.S.W. etc., 2 vols., Lond:1834, Vol. I, pp.271-272.) Comparison of figures given in the various censuses makes it seem likely that, of those emancipists who falsified their returns, the vast majority chose Currency status rather than that of "Arrived Free."

Most writers who have touched upon early Australian demographic changes have tended to concentrate attention upon the "swamping"(2) of those whom Mudie christened the "felonry"(3) of New South Wales by the rapidly increasing number of free persons, colonial-born and immigrant. Often the emancipists also are added to these latter groups. It may be that this approach stems from a conscious or unconscious desire to minimise the influence of convicts in Australian history, rather than from a desire to understand it. We shall see that in manners and social outlook, even more than in the political struggles of the time, the Currency

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(2) e.g. R.C. Mills, Colonization of Australia (1829-1842), Lond: 1915, pp.322-323.

R.B. Madgwick, Immigration into Eastern Australia 1788-1851, Lond: 1937, pp.52, 60.

T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia etc., (4 vols.), Lond: 1918, Vol. I, pp.561-562.

C. Hartley Grattan, "The Social Structure of Australia", Cap. XVIII in Australia, Univ. Cal.: 1947, ed. C.Hartley Grattan.

And J.C.G. Kevin (ed.), Some Australians Take Stock, Lond: 1939, Cap. II, L.R. McIntyre, "Botany Bay".

(3) James Mudie, Felonry of New South Wales etc., Lond: 1837, p. vi: "The author has ventured to coin the word felonry, as the appellative of an order or class of persons in New South Wales, - an order which happily exists in no other country in the world. The major part of the inhabitants of the colony are felons now undergoing or felons who have already undergone their sentences. ..."

Lads tended to align themselves with the emancipist class rather than with the more respectable of the free immigrants. (4)

If we take the Currency population as having more in common, socially and traditionally, with the convict and emancipist body than with that of the respectable free immigrant and official classes, we may draw from Table I the following figures:

Table II

	Convicts, Emancipists and Currency	Free Immigrants
1828	31,925	4,673
1841	73,367	43,621
1851	110,713	76,530

If these figures be expressed (very approximately) as ratios, we have:

Table III

	Ratio of Convicts, Emancipists and Currency to Free Immigrants
1828	7 : 1
1841	3 : 2
1851	3 : 2

The approximately constant proportion between the two groups for the last pre-Gold Rush decade is very interesting.

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(4) See, for instance, House of Commons Select Committee on Transportation, Report with Minutes of Evidence, Lond: 1838, p.153 (Evidence of Lt. Col. H. Breton); H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life in Australia etc. Lond: 1848, p.26 ff.; and James Demarr, Adventures in Australia Fifty Years Ago etc. during the Years 1839-1844, Lond: 1893, p.45.

It suggests the idea that certain distinctively Australian attitudes may have then been formed, and have become stabilised enough to persist through the more real "swamping" of the felon strain by the tidal wave of immigrants which arrived during the subsequent decade and later.[5] It need hardly be said that the physical transmission of criminal or other traits from parents to children is not being implied. Unlike eye and hair colours, social attitudes and traditions are not physically inherited, but learnt from parents, playmates, friends and teachers. In this way the children of even the most highly respectable free immigrants often absorbed ideas and manners from the felonry. As Darwin noticed in 1836:

> "There are many serious drawbacks to the comforts of a family, the chief of which, perhaps, is being surrounded by convict servants. How thoroughly odious to every feeling, to be waited on by a man who the day before, perhaps, was flogged, from your representation, for some trifling misdemeanour. The female servants are, of course, much worse: hence children learn the vilest expressions, and it is fortunate if not equally vile ideas."[6]

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(5) In 1851 the total population of Australia (excluding W.A. and the N. Territory., circa 10,000) was 402,174. In 1861 this figure had increased to 1,136,354. But of course most of the increase was in Victoria. The population of N.S.W. (including Q.) in the same period, increased only from 187,243 to 380,919 (Commonwealth Year Book, 1953, p.516).

(6) Charles Darwin, A Naturalist's Voyage etc., Lond: 1889 edn. p.531. And cf. J. Pitts Johnson, Plain Truths Told by a Traveller Regarding Our Various Settlements in Australia and New Zealand etc., Lond: 1846, p.45; and H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.156.

The reminiscences of the son of a Moreton Bay pioneer show that the ideas thus imbibed were not always vile - at least by current Australian standards. Hatred of the tell-tale and informer is not, of course, a trait uniquely Irish or Australian, but there is evidence to suggest that it is a much more widely held sentiment here than, for example, in contemporary U.S.A.(7) This passion was felt all the more strongly by the convicts because so many of them were Irishmen like "poor Kelly", a convict clerk who tutored young Tom Petrie:

> "Poor Kelly ... would never tell on me. Although I used to get many a thrashing from father for not knowing my lessons, and Kelly got many a scolding for not getting me along better, he would never 'split' on me. I used to take him now and again a bit of tobacco and a little tea and sugar, or a piece of bread, all unknown to my father, and sometimes I gave the other prisoners some, so that I was a great favourite among them, and no matter what I did they never let it out. ... My brothers, like myself, were in great favour with the convicts, as they used also to bring food and tobacco to them. The prisoners would do anything for us.

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(7) e.g. Voice Vol.4, No.2, Dec. 1954, p.2: "Recently the Security Service approached a lecturer at Sydney University to see if he would act as a contact man and report on staff and student activities. The horrified lecturer concerned reported the incident immediately to the University Staff Association, which body protested to Mr. Menzies. ... If there is any tendency to detect 'dangerous' sentiments at the university or elsewhere we should hit it on the head with a sledge-hammer at the very first sign ... else, as American conditions confirm, it will develop an octopus-like stranglehold which may be impossible to resist." And Canberra Times, 21/9/1955, p.4: "The Vice-President of the Executive Council, Sir Eric Harrison, yesterday called Mr. E.J.Ward a 'sucker' who had accepted incorrect information from 'the lowest form of human life - an informer'." Perusal of the United States press shows that this is anything but the accepted attitude or language of contemporary Americans.

> A convict called 'Joe Goosey', an odd job man, was much disliked by the others, because he told tales about them. ... The convicts could not stand a 'tell-tale' at any price, and poor 'Joe Goosey', a soft sort of a fellow, had anything but a pleasant life among them."(8)

If the children of prominent free families were thus influenced by the prisoners' outlook, we may take it that the feeling of emancipists and colonial-born people was affected not less strongly.

Up to 1851 in the mother colony of New South Wales proper (then including Queensland) this broad group of people, more or less directly influenced by convict attitudes, formed quite a large majority of the population. It is equally clear that the smaller group of free immigrants included almost all officials, magistrates and other persons possessed of formal power and prestige. Nevertheless, as a distinctive Australian ethos developed, it drew far more upon the habits and out look of the larger and socially inferior group than upon those of the smaller and more powerful one: and this for two reasons. First, the colonial elite tended to keep up respectable connections with 'home', to

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(8) Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland Dating from 1837, Recorded by his Daughter, Brisbane: 1932, 2nd edn., p.246. And cf. "A Gentleman Just Returned from the Settlement", An Account of the English Colony at Botany Bay etc., Lond: 1808, p.64: "The difficulty of bringing the people to bring evidence against each other was unsurmountable, and by far the greater part of the acquittals were occasioned by a wilful suppression of evidence."

send their sons there to be educated, perhaps to return there themselves.[9] Their natural bent was to preserve intact, or with minimum modifications, the values of contemporary British society. The first W.C. Wentworth's career shows that this was sometimes true even of the wealthier people among the native-born; and the novels of Henry Handel Richardson and Martin Boyd reflect the tendency for this tradition to persist in well-to-do families even after the lapse of several generations in Australia.[10] Members of the emancipist-Currency lad group, on the other hand, nearly always regarded Australia as their home. When, as early as 1820, Bigge observed that "of the older inhabitants there are very few who do not regard the colony as their home,"[11] the context makes it clear that he was including all the colonial born, old or young, among the self-elected Australians.

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(9) G.T. Lloyd, Thirty-Three Years in Tasmania and Victoria etc. Lond: 1862, pp.493-494; and Neil Black, MS Journal (P.L.V.) entry of 26/10/1839.

Even as late as the 1880's an English observer, speaking of squatters and other "good fellows" in Queensland, wrote that "every other man is an Englishman ... and nearly all intend to go home some day." (A.W. Stirling, The Never Never Land: a Ride in North Queensland, Lond: 1884 (2nd edn.), p.21.

(10) Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Martin Boyd and the Complex Fate of the Australian Novelist, Commonwealth Literary Fund Lecture delivered at Canberra, 18/9/1953.

(11) J.T. Bigge, Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry on the State of Agriculture and Trade in the Colony of New South Wales, p.82. (Cited in C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History, 1788-1850, Syd: 1950, pp.434-435.)

By the middle 1840's this group, which knew and wished to know no other home than Australia, far outnumbered convicts and emancipists combined.(12) With stock-whips and cabbage-tree hats there grew up manners and mores which were largely a direct response to the new environment, and which hence were much more likely to flourish than transplanted - and relatively unadulterated - British values. 'Harris's' novel provides a vivid contemporary caricature of what was happening:

> "'What a queer lot most of these emigrants are,' said Charlie. 'They seem like a set of children. They have no notion how to help themselves till they've been here half the length of a man's life.'
>
> 'Not all of them, Charlie. Look at all those old commissaries: how soon they feather their nests.'
>
> 'Ay, ay: but that's a different thing: it's in a manner their trade. This old chap at the Rocky Springs, the men tell me, never gives an order himself; and he looks just as if he'd done nothing all his life but sit and munch roast beef between the muzzles of two cannon.'"(13)

The second reason for the prevailing virtue of the convict-derived ethos is perhaps less obvious but more far-reaching. Australia is one of the very few countries whose whole development has taken place since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. In all English-speaking countries the nineteenth century saw the dilution and partial conquest of traditional

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(12) See Table I, supra.

(13) 'Alexander Harris', The Emigrant Family: or, the Story of an Australian Settler, 3 vols., Lond: 1849, Vol. II, p.234.

and aristocratic values by those of the middle and lower classes. Since, in Australia before the Gold Rush, there was no aristocracy and a relatively very small 'middle class',(14) the process was intensified here by the disproportionate weight of the lower class group embracing the vast majority of convicts, emancipists, Currency people and even, after a few years spent in Australia, of the working people among the

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(14) The exclusionist 'upper class' in early Australia was composed mainly of middle class Britons, possessed often of quite modest amounts of capital. Between this group of 4,477 squatters, importers, bankers, and professional men and the 50,158 mechanics, labourers, servants etc., there were listed in the New South Wales Census of 1841 only 1,774 "shop-keepers and other retail dealers". (N.S.W. Leg. Council, V. & P., 1841) These figures give a 'middle class' of 3·1%. F.K. Crowley says that there was "no middle class of any consequence, as the shop-keepers and other retailers were never more than 2% of the classified population in any colony." (Working Class Conditions in Australia 1788-1851, Melb. Ph. D. thesis, 7/11/49, p.191.

For Coghlan's interpretation of the 1841 census figures, see his Report on 11th. Census, p.82.

And cf. John Hood, Australia and the East, etc., Lond: 1843, p.309: "At the two meetings I have attended, the two opposite principles advocated, though both were covered under the cloak of great moderation, were ultra-Toryism and ultra-Radicalism. There does not seem to be any middle class in the colony of sufficient weight to take a leading part; or if such a class exists, it appears, at present, to have no inclination to mix itself up in public matters." And ibid., p.314: "The middle class, recognised in England as such, have very few representatives; and, if they exist at all, they hang aloof from distrust in both [the "ultra-Tory" and "ultra-Radical" factions] (as one gentleman who accounted himself of that section told me), from a consciousness of not belonging to the one, and a fear of being considered of the other."

free immigrants. Mundy, the conservative Adjutant-General of New South Wales, sensed what was happening when he wrote sadly,

> "I have always thought the song or whistle of man or maiden a sort of indirect compliment to those they serve under; and I wonder why I so seldom heard in Australia, these tokens of a cheerful heart. 'The milkmaid's song!' 'The ploughboy whistling o'er the lea!' - in New Holland! As well might you expect to hear the robin or the blackbird warbling in a gum-tree! Can it be that the original character and temper of labour has been engrafted permanently on the soil; - that the sullen tone of the original convict serf has descended to the free servant of to-day? Or is it that the foedality of feeling existing between master and man has departed altogether out of the land? - is departing out of all lands? I have been inclined to think so ever since the last groom and valet I had at home - a modernising fellow, who attended his club twice a week - taught me to look upon myself, not as his master but as his employer. There was a good deal of significance, methought, in that substitution of title."(15)

The same phenomena were hailed with delight by the radical spokesman, J.D. Lang, who recognised that when the Gold Rush began Australia was "a land where already perhaps more than in any other part of the world 'a man's a man for a' that.'"(16)

If convict and lower-class influences on manners were as significant as has been argued above, it becomes important to examine their nature. After the convict period itself had closed, most writers were for long inclined either to avoid the subject or to assume, at least tacitly, that the

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(15) Godfrey Charles Mundy, Our Antipodes; or Residence and Rambles in the Australasian Colonies with a Glimpse of the Goldfields, Lond: 1855, 3rd edn., pp.547-548.

(16) Quoted W.K. Hancock, Australia, Syd: 1945 edn., p.42.

influence of these first pioneers had been almost wholly deplorable. The climate of prevailing opinion is vividly implied by the half-apologetic, half-defiant air with which a clergyman introduced discussion of the subject in 1867:

> "It is not easy escaping the conviction, and it has never been, I presume, attempted to be denied, that convictism has tended in no small degree to give a distinct character and complexion to certain phases of Australian life which it would not have otherwise worn, and a knowledge of this constitutes no small part of that much-vaunted 'Colonial experience', extolled as the foundation of success. 'What is the use of a friend,' I have heard one man say, 'but to take the use of him?'"(17)

About thirty or forty years ago opinion swung towards the opposite extreme. "The greatest English criminals remained in England," wrote G.A. Wood in 1921, and he meant, not those raised to the eminence of Tyburn tree, but those raised above their fellows by birth, wealth or position - "the men who plundered their country in habitual political robbery."(18) Many living Australians gathered at school this impression that the convicts were more sinned against than sinning. A popular myth grew up that the transports were loaded to the gunwales with Scottish Martyrs, Tolpuddle Martyrs, Irish democratic rebels (who were also martyrs!),

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(17) 'A Clergyman' [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is: or etc., Lond: 1867, pp.222-223.

(18) "Convicts", Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, Vol. VIII, Pt.4, Syd: 1922, p.196.

and first offenders whose only crime had been to steal a loaf of bread or poach a rabbit to feed their starving families. It is interesting to notice that in the last century, before distance had enchanted the view, this loaf and rabbit story was usually told ironically,(19) but it has since been told seriously as typical of most transported persons.

Recent scholarship is beginning to draw a picture of convict criminality which will be juster, one trusts, than either of its predecessors. A.G.L. Shaw's work on the original records in Britain shows that the great majority of those transported were probably habitual criminals, many

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(19) e.g. C.R. Thatcher, Script to accompany Diorama of Life at the Diggings, MS (P.L.V.): "These are all Bullock drivers & are yarning. ... On sitting down for a chat & a smoke after tea it was a common thing for one to say to another, 'Come mate give us a yarn & tell us what you were sent out for.' ... Strange to say more than half thus appealed to would state that poaching was the crime for which they involuntarily emigrated."

And Francis Adams, The Australians: A Social Sketch, Lond: 1893, pp.29-30: "In many cases the convicts made fortunes and rose to high positions, when it was invariably discovered that they had been transported for snaring a hare or stealing a loaf of bread. ... The number of those transported to Australia for stealing loaves of bread or snaring hares must have been very large, and it is a singular proof of the innate integrity of these men, of course, that all who subsequently rose to distinction were discovered to be among their number."

of them thoroughly hardened and vicious.[20] If one takes the view that English rick-burners and Luddites, or Irish rebels and agrarian offenders, were really not criminals at all in the ordinary sense, then such 'innocent' men formed quite a large minority of those transported: but if one defines political criminals as men more or less consciously inspired by political aims, such people formed only a tiny minority.[21] Few historians would now endorse Scott's view

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(20) Sydney Morning Herald, 27/6/1953. Shaw's figures on poachers transported provide a striking example of how wrong an impression was given by earlier estimates. For instance, A.L. Lloyd (The Singing Englishman, p.50) writes, "In only three years between 1827 and 1830 more than 8,500 men and boys were convicted as poachers and a very high proportion of them transported." Shaw says there were "fewer than 250 [poachers] transported between 1829 and 1844." And cf. idem., The Story of Australia, Lond: 1955, pp.96-97.

(21) T.J. Kiernan, Transportation from Ireland to Sydney: 1791-1816, Canberra: 1954, p.16 et passim, argues that 1,443 out of 2,931, or 49% of men transported from Ireland during the period considered were neither ordinary criminals nor conscious political revolutionaries but rather the ignorant and innocent victims of forces which themselves were ultimately largely political in character.

Shaw, taking the narrower view in his newspaper article, writes: "The Scottish 'martyrs' of 1794, the naval mutineers of 1797 (including the famous surgeon Redfern), the Irish rebels of 1798, 1803, and 1848, the agricultural rioters of 1830, the Tolpuddle martyrs of 1834, the Canadian rebels of 1839, and the Chartists of 1842 make up a formidable-looking list, until one realises that they would number little more than a thousand in all, of whom more than half came from the rioters of 1830. Out of a total of 150,000 they did little to leaven the lump; and in relatively few cases (excepting the 1830 contingent) did they remain in Australia after their sentences had expired."

that "probably 83% of the earliest victims of the law were convicted for crimes 'for which in modern times they would be dealt with by the summary jurisdiction of a police court or pardoned possibly under a First Offenders' Act.'" (22) - at least in so far as it applies to the great majority of prisoners who were transported after 1820. (23)

In view of the state of British society during and after the Napoleonic Wars it would have been surprising indeed if there had not been a great many hardened criminals. During the eighteenth century the Agrarian Revolution and its accompanying enclosure acts multiplied the number of dispossessed peasant farmers and unemployed farm-hands as fast as it increased primary production. (24) The demand for 'hands' in the rising industrial towns seldom kept pace with the growth in numbers of those seeking work. Not infrequently men had to steal or starve. (25) One result, as Fitzpatrick has pointed out, was that between the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the day, a century later, when the First Fleet

(22) Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol.VII, Pt.1, "Australia", Camb: 1933, p.90.

(23) A.G.L. Shaw, loc. cit.

(24) Pauline Gregg, Social and Economic History of Britain 1760-1950, Lond: 1950, Cap.I.

(25) J.L. & B. Hammond, The Village Labourer, 1760-1833, Lond:1913, p.195 et passim, esp. Cap.VI, and G.A. Wood, loc. cit., and cf. Mrs. Cobden Unwin (ed.), The Hungry Forties, Life Under the Bread Tax: Descriptive Letters and Other Testimonies from Contemporary Witnesses, Lond: 1904, p.78 ff.

discharged its wretched cargo on the shores of Port Jackson, the number of capital crimes on the English statute book increased from fifty to about a hundred and fifty.(26) It is true that after 1820 the reforms of Peel, Brougham and Lord John Russell mitigated the severity of the laws, though but slightly by modern standards. On the other hand it is a commonplace of historical writing that during the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly up to and including the decade 1830-1840, living conditions for the poor were probably harder than at any other period in Britain since the Middle Ages.(27)

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(26) Brian Fitzpatrick, The Australian People, Melb: 1946, p.99.

(27) J.L. & B. Hammond, Rise of Modern Industry, Lond: 1925, pp.205-206, and Caps. XII and XIII passim. And The Bleak Age, Lond: 1947 (revised edition), esp. Cap. I.
G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, The Common People 1746-1946, Lond: 1946, pp.138-139, 142, 686-687.
J.R.M. Butler, History of England 1815-1918, Oxford: 1928, p.69 and Cap. III passim.
Sir John Clapham (Economic History of Modern Britain, 1926) and disciples like F.H. Hayek and T.S. Ashton have dissented from the majority view: but in a recent work edited by Hayek (Capitalism and the Historians, 1954), Ashton admits that N.J. Silberling's statistics, on which Clapham largely based his argument, are unreliable. Ashton also admits that during the Napoleonic Wars the "economic status of labour" was "almost certainly worsened" (p.135); argues that the marked downward trend in the terms of trade from 1814 to the middle 1830's "did not represent any worsening" of working class living standards (p.141); and admits that "throughout the twenties the cost of the staple diet moved to a higher rather than a lower level" (p.156). In conclusion he suggests that the real living standard of skilled workers improved, unlike that of the "unskilled and poorly skilled." (pp.158-159).

There is ample testimony that for unskilled men with large families, even if they were fortunate enough to have constant work, it was almost impossible to keep body and soul together. But these facts hardly validate Wood's remark that "the greatest English criminals remained in England."[28] Mass poverty and misery were perhaps inevitable accompaniments of the beginning of the industrial system. At all events they have accompanied its early stages not only in England but in every country where industrialisation has taken place. On the other hand recognition of social evils which tended to manufacture criminals, while it may, in the final analysis, absolve most of them from emotionally charged moral blame, should not lead the historian to suppose that the transports were filled with virtuous men and women. Even if they were not confirmed in vicious courses upon conviction, conditions in the transports,[29] and the effects

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(28) See p.102 supra.

(29) T.J. Kiernan, Transportation from Ireland to Sydney: 1791-1816, pp.17-18.

But successive reforms improved very considerably conditions aboard the transports. See Report of Select Committee on Transportation 1812 (quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1788-1850, pp.111-112; and ibid., pp.112-113.) Also T.B. Wilson, M.D., Surgeon R.N., Narrative of a Voyage Round the World; etc., Lond:1835, Appendix III, pp.325-349; and P. Cunningham, Surgeon R.N., Two Years in New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1827, Vol.II, p.215 ff.

of the "system" on those who drew an unlucky ticket in the lottery which it was,[30] made many of them so. Perhaps the best merited Vance Palmer's description of them as "people distinguished from their neighbours only by a lighter regard for property or a fainter capacity for self-control in the presence of a landlord."[31]

The vast majority of the convicts were unskilled or semi-skilled working class people, and this statement was probably hardly less true of the assisted immigrants of the 1830's and 1840's than of the convicts.[32] Most were townsmen,[33] though some of these may have had a not very remote rural

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(30) Report, H. of C. Sel. Comm. Tptn. 1838 (P.P. Gt. Br., 1838, Vol.III) pp.20-21 ff.: "A criminal sentenced to transportation may be ... a domestic servant, well fed, well clothed, and well treated by a kind and indulgent master ... or he may be the wretched praedial slave of some harsh master, compelled by the lash to work, until driven to desperation, he takes to the bush, and is shot down like a beast of prey." And cf. Historical Records of Australia, Series I, Vol. XVII, p.322 (Bourke to Stanley, 15/1/1834).

(31) Vance Palmer, The Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, p.32. And cf. M.H. Ellis, Lachlan Macquarie etc., Syd: 1947, p.177 ff: "On the whole the population of New South Wales was not so wicked as it might have been..."

(32) R.B. Madgwick, Immigration etc., p.242 ff.

(33) A.G.L. Shaw, Sydney Morning Herald, 27/6/1953, "Most of the prisoners were town thieves, pickpockets and shop-lifters, the product of urban over-crowding and un-employment."

J.T. Bigge, Report ... into the State of the Colony of N.S.W., Lond: 1822, p.75: "A very large proportion of the convicts assigned to the settlers, having, in the later periods of the colony, consisted of the lowest classes of the labourers from the manufacturing districts of Great Britain, or from the populous towns, much difficulty has been experienced in training them to agricultural labour on their arrival... "

background, being redundant farm-workers or the children of countrymen forced to the towns in search of work. Generally speaking the townsmen were the more cunning and adaptable, the countrymen stronger but duller, or at least more set in their traditional ways. There is even some reason to think that townsmen, because of their adaptability and because they had nothing to un-learn about rural work, often made the better bush-workers.(34) Cunningham gives an amusing picture of the two groups as he saw them on the transports in the early 1820's:

> "The cockneys are, of course, beyond all dispute the worst, and a leaven of a dozen of these is enough to infect a thousand of the country yokels, with whom peace is generally the order of the day. Such a number of these townies will keep a hundred of the others in subjection, from the manner in which they cling together, and from their overwhelming oratorical abilities. - The less gifted yokels have not a chance with them, if the strong hand of power is not stretched out for their protection. A ship which took in her yokel cargo in the river, sailed round to Portsmouth to fill up with a dunnage (a sea-phrase signifying a kind of make-weight) of thirty townies, when the whole boast of

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(34) George Bennett, Wanderings in N.S.W. etc., Lond: 1834, 2 vols. Vol. I, p.90.

G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.225: "Many of this class[shepherds]are or have been prisoners of the Crown - old pickpockets, it is said, making first-rate shepherds." And G.T. Lloyd, Thirty-Three Years etc., pp.167-168: "The cockney pickpocket invariably excelled all others in that most abstruse science [outback bullock-driving], owing, no doubt, to his extraordinary volubility of tongue." And see Alexander Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W. etc., Lond: 1847, p.35 ff., which makes it quite clear that though, as Bigge said, townsmen might make poor agricultural workers in the new land, they often made the best pastoral workers.

> the simple yokels, while proceeding round, was, how they would 'serve out' the townies on the voyage: but before they were a week together, the handful of Spartans left the others scarcely a pair of decent trousers to clothe their nakedness.
>
> Most desperate combats sometimes take place between the two parties in badly regulated ships, and murder has often nearly ensued; for when the bristles of the yokels are fairly up, they level the cockneys as if they were playing at ninepins; bullying being the chief qualification of the latter."(35)

The "cockneys'" predominance in numbers, prestige, and "oratorical abilities"(36) probably accounts for the basic qualities of what Mitchell calls "Broad Australian" speech;(37) but it would be misleading to exaggerate the difference in outlook between the urban and rural labouring classes from which most of the convicts were drawn.(38) As noted above, the songs sung by both groups were usually inter-changeable, and there is little doubt but that they mirrored faithfully the social outlook of those who sang them. The poor, wrote a London Ragged School master in 1851,

> "have a literature of their own, though they seldom read, and ... that literature represents correctly their feelings and ways of thinking. ... The form of literature which best suits the alley is the ballad - a striking

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(35) P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol.II, pp.262-264

(36) cf. T.B. Wilson, Narrative of a Voyage etc., p.330.

(37) A.G. Mitchell, The Pronunciation of English in Australia, Syd: 1946, Cap. III

(38) See p.36 supra.

> proof of the influence which poetry combined with music possesses over the human mind, even when most hardened and depraved. ... and the people are influenced by their ballads to an extent which a casual observer would not readily credit."(39)

There is also no doubt but that the prisoners brought their songs with them in the transports to Australia. Cunningham, who conducted four shiploads of felons to New South Wales, without, he was proud to say, "losing a single individual,"(40) wrote of their embarkation:

> "Before leaving the hulk, the convicts are thoroughly clothed in new suits and ironed; and it is curious to observe with what nonchalance some of these fellows will turn the jingling of their chains into music whereto they dance and sing."(41)

He encouraged them to keep it up throughout the voyage, "all day long if they pleased,"(42) as he sensibly believed it was good for their health. Another naval surgeon. T.B. Wilson, recorded that his maxim was "never to permit the slightest slang expression to be used, nor flash songs to be sung, nor swearing;"(43) but he added sadly that it was "nearly impossible to restrain their almost unconquerable propensity [for song and ribaldry] while below."(44) The schoolmaster's

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(39) English Journal of Education, Vol. IX (1851) p.33 ff: "Extracts from the Private Diary of the Master of a London Ragged School", No.7.

(40) P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol.I, P.vi.

(41) ibid., Vol.II, p.215.

(42) ibid., p.221.

(43) T.B. Wilson, Narrative of a Voyage etc., p.332.

(44) ibid., p.333.

diary states that many ballads were "songs of transports, and felons of various grades", and quotes a few lines of one as an example:

> "It was a few hours after her father did appear,
> And march'd me back to Omer gaol in the county of Tyrone,
> And there I was transported from Erin's lovely home;
> When I heard my sentence it grieved my heart full sore,
> And parting from my true love it grieved me ten times more."(45)

In 1954 the whole of this ballad(46) was sung to me by a lady of old Irish-Australian stock. She had learnt it from folk-singers on the western slopes of the Blue Mountains during her girlhood in the 1890's. The equivalent lines had become:

> "It's when we thought all danger past her father did appear,
> Which soon did separate me from the arms of my dear.
> He marched me off to Honeford gaol in the county of Tyrone,
> From which I was transported from Erin's lovely home.
>
> When I received my sentence, it grieved my heart full sore,
> To leave my home behind me, it grieved me ten times more."(47)

Although in the first half of the nineteenth century many, perhaps most, ballads were especially written for the market by professional street ballad-singers or "chaunters",

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(45) Eng. Journal of Education, loc. cit.

(46) See Appendix III.

(47) Mrs. Mary Byrnes, of Concord, N.S.W., was born at Springside, a small farming hamlet in the hills near Orange, of Australian born parents. She said of the lines here quoted, "I thought they used to say Honan gaol but I suppose Honeford is right. The line, 'It's when we thought all danger past...', I think sometimes was sung, 'But to my great misfortune her father did appear.'"

it would be a mistake to imagine that therefore they were not folk-songs but self-conscious, literary work.[48] The chaunters were poor, semi-literate men who shared fully the living conditions and attitudes of their customers. In his London Labour and the London Poor Henry Mayhew gives a thumbnail autobiography of a typical chaunter. This man did much work for the heirs and successors of that doyen of street-ballad publishers,[49] Jemmy Catnach of the Seven Dials Press, situate in the Rogues' Parish of St. Giles. He told Mayhew:

> "I am what may be termed a regular street ballad singer. When I was thirteen years old ... I turned into the streets in consequence of the harsh treatment I met with [at home]. ... I lived at this time upon the refuse I picked up in the streets - cabbage-stumps out of the market, orange-peel and such like. ... Having a tidy voice of my own ... I was going on for fourteen when I first took to [ballad-singing] and I have stuck to the business ever since. Of the regular street ballad-singers there are not less than 250 in and about London. ... who live solely by ballad-singing and selling ballads and song-books. ... There are five known authors for the Seven Dials Press, and they are all ballad-singers. I am one of these myself. The little knowledge I have I picked up bit by bit, so that I hardly know how I came by it. I certainly knew my letters before I left home, and I have got the rest off the dead walls and out of the papers and ballads I have been selling. I write most of the Newgate ballads now for the printers in the Dials, and indeed, anything that turns up. I

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(48) See also W. Henderson, Victorian Street Ballads, Lond:1937, Introduction.

And Chas. Hindley, History of the Catnach Press, Lond:1887.

(49) Chas. Hindley, op. cit., and Henry Mayhew, op. cit., Lond: 1864, Vol. I, p.234 ff. (The work was first published in 1851.)

> get a shilling for 'a copy of verses written by the wretched culprit the night previous to his execution.' I did the helegy ... on Rush's execution. It was supposed, like the rest, to be written by the culprit himself, and was particular penitent. I didn't write that to order - I knew they would want a copy of verses from the culprit. The publishers read it over and said, 'That's the thing for the street public.' I only got a shilling for Rush. Indeed they are all the same price, no matter how popular they may be..."(50)

On a priori grounds it is natural to suppose that transportation ballads would have been especially popular among our pioneers, and there is evidence to show that this was, in fact, the case. As late as 1888 a Sydney Bulletin correspondent, writing on "Bush Songs", recorded that:

> "Over twenty years back ... at the station hut and during shearing time where a very representative gathering of bushmen was to be found, the nasal quaver of the 'old hand' might be heard as he vaunted the glories of some old-time bushranger ... or gave a doggerel reminiscence of the ill-famed island prison ... where
>
> 'They yoked us up like horses
> All in Van Dieman's [sic] Land'"(51)

And since 1950 I have talked with four surviving ballad-singers (there must of course be many others) who remember transportation ballads, or fragments of them, which they learnt from even older Australians in the last decade or two

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(50) Henry Mayhew, op. cit., Vol. III, p.205 ff.

(51) op. cit., 10/3/88, p.14.

of the last century.[52] Judging by the number, variety, and widespread provenance of extant versions of Van Diemen's Land,[53] this song was perhaps the most popular and typical of all transportation ballads; but we may take as an example Adieu to Old England which, though hardly less typical, is much less well-known. It's "Come-allye" invocation to "wild young native lads" points also to the direct derivation, suggested above, of Currency attitudes from convict ones:

Adieu to Old England
or
The Transport's Farewell

Come all you wild young native lads
Wherever you may be,
One moment pay attention
And listen unto me.
I am a poor unhappy soul,
Within those walls I lay
My awful sentence is pronounced,
I am bound for Botany Bay.

I was brought up in tenderness,
My parents' sole delight.
They never could be hapy
But when I was in their sight.
They nourished my tender yrs
And Oft to me would say,
Avoid all evil company
Lest the lead you astray.

My parents bound me prentice
All in fair Devonshire
To a linen Draper,
The truth you soon shall hear.
I bore an excellent character,
My master loved me well,
Till in a harlot's company
Unfortunately I fell.

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(52) See p.12 ff., supra.

(53) See Appendix IV

In the gayest of splendour
I maintained this lofty dame,
But when my money spent
She treated me with disdain.
She said go robe your master,
He has it in great store,
If some money you don't get
You'll see my face no more.

To her bad advice I yielded
And to my Master went;
To plunder him of what i could,
It was my full intent.
Of costly robes and money too
I took as you shall hear
All from the best of masters,
As to me did appear.

The next robbery i committed,
It was on a gentleman,
Of full 500 sovereigns
He placed them in my hand.
Taken i was for this sad crime,
To Exeter sent me;
The Harlot then forsook me quite
In this extremely.

The assizes then drew near,
Before the Judge i stand.
My prosecutor then swore that
I was the very man.
My aged parents dear, they
So bitterly did cry,
Oh must we with a bleeding heart
Bid our fair boy good bye.

My master and friends
As they stood in the hall,
What floods of tears they shed,
And for mercy did call.

The cruel jade no mercy shew'd
But unto me did say,
My lad you're transported -
And to Botany Bay.(54)

During the twenty or thirty years prior to 1840 when the export of convicts to Australia was at its height, the living and working conditions of the poor in Great Britain were probably changing more rapidly than at any other period for a century before or afterwards.(55) Nevertheless it was an age of reform, not of revolution.(56) The

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(54) I have supplied rudimentary punctuation but otherwise reproduced this text verbatim from an MS scrap-book, kindly given me by the grandson of its compiler, M.J. Conlon. The latter was born at Wollongong in 1841, but spent his life from the age of seven in Sydney. In 1875 he founded a pottery in Broughton St., Glebe, and became a local councillor and president of the Glebe Football Club. To judge from the scrap-book he was also very interested in cricket, bowls and pugilism. His grandson says he was a very well-known amateur singer and entertainer. He died in 1917. (See Cyclopedia of New South Wales, 1907; pp.477-478.) The scrap-book is now held by the National Library, Canberra. There may well be other extant versions of this ballad in broadside collections in Britain, though Mr. Edgar Waters found none there in a very extensive search during 1954 and 1955. No other version has yet been found in Australia.

(55) cf. p.106 supra.

(56) cf. G.D.H. Cole and R. Postgate, The Common People, p.686 ff.: "The Chartists are more than anything else a pitiable people."

people who listened to the chaunters and sang their songs were an integral part of an old society, and one which has proved, since the seventeenth century, to be perhaps the most stable in the world. Yet the Ragged School master of 1851 thought that "the principles introduced into these ballads [were] most immoral, and dangerous to society."(57) Looking back now, it is difficult at first glance to see why. In the above transportation ballad, or in Van Diemen's Land, or in Botany Bay,(58) there is surely no fundamental conflict, in principle, with the famous lines from a hymn of the Victorian age:

> "The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate,
> God made them, high or lowly, and order'd their estate."(59

Another quotation from the schoolmaster's diary will help in understanding:

> "Throughout these songs there is not the least expression of remorse, nor do their authors attempt to make the victims of the law give vent to feelings of contrition or sorrow for the past, nor do they ever suggest that the criminal loses more than his liberty by the punishment awarded for his crimes. He is always made to speak of returning to his friends, as if nothing out of the way had happened; and I have remarked, in a former part of my diary, that this is the actual state of the case in their society. They have little or no

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(57) Eng. Journal of Education, loc. cit.

(58) See Appendix IV. "Botany Bay" was probably the most popular of all transportation ballads, after "Van Diemen's Land."

(59) Mrs. C.F. Alexander (1823-95), wife of the Archbishop of Armagh.

> feeling of shame; their behaviour would lead to the belief that they rather gloried in their degredation than otherwise. This is, perhaps, the most unpromising feature in their character..."(60)

The judgment is at once both penetrating and superficial. Adieu to Old England carries a heavier burden of conventional moralising than do most transportation ballads, but even so the distress of the hero and his friends clearly springs from the fact that he has been discovered, and not in the least from anything approaching truly felt moral penitence. By members of the social class to which they belonged, poachers and pickpockets were clearly accepted as normal, though unlucky, people, and it was this fact which respectable middle class contemporaries found shocking. Seeing the conventional moralising for what it was, as little more than part of the rogues' professional stock-in-trade, they completely failed to see that it was also an indirect, and indeed largely unconscious, tribute to the prestige of middle class morality, and so to the stability of contemporary society. While they lived by breaking the rules and took it for granted that they should do so, they tended to to take it equally for granted that the rules themselves

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(60) Eng. Journal of Education, loc. cit.

were an immutable part of the natural order of things. In their ballads working class people complained of their hard lot, but rarely indeed did they question the basic assumptions on which society rested.(61)

However the stability of English society was not, and could not have been, carried intact across half the world by the new colonists.(62) Respect for the squire, based on traditional obligations which were, or had been, at least to some extent mutual, was not often transformed into respect for a commercial slave-master whose wealth was often ill-gotten and nearly always recently acquired. When Australia was founded the natural expectation was that it would develop into a predominantly agricultural community of petty proprietors or tenants and landed gentry, on the model, idealised perhaps, of eighteenth century Britain. In so far as the Colonial Office can be said to have had a conscious or con-

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(61) See Appendix V for text of The Death of Bill Brown, one of the most "revolutionary" of contemporary English ballads. It contains a kind of implacable bitterness, but this is directed against the individual gamekeeper "as shot Bill Brown", and to some extent against what is felt to be the immanent nature of society.

(62) James Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies, Lond: 1843, p.513 and 503: "People in England maintaining a good character, are little aware, how much of what gains them this character, they owe to the oversight of those, by whom they are continually surrounded, and how little to principle. When they emigrate to a country where this oversight is withdrawn, too generally, but little that has the appearance of principle remains." And see pp.393-394.

And cf. E.W. Landor, The Bushman: or, Life in a New Country, Lond: 1847, p.107 ff. Landor notes exactly the same tendency in the then non-convict colony of Western Australia.

sistent policy, this was also the plan of the British Government,[63] as it was of Wakefield and the Systematic Colonisers.[64] But from the outset economic, geographic and social factors decreed otherwise. By 1831 Government policy too had been changed in such a way as to make it even more difficult for 'small men' to become farmers.[65] Predominantly Australia was not to be an agricultural country tilled by an industrious and contented peasantry, but a land of large pastoral estates, owned by men or companies of considerable capital, and employing, mainly on a casual basis, a nomadic rural proletariat.

This fact, however, did not mean that the transported yokels and pickpockets were worse off in Australia. In the Britain they left, though traditional social attitudes, derived from the pattern of life idealised in the "De Coverley"

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(63) R.C. Mills, Colonization of Australia etc., p.157. The policy was also vigorously forwarded by Macquarie during his long reign. See M.H. Ellis, Lachlan Macquarie etc., pp.246-247.

(64) R.C. Mills, ibid. p.120: "Wakefield appears to have thought that the long-established civilisation of an old society could be taken up in layers and transferred in the same position to a colony, the colonies becoming 'new Englands' with high and low, rich and poor, all classes and grades of society, though with more freedom of passage from one grade to another."

(65) ibid. pp.160-167; and E.G. Shann, Economic History of Australia, Camb: 1948, p.136; and Brian Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia, Melb: 1941, p.59 et passim.

papers of Steele and Addison, still had some virtue, the pattern itself had all but departed. For the majority, the "townies", it had passed completely. The life they actually knew was a grim scramble for an insufficient number of wretched jobs, wretchedly paid. Many of the convicts and paupers who made up the cargoes of transports and emigrant ships must have been demoralised to the point of becoming uninterested in, and even incapable of, honest work. Yet, lazy, drunken and dissolute[67] though so many of them were, the conditions in which they existed undoubtedly fostered the growth of some positive qualities which they brought across the oceans with them.[66]

First among these was a certain group or class solidarity indicated by the maxim that 'there is honour among thieves'. After all, this strong collectivist sentiment of group loyalty is, apart from his own individual cunning, the criminal's sole means of defence against the overwhelmingly powerful organs of state authority. On the other hand the very fact of his criminality presupposes his possession of unusually

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(66) R.B. Madgwick, Immigration etc., p.96 ff.

(67) The sexual licence of early Australian society is well-known. As late as 1847 Marjoribanks (Travels in N.S.W. etc., p.206 ff.) wrote: "Probably one-seventh part of the married men there have deserted their own wives and are living with the wives of others, or with single women, whilst the married women, when deserted by their husbands, generally change partners also." And cf. T.C. Croker (ed.), Memoirs of Joseph Holt etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1838, Vol. II, pp.223-225.

strong individualist leanings. He is, by definition, anti-social. But when the criminal becomes a long-term convict, his scope for exercising individual cunning is very severely limite while the forces impelling him towards social, collectivist behaviour (within his own group) are correspondingly strengthened All that we know about the convicts shows that this egalitarian class solidarity was the one human trait which usually remained to all but the most brutalised of them after the "system" had done its best or its worst.

There is abundant evidence (68) that the following vignette

(68) e.g. G.W.Rusden, History of Australia, 3 vols., Lond:1884, Vol.I, pp.213-214.
P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol.II,p.229-235.
Diary of George Hobler, 1827-71 (Mitchell Lib.MS), Vol.3, Oct.16, 1830: "Last night Peter Hawkins came to me for protection, he having been severely beat by Jeffries and Ashley his head cut open apparently by some sharp instrument kept him here for the night and this morning took all parties to the Police office, it appears Ashley and Peter had gone to town without leave as usual quarrelled and Jeffries assisted in ill-using Peter the whole mob of them having made a set against that man from an idea of his telling me tales, which he does not, Brown laid in his bed and instead of assisting Peter encouraged the others to beat him, he was ordered 25 lashes Ashley 30 Jeffries 50, and all promised if again brought up for a repetition of the offence they should be sent to Macquarie Harbour."
"A Resident of Twelve Years' Experience", New South Wales: Its Past, Present, and Future Condition etc., Lond:1849 (P.L.V., N.S.W. Pamphlets, Vol.XXXIX), p.16: "Perhaps the worst trait in the character of the convict population is the ill feeling they display to all except their own class. A spirit of freemasonry exists among them to a great extent; and the greater the ruffian the greater pet he is. A man who endeavours to become reformed, or to give satisfaction to his master, is barely tolerated; while he who has been subjected to excessive secondary punishments at the penal settlements of Moreton Bay or Norfolk Island, is considered a hero."
'Alexander Harris', Settlers and Convicts (ed.C.M.H.Clark), Melb:1953, p.24: "There was a sort of manly independence of disposition, which secured truthfulness and sincerity at least among themselves. If the penalty for the practice of that truthfulness toward the superior classes had been fixed too high, I felt that allowance ought to be made for it in estimating their character."
Among the convicts there were, of course, informers, who were sometimes murdered by their fellows. (See J.J.Knight, In the Early Days etc., Brisbane:1895, p.48.)

from Marcus Clarke's great novel faithfully reflects the strength of the sentiment. "Gabbett", the utterly debased cannibal prisoner, has just been re-captured after 'bolting' from the Macquarie Harbour penal establishment. The character of "Maurice Frere" is said, very plausibly,(69) to have been based on that of the historical John Price, Commandant of Norfolk Island from 1848 to 1853:

> "'How many mates had he?' asked Maurice, watching the champing jaws as one looks at a strange animal, and asking the question as though a 'mate' was something a convict was born with - like a mole, for instance."(70)

There is some reason to think that this freemasonry of felonry may have been, to a certain extent, institutionalised. Many of William Astley's ("Price Warung's") stories of convict

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(69) cf. Clarke's "Maurice Frere" with the character of the real John Price, as sketched by John Singleton in his Narrative of Incidents in the Eventful Life of a Physician, Melb:1891, pp.154-169. The correspondence is so close as to strain belief in the idea that it is fortuitous.

(70) The Term of His Natural Life (1st. pub. 1874), Lond:1925, p.100.

And cf. ibid., p.408: [The defiance of Dawes, the hero, has been broken down by repeated floggings and punishments.] "The next day Frere visited him, complimented him on his courage, and offered to make him a constable. Dawes turned his scarred back to his torturer, and resolutely declined to answer.

'I am afraid you have made an enemy of the Commandant,' said North [the Chaplain], the next day, 'Why not accept his offer?'

Dawes cast on him a glance of quiet scorn. 'And betray my mates? I'm not one of that sort.'"

life are based on sound research, and their author also learnt directly, from ex-convicts with whom he was friendly, much about the "system". His long short-story, The Ring, describes an 'underground' brotherhood whose organisation centred round the "convict oath":

> "The five agreed ... and ... took the Convict Oath. They chanted the eight verses, which began: -
>
> 'Hand to hand,
> On Earth, in Hell,
> Sick or Well,
> On Sea, on Land,
> On the square, ever.'
>
> And ended - the intervening verses dare not be quoted -
>
> 'Stiff or in Breath,
> Lag or Free,
> You and Me,
> In Life, in Death,
> On the Cross, never.'
>
> They chanted them with crossed and re-crossed hands, and the foot of each pressed to the foot of another. ... So was fealty to their leader, honour to one another, plighted. The Convict Oath was a terrible thing; it was never broken without occasioning death to someone - not necessarily the violator. John Price died in 1857 because of a Convict Oath registered at Norfolk Island in the Forties."(71)

(71) loc. cit., in Tales of the Old Regime, and the Bullet of the Fated Ten, Melb: 1897, p.91.
Price, then "head of the penal department at Melbourne," was battered to death with quarrying tools by his convict charges on 26th March 1857. (Australian Encyclopaedia, Syd: 1926, Vol.II, p.333.)

It would be easy, but probably wrong, to dismiss this entirely as the product of Astley's imagination; for in February 1830 a convict bolter from a road-gang described in court "his swearing with their hands crossed to stand by them",(72) when he joined a gang of bushrangers.

Another marked convict trait was resourcefulness - the ability to make piecemeal adjustments to changing circumstances, to make rough but serviceable implements from whatever scanty materials were to hand, and to be equally at home in a London tenement or gutter, an iron-gang on the Cowpastures road, or a bark hut beyond the Bathurst Plains. C.E.W. Bean notices this faculty for improvisation as being, at a much later period, an established characteristic of bushmen, and explains it, correctly enough, as a necessary response to outback conditions.(73) But the most successful improvisers among the first bushmen tended to be 'old hands'. Thus, when J.C. Byrne in 1839 drove nearly 1,000 head of cattle overland from Yass Plains to Adelaide he chose for the enterprise,

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(72) George Hobler, Diary, Vol.III, Feb. 23, 1830. The 'bolter', one Britten, gave evidence that after decamping from the road party he joined a bushranger named Bevan and his mate.

And cf. T. Potter Macqueen, Australia As She Is and As She May Be, Lond: 1840, pp.11.-12: "Whereas, send him [the convict] to a roadgang, he congregates with the greatest villains in the country, is made liable to the regulations of secrecy and fellowship they uniformly establish, ... "

(73) The Dreadnought of the Darling, Lond: 1911, p.322 ff.

> "chiefly 'old hands', many having been convicts long inured to every description of hardship, and caring little whether they lay down to rest within the hollow of a monster gum-tree, or the walls of a human habitation. Several years previously, two of the number had dwelt for some time amongst the aborigines, and were most experienced bushmen."(74)

That prisoners were often conspicuously untrustworthy and unresourceful in relation to the work assigned them by their taskmasters, was only the reverse side of the medal. In their relationship with each other they were equally often loyal and enterprising.

However, the century-long preoccupation with the question of whether the convicts were, or were not, the sort of people one would like to have had for grandparents, has diverted attention from another matter not less interesting and important. Granted that most of the convicts were habitual criminals, whether petty or great, how did they and their offspring re-act to the unfamiliar Australian environment?

There is good reason for thinking that, generally speaking, the convicts changed markedly in many ways, most of which were for the better. F.K. Crowley concludes that to the question of whether the transportation system was

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(74) Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847, Lond: 1848, 2 vols., Vol. II, p.216 ff

effective "as a means of reforming the criminals ... there are almost as many possible answers as there were convicts transported."(75) The statement is true as far as it goes, but misleading. Of course some prisoners were incorrigibles who ended their lives in the cells, or on the scaffold at Norfolk Island or some other place of secondary punishment. With many more reformation, in any deep or spiritual sense, was certainly more apparent than real. Yet the fact remains that the great majority of the convicts became free men and women who at least kept out of prison and performed useful tasks in society. A letter from the Convict Department to the Colonial Adjutant-General, dated June, 1850, stated that of the 60,000(76) odd prisoners transported during the whole period of the "system",

> "38,000 are now filling respectable positions in life, and earning their livelihood in the most creditable manner. ... Of the residue, death and departures from the colony will account for the greater part; and I am enabled to state that only 370 out of the whole are now undergoing punishment of any kind."(77)

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(75) Working Class Conditions etc., pp.484-485. M. Hartwell is more sweeping in his condemnation: "As a means either of punishment or reform, the assignment system was a failure. ... Transportation usually led to further degredation." (See Gordon Greenwood [ed.], Australia: a Social and Political History, Syd:1955, p.86.)

(76) The figure refers to New South Wales only (excluding Van Diemen's Land).

(77) Quoted G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., pp.44-45.

Although the lawful earning of bread is not evidence of a changed and contrite heart, it may indicate a standard of morality not inferior to that of the 'untainted' gentlemen of the 'Rum Corps', their associates and successors. (78)

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(78) cf. John Hood, Australia and the East etc., pp.319-320: "If the truth must be told, the fortunes of many of the exclusionists themselves were not acquired by the purest means; close contracts, the gin or rum-shop, embarrassments wilfully created by insidious loans and ejectments, and other crooked paths, were used equally by both parties, bond and free." And T.C.Croker (ed.), Memoirs of Joseph Holt etc., Vol. II, pp.70-73, and 293 ff.

After seven years in the colony Macquarie was completely confirmed in the opinion that, as a body, the emancipists were much more moral than the exclusionists. See his despatch to Bathurst, 31/3/1817 (H.R.A., Ser.I, Vol. IX, p.238), and his letter to Bigge, 6/11/1819 (ibid., Vol. X, pp.220-224), which reads in part: "You already know that Nine-tenths of the Population of this Colony are or have been Convicts, or the Children of Convicts. You have Yet perhaps to learn that these are the people who have Quietly submitted to the Laws and Regulations of the Colony, altho' informed by the Free Settlers and some of the Officers of Government that they were illegal! these are the Men who have tilled the Ground, who have built Houses and Ships, who have made wonderful Efforts, Considering the Disadvantages under which they have Acted, in Agriculture, in Maritime Speculations, and in Manufactures; these are the Men who, placed in the balance as Character, both Moral and political (at least since their Arrival here) in the opposite Scale to those Free Settlers (who Struggle for their Depression) whom you will find to preponderate." And cf. G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel in the Far East etc., Lond:1846, p.136; J.D. Lang, Historical and Statistical Account etc., Vol. II, p.19 ff.; and H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., pp.151-152: "That the majority, or even a large number, of offenders thus sentenced, reform, I will not undertake to affirm; that many do, few travellers in Australia will deny. Whether the criminal's repentance is in each case the result of that thorough spiritual conversion which the Christian would desire to see, might be hard to decide."

How did this reform, or at least this change, come about? Not, as has been too often implied, by the influence of virtuous emanations from the southern sun or from the aromatic leaves of the gum-trees. Contemporary observers were quite clear about the much more mundane and material reasons for the metamorphosis. As Judge Therry wrote:

> "Even in the class of the more depraved convicts transported for a serious crime, the instances of a reformed character were numerous and gratifying. London pickpockets and convicts from Dublin, Liverpool and the large towns of the United Kingdom, who, from their childhood upwards, had been brought up in ignorance, and had led lives of habitual crime, if not from principle, from obvious motives of interest in the prospect of becoming independent in a land of abundance, altered their course of conduct and became industrious members of society..."(79)

Charles Darwin, after his visit to New South Wales in 1836, stated a similar view:

> "The worst feature in the whole case [the transportation system] is, that although there exists what may be called a legal reform, and comparatively little is committed which the law can touch, yet that any moral reform should take place appears to be quite out of the question. ... On the whole, as a place of punishment,

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(79) R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria, Lond: 1863, p.25.
And cf. R.G. Jameson, New Zealand, South Australia and New South Wales; etc., Lond:1842, p.127; and George Bennett, Wanderings in N.S.W. etc., Vol.I, pp.57-60. Bennett describes a visit to Sydney's newly-licensed first theatre, The Royal, on the George St. site to-day occupied by Dymock's book-shop. His account of the visit ends with the words: "It may also be worthy of remark, as a proof of the increasing morality of the colony, that no-one was stationed at the doors, as in our depraved metropolis, warning you 'to take care of your pockets'; and that neither myself, or any gentleman in company, either in our ingress or egress, had our pockets picked."

> the object is scarcely gained; as a real system of reform it has failed, as perhaps would every other plan; but as a means of making men outwardly honest - of converting vagabonds most useless in one hemisphere into active citizens of another, and thus giving birth to a new and splendid country -a grand centre of civilisation - it has succeeded to a degree perhaps unparalleled in history."(80)

Judged from the viewpoint of its effect on the people, the greatest single difference between the old environment and the new was that in Australia there was a perennial labour shortage.(81) Even during the country's first major depression of 1840-43, though there were workless men in Sydney, there were still jobs to be had 'up the country' if one went far enough.(82) Moreover, the working people enjoyed a vastly higher standard of living than they had known in Britain. There, millions tasted meat once or twice a week if they were lucky. In Australia three square meals a day,

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(80) A Naturalist's Voyage etc., pp.533-534.
And cf. P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol.II, pp.210-211; and "A Clergyman", [Rev. J. Morison], Australia As It Is etc., pp.221-222.
Birds of passage, or compilers of secondary works on colonial society, were apt to take a much more sweepingly favourable view of convict reformation. See, e.g., M.F. Peron, Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Hemisphere etc., Lond:1809, pp.268-299; and R. Montgomery Martin, British Colonial Library, Vol. II, History of Australasia etc., Lond:1836, pp.144-145.

(81) cf. [Charles Rowcroft], Tales of the Colonies or etc., 3 vols., Lond:1843, Vol. II, p.233.

(82) See Cap. V, infra.

including too often a surfeit of meat, was the unquestioned portion of everyone.(83) Even convicts serving their sentences usually worked much shorter hours, and ate more and better food than did labouring people at home.(84) As Mundy wrote in 1846:

> "In England and Ireland the permission to work hard from Monday morning to Saturday night, is a great boon; in Australia, the artisan and labourer has leisure as well as work."(85)

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(83) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., pp.21, 193, 457-460.

(84) M.H. Ellis, Lachlan Macquarie etc., pp.325-326.
Even the early lonely exiles of Hunter's day realised, sometimes too late, this fundamental difference between life at home and life in Australia. See Admiral Hunter's evidence to H. of C. Select. Comm. on Tptn. 1812 (Appendix No. I, p.23): "Could you judge at all what number chose to settle in the country? - I cannot say what proportion, but there were many who did return to this country. When I returned to England numbers applied to me for permission to go out again, for they said they could live there, but they could not live here."
T.B. Wilson, Narrative of a Voyage etc., (p.326), claims that, in the later part of the transportation period, the prisoners enjoyed better conditions during the voyage out than "any steerage passanger". And T. Potter Macqueen, Australia As She Is etc. (p.6), records that troops serving in N.S.W. often formed the opinion "that a convict was more enviable, in point of labour and comfort, than a British soldier". This view, which inspired the celebrated crimes of Sudds and Thompson, was by no means exceptional. Macqueen says there were "more than a dozen soldiers, of different regiments", awaiting trial for such crimes, when he left the colony.

(85) G.C. Mundy, op. cit., p.459.

Under these circumstances it is small wonder that the convicts' outlook, and that of their offspring, changed so rapidly. A condition of affairs, in which jobs are more plentiful than men to do them, always tend to evoke an attitude of "manly independence"(86) or, according to the point of view, insubordinate insolence(87) in working people.

Many of the qualities which the pioneers brought with them were retained, or even accentuated by the comparatively bounteous environment. There is a wealth of testimony to the

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(86) 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, p.24.

(87) Jas. Mudie, Felonry of N.S.W. etc., pp.268-271; H.S. Russell, Genesis of Queensland etc., Syd:1888, pp.164, 192, 205-206; and Niel Black Papers (MS, P.L.V.), 25/12/1839, 4/4/1840, and 6/2/1840: "I wd. as soon become hangman at once as be under the necessity of managing a set of Devils incarnate such as the men here are. Moreover they are much more Masters than Servants."

passion for gambling,(88) and to the careless improvidence(89) of many early Australians. To judge from contemporary accounts, no people on the face of the earth ever absorbed more alcohol per head of population, or swore so foully and

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(88) David Collins, Account of the English Colony in New South Wales etc., Lond: 1798, p.377 ff: "All these offences against peace and good order were to be attributed to the horrid vice of gaming..." And cf. ibid., p.359 ff.

"A Gentleman Just Returned etc.", "Account of the English Colony etc. (1808), p.65: "To such excesses was the pursuit of gambling carried among the convicts that some have been known, after losing money, provisions, and all their cloathing, to have staked their cloaths upon their wretched backs, standing in the midst of their associates naked, and as indifferent about it as the unconscious natives of the country. They have been seen playing at their favourite games of cribbage and all-fours, for six, eight, and ten dollars each game; and those who are not expert at these, instead of pence tossed up for dollars." And cf. G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel etc., p.189.

(89) Edward Curr, An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land etc., Lond:1824, p.14: "These are in a majority of cases the only features of a farm-house in Van Diemen's Land. ... Every thing betokens waste and disorder, the total absence of industry and economy."

And cf. Jas. Atkinson, An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales etc., Lond: 1826, pp. 28 ff., 106 ff.

fluently.(90) In April 1851, when the oceanic tide of rum had long been ebbing, an intelligent world traveller, freshly arrived from the 'Barbary Coast' of California, wrote:

> "I have really never been in any place yet where I saw so many drunkards as in Sydney, and, more disgustingly still, drunken women."(91)

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(90) e.g. Gipps to Stanley, 7/3/1842, H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol.XXI, p.719; J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol.I, p.144; 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, pp.63-64; J. Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit etc., passim. esp. pp.63 ff., 310, 352, 354 ff.; John Hood, Australia and the East etc., pp.161-163; R.M. Martin, History of Australasia etc., p.259; H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.26 ff: "The two most glaring vices, intoxication and profane swearing, prevail throughout the interior of New South Wales to an extent hardly conceivable but by those who have actually witnessed it. ... From the force of constant example which is always so very contagious in this particular, the native-born youths often inherit this way of talking, and grow gradually callous to its enormity, thus handing down to succeeding generations one of the most pernicious legacies of the old Botany Bay convicts." And Mrs. Charles Meredit Notes and Sketches of New South Wales, During a Residence in that Colony from 1839 to 1844, Lond: 1861 (new edn.), p.77: "Age and sex make no difference... and no threats, no bribes, no punishments avail to keep the besotted creatures from the dram-bottle. ... Eau-de-Cologne and lavender-water, I know, they drink whenever they are left about, or anything else believed to contain spirit. The universality of this vice is most dreadful to contemplate, and far worse to witness and endure..." And cf. pp.54-58. (However, some observers, including 'Harris', thought that the native-born youths tended to be less drunken, though not less foul-mouthed, than their parents.

(91) F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey Round the World etc., 3 vols., Lond:1853, Vol.II, pp.285-286.
As early as 1805 a fugitive convict from Botany Bay, William Stevenson, had established himself as distiller to the Court of Hawaii, which he supplied with rum made from the native "tee-root". King Kamehahea drank a half tumbler of this beverage daily with his dinner, but forbade Stevenson to use it "except at the new-year, at which time he indulged to the greatest excess." (Archibald Campbell, A Voyage Round the World from 1806 to 1812; etc. Edinburgh: 1816, pp.146-147.)

Pioneering conditions accentuated not only the dissolute habits, but also the toughness and adaptability of the pioneers; and the loneliness of bush life, no less than the brutalities of the system, accentuated their group solidarity. But much of their lip-service to conventional morality, and of their psychological acceptance of an inferior position in society, disappeared along with the abject poverty (92) which in Britain had helped to condition these traits.

Very early the convicts had established for themselves a customary right to the more euphonious and dignified title of "government men". (93) By the 1820's they had also composed many ballads which probably reflected their changing outlook. (94) Unfortunately no Australian folk-song which can be dated with certainty before about 1820 appears to have

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(92) cf. Mrs. Chas. Meredith, Notes and Sketches etc., p.57.

(93) [Charles Rowcroft], Tales of the Colonies or etc., Vol.II, p.215: "But first I must warn you, that we never speak of the convicts in this country by that term; we always call them 'government men', or on some occasions, prisoners; but we never use the word 'convict', which is considered by them an insulting term, and the expression therefore is, by all right-minded persons, carefully avoided."

And cf. J. Pitts Johnson, Plain Truths Told by a Traveller Regarding our Various Settlements in Australia and New Zealand etc., Lond: 1840, p.38.

(94) P. Cunningham, op. cit., Vol. II, p.198.

survived, but Jim Jones, which refers to the notorious bush-ranger Jack Donahoe as though he were alive when it was composed,[95] probably belongs to the late 1820's. Its deep melancholy reminds the reader of the mood of Van Diemen's Land, and yet instead of the pro forma moralising of that ballad or of Adieu to Old England, it shows a spirit of open and implacable defiance. Instead of an implicit acceptance of the rules of society, there is an explicit assumption that society itself is out of joint, and even a hint that in the new land may be builded a new society nearer to the heart's desire. Here is the only surviving text of this very interesting ballad:

O, listen for a moment lads, and hear me tell my tale -
How, o'er the sea from England's shore I was compelled to sail.

The jury says 'he's guilty, sir,' and says the judge, says he -
'For life, Jim Jones, I'm sending you across the stormy sea;

And take my tip, before you ship to join the Iron-gang,
Don't be too gay at Botany Bay, or else you'll surely hang -

Or else you'll surely hang,' he says, says he - 'and after that, Jim Jones,
High up upon th' gallow-tree the crows will pick your bones -

You'll have no chance for mischief then; remember what I say,
They'll flog th' poachin' out of you, out there at Botany Bay.'

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(95) Donahoe was shot by the police on 1st Sept., 1830. (Sydney Gazette, 7th Sept., 1830.)

The winds blew high upon th' sea, and th' pirates came
along,
But the soldiers on our convict ship were full five
hundred strong.

They opened fire and somehow drove that pirate ship away.
I'd have rather joined that pirate ship than have come to
Botany Bay.

For night and day the irons clang, and like poor galley
slaves
We toil, and toil, and when we die must fill dishonoured
graves.

But bye-and-bye I'll break my chains: into the bush I'll go
And join the brave bushrangers there - Jack Donahoo and Co.

And some dark night when everything is silent in the town
I'll kill the tyrants, one and all; and shoot th' floggers
down:

I'll give th' law a little shock: remember what I say,
They'll yet regret they sent Jim Jones in chains to Botany
Bay.(96)

Obviously the outlook of Jim Jones, and of those who sang about him, differed from that of their British congeners not only because of the better food and greater security (97) which

(96) Charles Macalister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South, Goulburn: 1907, pp.72-73.

(97) Edward Curr, op. cit., p.120: "The labourer is a slave with no motive to impel him but fear; his maintenance must be provided, let him work or not. He is therefore idle and discontented, nay worse, he is contumacious and insolent... . Should it unfortunately happen that, from the difficulty of providing meat or flour in remote situations, or, as is more frequent, from the wasteful extravagance of the men, they should be a day upon short allowance, they go down in a body to Hobart Town to make their complaint of being starved. In a word, the men are fed, and clothed, and provided for, while the master is a prey to care and perplexity." This is just the kind of absolute security - of a certain kind - which is suffered or, according to temperament, enjoyed by private soldiers in the armed forces.

even prisoners enjoyed in Australia, but also by reason of the repeated injustices and brutalities which many of them suffered.(98) Charles Macalister records vividly the hardening effect which repeated flagellation had on some of the convicts who:

> "were made of the sternest human stuff possible, and men of that type never flinched under the lash. On two occasions I saw men - after undergoing, one a flogging of fifty, and the other seventy-five lashes, bleeding as they were, deliberately spit, after the punishment, in the flogger's face. One of them told Black Francis 'he couldn't flog hard enough to kill a butterfly.'"(99)

'Black Francis' was the official flagellator at Goulburn for three years in the late 1830's, until one day he was found near Run-o-Waters Creek with three bullets in his carcase.

It was argued at the beginning of this chapter that the outlook of 'government men' tended to influence strongly that of the emancipists and of the colonial-born population, but

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(98) It was not uncommon for prisoners at Moreton Bay, Norfolk Island, and other penal stations, deliberately to murder a comrade for no other reason than to end his sufferings at once and their own, shortly afterwards, on the gallows. (See R. Therry, Reminiscences etc., pp.20-24; W. Ullathorne, The Catholic Mission to Australasia, Liverpool:1837 (end edn.), p.41; and James F. O'Connell (ed. by "'H.H.W.' from his verbal narration"), A Residence of Eleven Years in New Holland and the Caroline Islands, Boston: 1836, p.73; and H.S. Russell, Genesis of Queensland etc., pp.61-65, 212.

(99) Old Pioneering Days etc., p.63 ff.
For fuller accounts of flogging and its effects on different types of prisoners, see 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, pp.9-13, 69, 184-185; Memoirs of Joseph Holt etc. Vol.II, pp.118-122; G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes etc., pp.88-89; J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc. Vol.I, p.145; and Report, H. of C. Select C'tee on Tptn., 1837-38 (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1788-1850, p.141): "This description of punishment belongs to a barbarous age, and merely tends to increase the desperation of the character of an offender."

there is much evidence to show that the whole of colonial society, including even the purest of "pure merinos",(100) was deeply affected by 'the system'. It has to be remembered that up to 1840 practically every employer of labour was ipso facto a gaoler, and it did not need modern psychology to show that those possessing nearly absolute powers over their fellow men were inevitably more or less corrupted by the relationship. In 1805 one observer wrote:

> "The circumstances under which the colony was settled, and the very purpose of the settlement, has had a very visible effect upon the general manners, or what may be called the national character, of Botany Bay. The free settlers are not without something of the contagion. ... From upwards of 100 families who have been sent out from England, there are not above 8 or 10 between whom and the convicts the smallest degree of discrimination could be drawn. ..."(101)

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(100) R. Therry, Reminiscences etc., p.58: "The term pure merino, a designation given to sheep where there is no cross-blood in the flocks, was applied to mark a class who were not only free and unconvicted, but who could boast of having no collateral relationship or distant affinity with those in whose escutcheon there was a blot. These pure merinos formed the topmost round in the social ladder."

(101) John Turnbull, Voyage Round the World in the Years 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 and 1804, 3 vols., Lond: 1805, Vol. III, pp.182-185.

And thirty years later J.D. Lang thought that the position had in no way altered:

> "From their great number and comparative concentration, the prison population have uniformly given the tone to society, throughout this community - and a low tone it is... ."(102)

In the character of Maurice Frere, Marcus Clarke gives an imaginative picture of the process.(103) Later still in 1895 an old colonist wrote:

> "When we look back, and recollect what a thorough barbarian the average 'Government man' was, and how the free immigrant, yielding to the contemptuous assumption of the 'old hand', too often sank in the scale by adapting himself to the ruling standard of the 'men's huts'; when we picture over again old scenes, and recall the fact that, among the working classes there prevailed habits and language which now characterize the lowest grades only, we begin to realise how much our world of Australia has changed.

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(102) J.D. Lang, Historical and Statistical Account etc., Vol. II, p.410.

And cf. Evidence of John Russell, Report, H. of C. Sel. C'tee on Tptn. 1837-38 (P.P. 1838, Vol. III, p.49); J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. I, p.224; T.J. Kiernan, Tptn. from Ireland to Sydney etc., p.18; R.C. Mills, Colonization of Australia etc., p.282: "Transportation, as carried out in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, corrupted convict and colonist alike..."

R. Therry (op cit., pp.47-48), draws a picture of magisterial corruption and tyranny quite as black as that presented by 'Harris' in Settlers and Convicts (p.137): "It may not be still unworthy of remark, as showing how unnecessary it is that an administrator of the laws should be disliked here more than elsewhere, that one of the magistrates, an old medical gentleman, was very much beloved by all classes. A like prodigious phenomenon, I believe, also existed at Goulburn Plains... et passim. Therry's remarks, of course, come with added weight from one who spent the best part of his life at the colonial bar and on the bench.

(103) See pp.123-124 supra.

> And these are not the only facts we can recall as proving the extent of the change.
>
> At the other extremity, the other pole of the social system, there was to be found another index, and as true a proof of the prevalent barbarism.
>
> It would seem as if the first efforts European Australia made to evolve a leading caste, resulted at times like the experiment of Frankenstein - the product was not a feudal hybrid, but a mongrel of original stamp... .
>
> Such 'gentlemen' were simply the natural reflex and counterparts of their congenors [sic] clothed in grey felt and marked with the broad arrow, whom they treated with so much contempt and cruelty."(104)

Class divisions in early nineteenth century Britain were of course very much more rigidly marked than they have become since; but the difference in this respect between early and present-day Australia is even more striking. The fact that, initially, practically all 'lower class' Australians were also convicted criminals, strongly underlined the dividing

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(104) Windabyne, a Record of By-gone Times in Australia, Related by Reginald Crawford ... in 1880, George Ranken (ed.), Lond: 1895, p.51 ff.

And cf. G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel etc., p.136.

Charles Darwin, A Naturalist's Voyage etc., p.531.

John Hood, Australia and the East etc., p.313: "However true it is that there is no rank amongst the embryo legislators, there is nevertheless a high, a ludicrously high tone of aristocratic feeling about the party who consider themselves the distingue, which is calculated to injure their cause..."

Hogan Papers 1830-36 (MS. M.L. Syd.), Letter from J.R. Macleay to T. Hogan, May 12, 1830: "I have sent by the dray 12½ bushels of wheat and 12½ maize - I wish you to give the men ½ peck of each weekly. ... If any of the men should object to the maize - take them before the nearest Magistrate."

Mrs. Chas. Meredith, Notes and Sketches etc., p.52.

'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, passim.

line between them and their masters, and intensified mutual hostility. Hood wrote in 1843:

> "Caste in Hindostan is not more rigidly regarded than it is in Australia: the bond and free, emancipist and exclusionist, seldom associate together familiarly."(10(106)

The testimony of most contemporary writers makes it clear that this comparison of early Australian society with that of India was not wholly absurd: but the same testimony demonstrates too that the affectations and vulgarity of the rich, in their strivings after gentility, were. Cunningham relates an amusing anecdote in illustration of the point:

> "The pride and dignified hauteur of some of our ultra aristocracy far eclipse those of the nobility in England. An excellent Yorkshire friend of mine, in command of a merchant-ship, unaware of the distance and punctilio observed here, very innocently stepped up to one of our 'eminent lawyers', (to whom he had been casually introduced but a few days previous), to ask some trifling question, which he prefaced with 'Good morning Mr. ..... .' The man of the law, however, recoiled as if a toad had tumbled in his path, and ejaculated with a stern frown, 'Upon my life, I don't know you, sir.' This proved a subject of much merriment afterwards to my friend, who would receive my usual

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(105) Australia and the East etc., p.321.

(106) e.g. Niel Black Papers (MS, P.L.V.), 26/10/1839: "There is no place in the known world where the different grades of Society are so Strictly marked as here, therefore those who have just got within the pale of the better Circles are afraid to be seen taking any notice of a Stranger until he become known within the walls of Govt. house."

And James Dixon, Narrative of a Voyage to New South Wales etc., Lond: 1822, p.92: "He will land in a country possessing two distinct sorts of mankind. He will find that he can hardly avoid attaching himself to one party: if to the free, the other will say, 'Let him alone awhile; the swells will pluck him, and then he will come to us.' ... Perhaps in all societies, it is in some measure the same, but here it is more strongly felt."

'How d'ye do's,' when we met, with a disdainful toss of the head, and 'Upon my life, I don't know you, sir!'"(10

Possibly the 'eminent lawyer' was not a pure merino but one of the almost incredibly vulgar wealthy emancipists described by Mrs. Meredith;(108) but of these Hood observed, in about 1840, that "their children [were] sent to the colleges of England, and their daughters' fortunes get them husbands from among the free."(109) It may be suspected that this ludicrous straining after exclusiveness and gentility was in reality a measure of the perilously slight differences in taste between the classes, and that it was exacerbated by the almost total absence of any middle class already noted.(110) In fact few of the colonial 'upper class' were persons of what would have been accepted, by the contemporary English landed gentry, as real birth and breeding.(111) Hood (whose two sons held a run at Mt. Canobolas near Orange) agrees with most contemporary chroniclers(112) in attributing birth and breeding, in this sense, to a large proportion of the flock-masters beyond the boundaries of location; and the New England

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(107) Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol.II, pp.121-122.

(108) Notes and Sketches etc., pp.50-51, 82; but cf. P.Cunningham, op. cit., Vol. II, p.139 ff.

(109) Australia and the East etc., p.322.

(110) See p.100 supra.

(111) op. cit., pp.310, 313.

(112) e.g. Gipps to Stanley, 3/4/1844 (H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, p.511), H.S. Russell, Genesis of Queensland etc., passim.

district and the Western district of Port Phillip have been traditionally credited with a greater proportion of blue-blooded squatters than any others.(113) Foster Fyans, Commissioner of Crown Lands for the latter district from 1840, wrote that:

> "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... .
>
> Another class consists of old shepherds. I have known this class to grow rich, the master poor, and in time the worthy would become the licensed squatter... ."(114)

Fyans, like Gipps, gives no estimate of what proportion of squatters he considered to belong to each of these three classes; but Margaret Kiddle's study of the Western District(115) shows that even in this favoured area most pioneer squatters sprang from middle-class, Scottish, tenant-farmer stock.

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(113) The putative social advantages of the Victorian Western District and of New England were also remarked upon at the time, e.g. "A Resident of Twelve Years' Experience", New South Wales: Its Past, Present and Future Condition etc., Lond: 1849, p.46; and John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1851, Vol. I, p.245. The Darling Downs was also believed to be a particularly 'aristocratic' district.

(114) T.F. Bride (ed.), Letters From Victorian Pioneers etc., Melb: 1898, pp.119-121.

(115) Men of Yesterday: a Social History of Western Victoria, 1834-90 (MS being prepared for publication).

The effort artificially to emphasise class differences points also to the much greater fluidity of colonial society. This was caused partly by the breaking of old ties and traditions, inseparable from physical up-rooting from the mother-country, but partly too by the much greater economic opportunities open to those possessing even a modest amount of capital - or unusually sober habits.(116) As Mundy wrote, of the last pre-Gold Rush decade:

> "In England there are instances of individuals - especially among the manufacturing classes - who, in the course of one life-time, have raised themselves and their families from moderate means to enormous wealth; but in Australia all the stages between adventurous beggary and inordinate possessions have, in some cases, been traversed in a quarter of a man's usual existence."(117)

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(116) H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.29: "This prevailing habit [periodical 'spreeing'] is in fact the chief cause which prevents servants, such as stock-keepers and persons of that description, from speedily realising a sum sufficient to enable them to become stockowners on their own account. Thus, were the habits of the working classes more temperate, labour would be far dearer and scarcer than it is, for no steady and sober man need pass years of his life as a servant."

But cf. 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, p.164: "Thousands of pounds are now spent upon drinking, &c., in New South Wales, by the labouring class, which, if small portions of land were to be had, they would lay out in its purchase."

(117) Our Antipodes or etc., p.541. And cf. R.G. Jameson, New Zealand, S.A., and N.S.W., etc., p.109; and George French Angas, Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand: etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1847, Vol. I, pp.213-214: "An individual who is pining in Great Britain - struggling ... to be a 'somebody', upon a very 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."

There is little doubt that the lower orders were singularly un-impressed by the self-proclaimed superiority of the colonial 'gentry'. Australians acquired a cynical attitude towards the pretensions of wealthy citizens long before the Gold Rush underlined the point for them. Hood wrote of Sydney in 1843:

> "Many of the private houses in the vicinity of the town are delightful little retreats, placed amid beautiful gardens and scenery, wood and water. Many are magnificent in their architecture and dimensions. When you inquire the names, however, of some of them, you are amused at hearing, in reply, a nickname generally indicative of the calling or origin of its possessor or builder. 'Frying-pan Hall', for instance, a very handsome chateau in the neighbourhood, belonged to a person who, after serving his term of bondage for seven years, followed the useful calling of an ironsmith'."(118)

It is worth noting, in passing, that the nickname imputes no blame to the ironsmith for having come out to Australia at Government expense, but only for his having become rich and, it is implied, pretentious.

One important result of 'upper class' exclusiveness was that the great majority of free immigrants, who came from a working class background at home, tended, after a few years' acclimatisation, to adopt the attitudes and outlook of the

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(118) Australia and the East etc., p.98.

old hands.[119] For masters accustomed to lording it over convict servants it was natural to treat free men, performing the same tasks, in much the same way. J. C. Byrne drew attention to the evil in 1848 when he wrote:

> "Nearly all the great flock-masters of the colony of New South Wales have at some period been accustomed to employ convict labour. Slaves, subject to the lash, to chains, and the penal settlements, have served them; they have become accustomed to such, and with these habits, they forget the rights of free men. Newcomers often fall into this mode of proceeding from example..."[120]

The free employees would have been less than human if they had not frequently re-acted to such treatment by making common cause with their unfree fellow-workmen.

Crowley shows that even legally, until 1851, under the succeeding Master and Servant Acts,[121] there was surprisingly

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(119) Report and Minutes of Evidence, H. of C. Sel. C'tee on Tptn., 1837-38 (P.P., 1838, Vol.III, pp.60-61). John Russell, assistant-surgeon to the 63rd Regt. in Van Diemen's Land from 1829 to 1833, thought that "the lower orders... [of] the free emigrant population who have resided in the colony for a number of years, appeared to be very much on a par, in point of habits, with the convicts."

(120) Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. II, p.283. And cf. 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, pp.163-164.

(121) Even the modest rights legally pertaining, in the acts, to servants, were usually rendered nugatory by the habitual bias of magistrates. See 'Harris', Settlers and Convicts, p.228; R. Therry, Reminiscences etc., pp.47-48; J. Henderson, Excursions and Adventures etc., Vol.II, p.279 ff.; and J.C. Byrne, op. cit., Vol.I p.287 ff.: "The 'Master and Servants' Act of New South Wales was partially brought into existence for the purpose of compelling masters to do their servants justic ... . But the benefit contemplated by this act is almost set aside, through the administration of the law being left in the hands of the J.P's, all of whom, in the interior or elsewhere, are either stock or land-holders arrayed against the interest of the labourer, and on the side of the master...." Jas. Mudie, a rigorous exclusionist, corroborates the statements of the above writers without, of course, meaning to do so. Felonry of N.S.W. etc., passim and p.115 ff (esp.p.119) and p.296 ff.

little real distinction between the status of bond and free servants. He writes:

> "The way of life of the bond and free worker was in many respects strikingly similar. They were employed in the same occupations and on the same farms and stations. They often lived in the same huts and houses and in the rural areas they generally received the same rations.(122) They were also both subject to the same summary laws governing their conduct as servants. The difference lay chiefly in the length of service, the payment of wages and the extent and nature of punishments under these summary laws."(123)

In conclusion it may be said that the attempt, only partly conscious, to establish an English pattern of life in the county of Cumberland was distorted by the various factors considered above. The distance between upper and lower classes was not at first sensibly lessened. Indeed, in many ways it was increased, but at the same time movement up and down the social ladder became easier and the lower class, placed in a strong position to do so by the insatiable demand for labour and by the need to re-act to new conditions, came much more rapidly and trenchantly than in Britain to

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(122) cf. J.T. Bigge, Report into the State of the Colony of New South Wales etc., Lond: 1822, p.78.

(123) Working Class Conditions etc., p.486. And cf. ibid., p.257 ff.

question the assumptions on which the old society rested.(124)

Generally speaking, the new Australian conditions had a levelling effect.(125) Without diminishing class consciousness

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(124) Here, as throughout the thesis, I am trying to deal with commonly held social attitudes rather than political attitudes and actions - though the latter often proceeded from the former. In the sphere of political thought and action colonial working men, before the gold discoveries, were considerably less militant than their fellows in Britain. As Mundy wrote (Our Antipodes or etc., p.470): "Regarding politics, they are peculiarly apathetic; the abstract rights of man troubling their heads but very little. ... for when men are individually and collectively comfortable, it is difficult to inspire them with that sort of public virtue whose real names are discontent, disquiet, and dissolution of social bonds, - and whose end is revolution and ruin."

And cf. F. Lancellott, Australia As It Is etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1852, Vol. II, p.72: "Few trouble their heads with political, sanatory [sic], or social questions. ..." And A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W. etc., p.201: "The colony of New South Wales has been hitherto comparatively free from strikes and combinations..."

R.D. Walshe, Emergence of Popular Political Movements in N.S.W., 1842-1848 (B. A. thesis, Syd: 1950), shows that such scanty working class political activity as there was, took place almost solely among the Sydney artisans. But the rapid political advances of the 'fifties and later probably owed much to the great changes in working class social outlook considered in this chapter.

(125) P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, pp.238-239: "Thieves generally affect to consider all the rest of mankind equally criminal with themselves, only being either lucky enough not to be found out, or committing actions which (though equally bad in the eye of the Divinity) are not so tangible in that of man. It is their constant endeavour to reduce everyone in fact, to the same level with themselves."

and hostility, they made society much more fluid and, while tending to vulgarise and debase the rich, tended equally to augment the integrity and self-reliance, though not to polish the manners, of working people. And poor men generally, indeed the whole of colonial society, were strongly influenced by the convict system and by the outlook which it evoked among its primary victims.

Chapter IV

CELTS AND CURRENCY.

"Then hurl me to crime and brand me with shame,
But think not to baulk me my spirit to tame,
For I'll fight to the last in old Ireland's name.
Though I be a bushranger,
You still are the stranger,
And I'm Donahoe."

In the last chapter an attempt was made to examine the influence of the convicts and lower class immigrants on early Australian manners; but these people were not an undifferentiated mass. They came from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and the traditions they brought with them differed accordingly. In this chapter we shall consider the ways in which Celtic and native Australian influences modified the basically English tradition of the majority.

The leading authority on Australian ballad music, Dr. Percy Jones, says that some of the songs were sung to tunes popular in the British Isles a hundred years or more ago, while others were set to original melodies composed for the new ballads in Australia. Of the former group he writes that:

> "they indicate to some extent the proportionate extent of the various racial influences among the balladists and their friends. The honours seem to be fairly evenly divided between England and Ireland. Numerically there is a slight preponderance of English tunes, but quite a few of these were, so to speak, common property, so

> that an accurate estimate is very difficult. ... One rather interesting fact is the almost complete absence of any Scottish songs."(1)

The scarcity of Scottish tunes and ballads among Australian folk-singers was no accident. In this chapter we shall find many reasons for thinking that the Irish influence on the early Australian working class was disproportionately strong while that of the Scots was disproportionately weak. There were so few Welsh convicts and immigrants that, for the purposes of a broad sketch like the present, they can be disregarded.(2)

Although Australian census returns do not record the national ancestry of citizens, they do record their religions. Of course there are many Presbyterian Irishmen in Ulster and a few Catholic Scotsmen in the Highlands, and there are

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(1) "Australia's Folk Songs", article in Twentieth Century: an Australian Quarterly Review, Vol. I, No. 1.
Dr. Jones cites as the only Scottish song 'to have come his way', a parody on "D'ye Ken John Peel". This is printed in the last edition of A.B. Paterson's Old Bush Songs, Syd: 1930, pp.184-185. It is in fact an English song as John Peel lived and hunted in Cumberland. I have found two or three Scottish folk-songs, notably "Caledonia" and "Glencoe" (see Appendix VI), but these, since they are purely survivals and not parodies adapted to the Australian environment, underline Dr. Jones' main point - that Scottish influence on the Australian folk-tradition was extremely meagre.

(2) For instance in the census of 1841, of 51,680 persons in New South Wales who had been born south of the Tweed, only 558 gave Wales as their birthplace.

Catholic and Presbyterian Englishmen. Nevertheless these exceptional cases tend to balance each other, and the body of professing Catholics in Australia was, until the large-scale immigration after World War II, probably approximately equal to, though not identical with, the body of people of Irish descent. In the same way the Presbyterian body serves as a rough index to the number of Australians of Scottish ancestry.(3) The following table gives a picture of the population, from the above viewpoint, at the censuses of 1841, 1851, and 1947:(4)

Table IV

	R.C.	Pres.	C. of E. plus Remainder of Population	R.C. % of Total Population.	Pres. %
1841	33,249	11,109	72,630	28.4	9.5
1851	56,899	18,156	112,188	30.4	9.7
1947	1,569,726	743,540	5,266,091	20.7	9.8

(3) cf. Brian Fitzpatrick, The Australian People 1788-1945, Melb: 1946, p.29.

(4) The figures for 1947 refer to the whole of Australia; those for 1841 and 1851 to New South Wales excluding the Port Phillip district, and Van Diemen's Land whence so many of Victoria's first citizens came. This choice of area has been made, as in the last chapter, for two reasons. First, in the early period New South Wales contained the bulk of the population; and the 'Old Australian', up-country ethos, which is our primary interest, began there and spread thence to the rest of the continent (cf. p.77 ff. supra). Second, as will appear in Chapter VI infra, it is desirable to keep the Victorian figures separate from those of New South Wales, because of the very different rates of immigration to the two major colonies during the decade of the first gold discoveries.

It is immediately clear that the 'racial' composition of the Australian population differs markedly from that of the British Isles. As Fitzpatrick says (of the 1933 Census figures):

> "The Australian percentage of twenty Roman Catholics compares with not much more than half that percentage in the combined populations of Britain and Ireland, and the eleven per cent of Australians who are Presbyterians are about half as great again a proportion as Presbyterians are in the whole of the British Isles."(5

One might expect to find then that Irish influence has been about twice as strong here as in Britain, and Scottish influence half as strong again. Fitzpatrick suggests that this has in fact been so in the political and other spheres. The figures also show however that, in the formative period of the 1840's, there were proportionately not twice but about three times as many people of Irish descent in Australia, as there were in the British Isles. Before 1851 more than half of the assisted immigrants reaching New South Wales were Irish. The actual figure is forty-eight per cent, but this excludes many Irish who emigrated by ships clearing from English or Scottish ports.(6) Moreover, it is certain that people of

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(5) Brian Fitzpatrick, loc. cit.

(6) Margaret Kiddle, Irish Paupers c. 1830-1850, seminar paper read at Australian National University, 20/5/1954, in series "The British Background of Australian Settlement 1830-1850", p. 1.

See also Alexander Marjoribanks, Travels in New South Wales, Lond:1847, pp. 230-231.

Irish and Scottish descent were not scattered more or less evenly through the different strata of colonial society. The following figures, compiled from the 1947 census returns, show that even at that date, proportionately to their numbers in the total population, there were more than twice as many Catholics as there were Presbyterians in the less highly skilled and lower paid sections of the Australian community. Conversely, disproportionately large numbers of Presbyterians were to be found among the higher income groups. In the population as a whole the ratio of Catholics to Presbyterians was about two to one. The tables show the ratio of Catholics to Presbyterians as regards what the 1947 census called "Occupational Status" and "Occupational Order":

Table V

"Occupational Status"

	Catholic	:	Presbyterian
Employers	1.35	:	1
Self-employed	1.6	:	1
Employees	2.15	:	1
Unemployed (on date of census)	3.1	:	1

Table VI

"Occupational Order"

	Catholic	:	Presbyterian
Administrative	1.3	:	1
Professional and Semi-Professional	1.55	:	1
Rural (7)	1.6	:	1
Craftsmen	1.7	:	1
Commercial and Clerical (8)	1.8	:	1
Operatives	2.7	:	1
Domestic and Protective Service (9)	2.7	:	1
Labourers	3.9	:	1

The published census returns for 1841 and 1851 provide no basis for correlating religions with occupations, but we shall see that contemporary observers of that period were convinced that the tendencies shown in Tables V and VI were then very much more marked. Generally speaking, Irish convicts and immigrants became unskilled labourers in Australia, while a very high proportion of Scotsmen, even of those who landed with little or no capital, became rich or at least 'successful'.

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(7) Approximately two-thirds of this group (comprising mainly small farmers) were employers or self-employed.

(8) Only sixteen per cent of this group were employers or self-employed.

(9) Including police and firemen.

The reasons for this state of affairs are not far to seek. First of all very few Scottish convicts, relatively, were sent out, and those few, owing to differences between the English and Scottish legal systems, were likely to have been unusually hardened criminals.(10) There was more than a germ of truth in the remark of a European Review writer that "a man is banished from Scotland for a great crime, from England for a small one, and from Ireland, morally speaking, for no crime at all."(11) Scotsmen were not more wicked than their fellow subjects. A report from the Inspector of Scottish Prisons in 1845 to the Home Secretary explains the situation:

> "In England and Wales the average number of persons sentenced to transportation in each of the last three years has been 3,900; while in Scotland, with a population of about one-sixth of that of England and Wales, the number has been less than 300. In other words, there have been more than twice as many persons sentenced to transportation in England and Wales, in proportion to the population, in the last three years, as in Scotland. ... This great difference ... is, I think, chiefly attributable to the power of awarding it being much more

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(10) There were, of course, honourable exceptions, such as the 'Scottish Martyrs'.

(11) Quoted A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W., p.154. And cf. P. Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1827, Vol. II, p.245: "But indeed a great portion of them [Irish Catholic convicts] were poor simple peasantry, transported for very trumpery offences." And R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria etc., Lond: 1863, p.93 ff. discusses "exiles of Erin", transported for purely political (or patriotic) offences.

> confined in Scotland than in England; being in England possessed not only by the judges, but by the numerous recorders and by the courts of justices in quarter sessions; whereas, in Scotland it is limited to the judges."(12)

Even among the few Scottish convicts some, like Macquarie's protégé, Andrew Thompson, rapidly became rich.(13) Among Scottish immigrants, both assisted and unassisted, the proportion was undoubtedly much higher.(14) There were probably three main reasons for this.(15) A high proportion of Scottish migrants were of middle-class, or tenant-farmer stock.(16) Their Presbyterian faith, in practice, often came near to

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(12) Quoted A. Marjoribanks, op. cit., p.144 ff.

(13) M.H. Ellis, Lachlan Macquarie etc., Syd: 1947, p.263 ff.

(14) Anon. [David L. Waugh], Three Years' Practical Experience of a Settler in New South Wales etc., Edinburgh: 1838, (4th edn.), p.17. And cf. [Thomas Walker], A Month in the Bush of Australia etc., Lond: 1838, p.7.

(15) See Margaret Kiddle, Scottish Lowland Farmers c.1830-50, (passim), from the series "The British Background of Australian Settlement c. 1830-1850". A.N.U. Seminar paper read 13/5/1954.

(16) loc. cit., and cf. John Hood, Australia and the East etc., Lond: 1843, pp.273-274: "Scotland is too poor in population to afford to spare its best sons, and generally throughout the country the mechanics and labourers are able to make a decent livelihood. I say its best sons, for as far as my observation enables me to judge, it is the educated, enterprising portion who have funds that leave it, and not the poor in character or in purse."

equating virtue with material success, but it did instil into their minds the habits of hard work and frugality. And the average standard of education, as much above that of England as England's was above Ireland's, also gave the Scottish immigrants an advantage in the race for colonial 'success'. As Margaret Kiddle writes:

> "The Scots farmers ... represent the middle-class immigrants who came to Australia. They were the men who came with varying amounts of capital. ... In ... the Victorian Western District, no less than two-thirds were of Lowland farming stock. ... And in 1845, according to Dr. Lang, there was a concentration of Scots squatters around Moreton Bay. The New England district too, was largely settled by Scots."(17)

G.F. Davidson noted that even paupers from Scotland often rapidly made good by frugality, sobriety and hard work:

> "Several ships with emigrants from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, arrived at Sydney during the years 1838 and 1839. These people were, in general, unwilling to accept of employment in any shape, but preferred taking clearing-leases of land on their own account. This plan, many of them succeeded in carrying into execution, much to the disappointment and annoyance of the community at whose expense they had been brought to the colony; and it was reasonably complained, that these men, in place of supplying the labour-market, as was intended, actually created an increased demand for labour, by requiring aid in their own operations before the frist twelvemonth had passed over them. Be this as it may, they are a hard-working, industrious set of men; ..."(18)

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(17) M. Kiddle, op. cit., pp.1-2; and cf. R. Howitt, Impressions of Australia Felix etc., Lond: 1845, p.150.

(18) Trade and Travel in the Far East etc., Lond: 1846, p.203

To Australians of a later generation, perhaps the most striking indication of the Scots' tendency to rise in the colonial world is provided by Marjoribanks' remark that "most of the inns upon the [Great Western] road are kept by Scotch people".(19) However, another observer of the time believed that at least the less respectable grog-shops were "kept by a race of low and pilfering Irish."(20)

Since so many Scottish immigrants quickly became rich, it is not surprising that they should have had little influence on the outlook and songs of Australian working people. With the Irish the case was very different. We have seen that during the two pre-Gold Rush decades something approaching a third of the whole population and more than half of the immigrants were Irish, and there is much more than the evidence of the folk-songs to show that the great majority of these were extremely poor working people. In Australia most of them joined and remained in the unskilled and semi-

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(19) Travels in N.S.W., p.65.

(20) George French Angas, Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1847, Vol. II, p.236; and cf. Alfred Joyce, A Homestead History (ed. G.F. James), Melb: 1942, p.100.

skilled labour force.[21] There is nothing discreditable to the Irish people in this fact. At home political, social and economic factors had combined to reduce their standard of living to rock bottom. Miss Kiddle quotes de Beaumont as saying, "with little exaggeration, 'in all countries, more or less, paupers may be discovered, but an entire nation of paupers is what never was seen until it was shown in Ireland.'"[22] So wretched was their food, clothing and shelter that even the hold of a convict transport could be a haven of luxury by comparison. Cunningham observed that:

> "The Irish convicts are more happy and contented with their situation on board than the English, although more loth to leave their country, even improved as the situation of the great body of them is by being thus removed, - numbers telling me they had never been half so well off in their lives before."

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(21) Brisbane to Bathurst, 28/10/1824, H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol. XI, p.383: "In Sydney ... there are to be found few, if any, Individuals of Wealth, who are Roman Catholics." There were, however, a number of well-educated Irishmen among the political prisoners. (See T.J. Kiernan, Irish Exiles in Australia, Melb. and Lond: 1954.)

The working class character of most Irish colonists was clearly recognised by Catholic spokesmen of the day. R. Flanagan (History of New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1862, Vol. I, pp.379-380) discusses a memorial, sent in 1832 to the Governor, by the subscribers to the building fund for the church which later became St. Mary's Cathedral. This document represented to Bourke that "the Roman Catholics constituted not only a majority of the poor, but, for want of means, a majority of the uneducated poor, to a disproportionate degree."

(22) Irish Paupers 1830-1850, p.2

To illustrate the point he went on to quote some passages from convicts' letters which it was his duty to censor. Typical of many, he says, was:

> "Many a Mac in your town, if he only knew what the situation of a convict was, would not be long in following my example! thank God for the same! I never was better off in my life!"(23)

Most observers of the Australian scene in the 1840's commented upon the large numbers and pervasive influence of Irish working people.(24) When, as in most cases, the writer was a respectable English or Scottish Protestant, he more or less openly deplored the situation. We may take John Hood's comments as typical:

> "Throughout my wanderings in New South Wales, I have observed that the lower classes are chiefly Irish ... the poorest, most useless, and most dissolute part of the population from the southern counties of the Emerald Isle, have been exported hither, more as articles of commerce than with a view to the benefit of this country.(25 ... Few of the Irish emigrants land with anything except the clothes on their backs; whereas, from England and Scotland the generality have a little stock wherewith to commence their colonial career. ... I shall be borne out

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(23) Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, pp.241-242.

(24) e.g. G.F. Angas, Savage Life etc., Vol. II, p.236.
G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel etc., pp.201-202.
A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W. etc., p.140 ff., and pp.230-231.
Henry Melville, Present State of Australia etc., Lond: 1851, pp.24-25.
'A. Harris', The Emigrant Family or etc., 3 vols., Lond: 1849, Vol. I, pp.121-122.
R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria, Lond: 1863, pp.146-147.

(25) Australia and the East etc., p.260.

> by the present state of the populace of New South Wales when I say that the lower Irish character, in some of its worst features, is deeply imprinted upon this colony, and that it would be well for it if the tide of a similar description of its population were to cease to set in here from the shores of Ireland."(26)

Hood's gloom was occasioned partly by the fact that the Irish, who at home were willing to work, or at any rate did work, for next to nothing, rapidly became 'discontented' and 'independent' towards their employers in Australia. "They can live at home on simple and scanty fare, but on reaching the shores of this country their character changes," he complained. "They are found to be indolent at their tasks, and troublesome and discontented as to their food."(27) Davidson, a rather pious old China sea-captain and opium-trader, says that it was:

> "remarked all over the Colony, ... that the man who had been worst fed at home, was the most difficult to please abroad. An Irishman is generally found the chief grumbler here..."(28)

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(26) ibid., p.273. And cf. J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations in N.S.W. etc., Lond: 1849, pp.270-71. The writer describes how on 13th July, 1846, the 'whole town' of Sydney was occupied for the day and night by Irishmen demonstrating against a rumoured Orangemen's procession which, however, failed to materialize. For a more blatantly sectarian comment on the problem, and one typical of even the more restrained part of the contemporary press, see The Sydney Herald leading article, "Irish Immigration", 12/11/1840. It reads in part: "Shall Jesuitical cunning overcome the manly principles of Protestantism? Shall Popish serfs found an empire, or shall men of reasoning powers, in the persons of our Protestant countrymen? Thus stands it... "

(27) Australia and the East etc., p.270.

(28) Trade and Travel etc., p.201.

Yet as we have seen,[29] Cunningham, the Scottish surgeon, stressed that in the most unpropitious circumstances, the Irish were "happy and contented with their situation," and even that they possessed "an anxiety to oblige" and "a light-hearted civility ... of which the English are totally destitute."[30] Davidson also noted that although the Irish were so hard to please in New South Wales, a friend of his who was a major in an Irish regiment, thought that the reverse was true in the army.[31]

It is not very difficult to reconcile these apparently conflicting views. At home the Irish peasant worked for a handful of potatoes because he had to do so or starve. Comparatively, life in a well-conducted convict ship, or an early nineteenth century army barracks, might be secure and even luxurious. Naturally the Irishman in these circumstances became light-hearted and cheerful. Yet the rigid discipline, never very far in the background, prevented him from seriously challenging the slightest whims of those who regarded themselves as his 'betters'. But, as Hood complained, his character changed in Australia. There, after serving his time if a convict, at once if an immigrant, he found himself free of

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(29) supra, pp.162-163.

(30) Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, p.243.

(31) Trade and Travel etc., pp.202-203.

rigid legal or other restraints, and placed in a very strong economic position[32] by the perennial labour shortage. With plenty of good food, and no worry about obtaining another position if he should offend his employer, he could afford to become "troublesome and discontented" - from his employers' point of view. From his own, no doubt, he was merely living for the first time as a free man should. The extent to which, in comparison with his English fellows, he tended to glory insultingly in his new found confidence, was a measure of his previous degredation.[33] Another contemporary summed up the position not inaptly when he wrote, "Of all the colonial devils the English is the strongest, the Irish the merriest, and the Scotch the keenest and best educated."[34]

In the last chapter we found reasons for thinking that the social outlook of colonial working people was very strongly influenced by that of the convicts. It is now clear that

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(32) Gipps to Russell, 9/9/1840, H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol. XX, p.800: "I hesitate not confidently to assert that there is no Country, in which Laborers living in equal comfort can put by so large a portion of their Wages."

(33) "A Bushman" [John Sidney], A Voice from the Far Interior of Australia, Lond 1847, pp.18-19: "The sweepings of English workhouses and Irish beggars, who have never eaten a good meal or done a good day's work in their lives, grow fat and saucy as soon as they exchange their rags and potatoes, or parish uniform and parish allowance, for our fine climate and Bushfare."

(34) Rev. John Graham (ed.), Lawrence Struilby: or Twenty-Five Years of Bush Life in Australia, Lond: 1863, p.165.

Irish working class attitudes formed another important ingredient in the distinctive Australian ethos which was developing. Even though Irishmen seemed usually to retain a greater sentimental attachment to their native soil than did the English immigrants,(35) other powerful factors tended to attach them also more quickly and closely to that of their adopted country. The brute fact that their standard of living at home was so much lower than that of the English(36) must have tended to make them more appreciative of conditions in the new land of plenty. Though they continued to sing sentimental songs about "the shabbit island where the dear little shamrocks grow",(37) Caroline Chisholm's Voluntary Statements from immigrants show that they were, if anything,

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(35) cf. P. Cunningham (quoted supra pp.162-163); Margaret Kiddle, Irish Paupers 1830-1850, pp.22-24; and [T.P. Besnard], A Voice from the Bush in Australia etc., Dublin: 1839, p.15.

(36) Margaret Kiddle, op. cit.; and cf. J.R.M'Culloch, Principles of Political Economy etc., Lond: 1849, (4th edn.), p.402 ff.

(37) See Appendix VII for the full text of the song of which this is the refrain. It seems to be a ballad containing both transportation (to America) and emigration elements, and was still remembered in 1954 by a fourth generation Australian woman of Irish descent. The word "shabbit", which was meaningless to the singer from whom the words were obtained, is presumably a corruption though not, according to Dr. T.J. Kiernan, of any Gaelic word.

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even more anxious than English immigrants to persuade relatives and friends to follow them to Australia.[38] Marjoribanks tells the story of one Irish convict girl who, after serving her seven years, returned to Dublin but then committed another crime for the express purpose of re-emigrating at Government expense. When sentenced, she exclaimed joyously to the court: "Hurrah for Old Sydney, and the sky over it!"[39]

The other factor which made Irishmen specially prominent in developing a distinctive Australian outlook was more complex and more important. We saw in the last chapter that what was new in this ethos tended to spread upwards and outwards, from the convicts initially, and then from the 'lower' sections of society generally. The mere fact that a disproportionately large majority of Irish convicts and immigrants were very poor working people tended to place them naturally in the vanguard of the movement; but more important was the anti-British attitude which so many Irishmen brought across the oceans with them. It would have been astonishing if, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, most peasant and working-class Irish-

(38) cf. Voluntary Statements quoted by Margaret Kiddle in English Assisted Emigrants from Country and Town, c. 1830-1850, A.N.U. seminar paper, 17/6/1954, pp.18-20; and in Irish Paupers 1830-1850, pp.19-22.

(39) Travels in N.S.W. etc., pp.60-61.

men outside Ulster[40] had not hated England and English rule. Irishmen convicted and transported under English laws, or forced to emigrate by the appalling poverty which they felt to be 'made in England', were likely to be doubly and trebly Anglophobe.[41] The influence of Irish immigrants in the United

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(40) But many Ulstermen at this period were also Anglophobe. Protestant Ulstermen were among the leaders of the 1798 rebellion.

(41) cf. J.A. Ferguson, Bibliography of Australia, 4 vols., Syd: 1941, 45, 51, 55, Vol. I, p.365.

Ferguson quotes the Dictionary of National Biography's account of a rare work published anonymously in 1824, The Memoirs of Captain Rock, the Celebrated Irish Chieftain, etc. The book, actually written by Thomas Moore (1779-1852), gives a satirical account of Irish history:

"The rebel hero ends his story by picturing himself as transported to Botany Bay where, as he remarks, so many lads 'who love the moon' had preceded him.

'It is amusing enough that this should be my fate', he says ... when ... you reflect that now - at the end of six hundred years - an Irishman may be transported, under English laws, for being out of his house (having none, perhaps) after sunset ... much as we, of the Rock race, require instruction, our rulers of every race, require it still more. For myself, I am grown old in the service ... and when all that a man wishes is, to be able to say, inveni Portum, Port Jackson, perhaps, will do as well as any other.'"

P. Cunningham (Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, pp.248-249) writes that, on one convict ship, Irish prisoners bestowed on the popular mess-captain they had chosen, the sobriquet of "Captain Rock ... whose name has made so much noise throughout Ireland." In a footnote Cunningham explains that: "the appellation of Captain Rock has been given to various individuals in Ireland, both high and low. It is in itself an idea - a principle - nomen et praeterea nihil."

States, and the history of the later Fenian movement, underline the point.(42)

The strength of this Irish-Australian hatred of England is vividly suggested by the composition here of Irish revolutionary folk-songs, and their survival, in some cases, right down to the present day. The most famous and popular of all early Australian folk-bards was one "Frank the Poet" or Francis Macnamara, an Irish convict who is said to have prefaced his public performances by declaiming a sort of 'signatur stanza' which went:

> "My name is Frank Macnamara,
> A native of Cashell, County Tipperary,
> Sworn to be a tyrant's foe -
> And while I've life I'll crow."(43)

From the internal evidence of the verses themselves(44) it seems not unlikely that "Frank the Poet" may have been the original author of the following effusion, though it has also been ascribed to the most celebrated of pre-Gold Rush bushrangers, Jack Donahoe himself:

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(42) cf. "Fenians", article in Encyclopaedia Britannica, (14th edn.), Vol. 9, p.160; and E. Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, Lond: 1951, Cap. XVI. See also Appendix VIII.

(43) Geoffrey C. Ingleton, True Patriots All, Syd: 1952, pp.129, 143, 269.

(44) See Appendix IX for verse of Macnamara's, and other verse of this genre with which the above may be compared.

"A life that is free as the bandits' of old
When Rome was the prey of the warriors bold,
Who knew how to buy gallant soldiers with gold,
Is the life full of danger
Of Jack, the bushranger,
Ofbrave Donahue!

If Ireland lies groaning, a hand at her throat,
Which foreigners have from the recreants bought,
Forget not the lessons our fathers have taught.
Though our Isle's full of danger,
And held by the stranger,
Be brave and be true.'

I've left the old Island's hospitable shores,
The land of the Emmets, the Tones and the Moores;
But Liberty o'er me her scalding tear pours,
And she points to the manger,
Where He was a stranger,
And perished for you.

Then hurl me to crime and brand me with shame,
But think not to baulk me my spirit to tame,
For I'll fight to the last in old Ireland's name.
Though I be a bushranger,
You still are the stranger,
And I'm Donahue."(45)

This ballad, more clearly than most of the same genre, reflects the ambivalence of early Irish-Australian working class feeling. Stanzas two and three, except for the reference in the latter to transportation, could come from a purely Irish ballad of the period. They struggle to express something deeper than a merely sentimental patriotism. But in the first

(45) Quoted by "An Old Identity" [Thomas Walker, M.P. for Newcastle, N.S.W., 1893], Felonry of New South Wales etc., Syd: 1890, p.60 ff., and ascribed by one of the characters in the story to Donahoe. And see Appendix XIX.

stanza there is a clear recognition of the greater freedom and plenty of life in Australia, greatest of all for bushranger who are conceived of as continuing in the new land the old patriotic fight against English tyranny. The same motif is emphasised in the last stanza, and carried a stage further. Irishmen in Australia are continuing, more successfully and joyously, the battle against British authority, and they already feel that the new land belongs truly to them - that they are at home in it while their rulers are still "strangers", just as had been the case in Ireland.

This Irish-Australian hatred of England cut very deep, and no doubt it was a major component in the general Australian working-class disdain for Englishmen. Fifty years after Donahoe's death it found incoherent, but volcanically forceful, expression in Ned Kelly's life and death, no less than in the remarkable document known as the Jerilderie Letter which he bequeathed to posterity. Why should men obey the laws of England, the Letter asks, under which so many Irishmen were starved to death and,

> "more was transported to Van Diemand's Land to pine their young lives away in starvation and misery among tyrants, ... were doomed to Port McQuarie Toweringabbie Norfolk island and Emu Plains and in those places of tyranny and condemnation many a blooming Irishman rather than subdue to the Saxon yoke were flogged to death and bravely died in servile chains..."(46)

(46) Quoted Max Brown, Australian Son: the Story of Ned Kelly, Melb: 1948, p.280.

The importance of ballad singing as a vehicle of folk-tradition is strikingly instanced by the fact that this particular passage clearly springs from Kelly's memory of a stanza in one of "Frank the Poet's" most popular songs - Moreton Bay. The relevant lines are:

> "Early one morning as I carelessly wandered by the
> Brisbane waters I chanced to stray,
> I saw a prisoner sadly bewailing, whilst on the
> sunbeaming banks he lay.
> He said: I have been a prisoner at Port Macquarie,
> at Norfolk Island and Emu Plains;
> At Castle Hill and cursed Towngabbie - at all those
> places I've worked in chains;
> But of all the places of condemnation in each penal
> station of New South Wales,
> Moreton Bay I found no equal, for excessive tyranny
> each day prevails."(47)

Finally it is worth noticing that before 1851 there were, relatively to the total population of each colony, many more Irishmen in New South Wales than elsewhere. This state of affairs seems to have stemmed largely from the fact that few, if any, Irish convicts were sent to Van Diemen's Land between 1824 and about 1840. Giving evidence to the New South Wales Legislative Council's Select Committee on Immigration in 1838, the Colonial Secretary, Alexander Macleay, stated that:

> "All the convicts transported from Ireland are without exception sent direct to this colony, and since Van Diemen's Land was made a separate government, no Irish convicts have been transported from hence to that island."(48)

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(47) This version from Jack Bradshaw, Highway Robbery Under Arms etc., Syd: N.D. [c. 1930]. And see Appendix IX.

(48) Votes and Proceedings, N.S.W. Leg. Coun., 1838, p.177.

For once J.D. Lang,[49] the paladin of anti-popery, and Therry,[50] a leading Catholic layman, agreed in thinking there was something sinister, or at least unexplained, about this arrangement. T. Potter Macqueen, an ex member of Parliament, ascribed it to "the influence which Sir George Arthur possessed in Downing Street."[51] Whatever the true explanation,[52] this concentration of Irish convicts in the mother colony was one more factor tending to make New South Wales the major seed-bed of the emerging Australian ethos. It also helps to explain the traditional feeling that Tasmania, which still has a lower percentage of Catholics in its population than any other state except South Australia, is "more English" than the rest of Australia.

It would be misleading to seek to isolate completely the Irish component in the budding Australian national sentiment. The latter, as we have seen, tended to spring up first among the convicts and lower class immigrants, and it is true only to say that among these elements of the population people of Irish birth or ancestry tended to acquire the new outlook most

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(49) Transportation and Colonization; or etc., Lond: 1837, pp. iv-vi.

(50) Reminiscences etc., p.146.

(51) Australia As She Is and As She May Be, Lond: 1840, p.17.

(52) The fact, as well as its explanation, seems to have been little noticed by Australian historians.

readily and to feel it most deeply. Since the World War I home-front battles over conscription have faded into the background of consciousness, it has become more and more clear to everyone that Australian patriotism does not usually or necessarily involve weakening of attachment to Britain, but rather the reverse. Before that time it was by no means clear. In the nineteenth century Australian patriotic sentiment was usually more or less deeply tinged with 'disloyalty' - with radical notions of complete republican independence. Prisoners and assisted immigrants had less reason to love Britain than did more prosperous persons, and were less able to maintain their connections with 'home' however much, in many instances, they may have wished to do so. Still, to love the new land more seemed often to mean loving the old one less, in so far as Australian national sentiment was felt to weaken the attachment to Crown and Empire. For English and Scottish working class immigrants, patriotic and class feelings seemed to pull in opposite directions. For Irish-Australian working people the reverse was true. To love Australia more was also to strike a blow for 'Old Ireland', just in so far as the development of an Australian national feeling was felt to weaken the British connection.

It is not suggested of course that such considerations were consciously present in the minds of many. An incident

recorded by Mundy illustrates with extraordinary aptness both the complete lack of self-consciousness with which the embryonic national feeling was held, and the organic connection between it and the convict-lower class-Irish elements of the population.[53] On 3rd December 1846 Sir Charles Fitzroy's party, on tour of the Western districts, stopped for luncheon at the Summerhill inn. Mundy writes that they

> "passed out of Summerhill under a pair of gorgeous banners sustained by two standard bearers standing, or, more properly, staggering opposite each other, and apparently on the worst of terms. I heard one of them, a little old native of the land of pat-riotism, conclude a volley of abuse discharged at his vis-a-vis by contemptuously denouncing him as 'a bloody immigrant!' - thereby leaving the hearer to infer that the speaker himself was a 'Government Man', that his rival was a free man, and that it was disgraceful for anyone to come to this country except in pursuance of the sentence of a court of criminal jurisdiction."[54]

The hyphen in 'patriotism' suggests that the more aggressive of the two standard bearers was an Irish ex-convict who, by virtue of these qualifications and of an at least relatively long residence in the colony, felt ineffably superior to the free immigrant.

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(53) Contemporary observers often exaggerated the obviously very great Irish influence among the convicts. Thus the author [D.L. Waugh] of Three Years' Practical Experience etc., writes (p.22): "I have fifteen men under me, all Irish but two, of the strangest names you ever heard. Three-fourths of the prison population are Irish, most of them admirers of O'Connell, whose name figures over a public house in Sydney, where all the Irish go to cash their orders and drink his health."

(54) Our Antipodes: or, etc., Lond: 1855 (3rd edn.), p.173.

Nevertheless, native-born Australians were obviously more completely at home than even an old Irish lag.[55] As we have seen,[56] 'Harris' hoted that in the 1830's "fellowship of country" had "already begun to distinguish them in a most remarkable manner;"[57] and in 1820 Commissioner Bigge wrote:

> "They are generally tall in person, and slender in their limbs, of fair complexion, and small features. They are capable of undergoing more fatigue, and are less exhausted by labour than native Europeans;..."(58)

Only three or four years later Cunningham wrote:

> "They grow up tall and slender like the Americans, and are generally remarkable for that Gotic peculiarity of fair hair and blue eyes which has been noticed by other writers. Their complexions, when young, are of a reddish sallow, and they are for the most part easily distinguishable - even in more advanced years - from those born in England."(59)

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(55) Slang term for convict.

(56) See p.99 supra, and op. cit., Vol. I. p.3.

(57) And cf. evidence of James Mudie and of James Macarthur to H. of C. Select Committee on Transportation, Report of Committee with Minutes of Evidence, 1837, pp.108, 175-176.

(58) Report on the State of Agriculture and Trade in N.S.W., Lond: 1823, p.81.

(59) Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, p.54.

In their accounts of the physical characteristics of the Currency people most writers (60) agree at least to the extent of believing that Australians were typically tall, slender, and fair - or 'sallow'. But Hood also says flatly that "the eye is generally black in both sexes," and it is noticeable that the more detailed the descriptions are, the more the general impression conveyed diverges from the stereotype. It would indeed have been a remarkable 'sport' in the laws of heredity if a really distinctive physical type had sprung up in the first native-born generation. One suspects that many later writers had Bigge's picture in their minds when they came to put down on paper their own impressions. Yet twenty years before Bigge wrote, a visiting sea-captain had observed that "the children born in the colony are very

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(60) e.g. 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, p.89.
H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life in Australia etc., Lond:1848, p.92.
John Hood, Australia and the East etc., p.89.
A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W., p.217.
Chas. Rowcroft, Tales of the Colonies; or etc., 3 vols., Lond: 1843, Vol. I, p.60.

Marjoribanks and Rowcroft do not mention the matter of complexion.

M. Hartwell (Australia: A Social and Political History, ed. Gordon Greenwood, Syd: 1955, p.92) writes that the Australian of this period "was taller, heavier, and healthier than his English parents." (My italics). He may have been heavier, but most contemporary chroniclers take some pains to stress that he was lighter, or at any rate more lightly built.

fair and healthy."[61] Probably more and better food and an active, out-door life did make the average 'Cornstalk' taller and more slender than the average Briton; and it may be that when visitors described the Australians as 'fair' or 'sallow'[62], they meant simply that, as Cunningham noted, they lacked the rosy cheeks which have always been held a prime sign of good health in the cold British climate.[63]

However there is evidence to show that in matters not so intimately connected with Mendelian laws the Currency population early developed distinctive traits. As has been suggested above these characteristics sprang largely from working class, particularly Irish working class, attitudes; and it is not usually possible to distinguish sharply between these and Currency attitudes proper, except in so far as the native-born tended to exhibit the common outlook in a heightened form. Its basic component was simply a feeling of being at

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(61) Life, Voyages and Travels of Captain John Myers etc., Lond: 1817, p.200. (Myers made his second visit to Port Jackson in 1801.)

(62) Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, p.54.

(63) cf. J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., pp.5-6: "The complexion of the keen and money-making Sydney people wants the healthy English red and white. On my return to England, I was much struck by the contrast that the hale and strong appearance of my countrymen afforded, and by the fine colour that then, as ever, heightened the charms of the bonnie Devonshire lassies. In Sydney all are done brown."

home - of 'belonging' in the country. The corollary, of course, was that the country belonged to the people who felt thus.[64] When 'Alexander Harris' first went 'up the country' seeking work in the late 1820's, he slept near Bulli Pass in the hut of "two Irishmen, brothers, who ... refused nobody a feed and shelter for the night."[65] Most of his fellow guests, he tells us, had been convicts and they chaffed him "not very sparingly, but I must say with very good humour ... for having come to the colony 'to make a fortune', or for being 'a free object' (subject), or for having 'lagged myself for fear the king should do it for me'."[66] A few days later his mate, an assigned servant, apologised for Harris to a visiting bushranger by saying that he had been "hardly a month in the country." The reply was

> "Oh! we know that; he's one of the free objects - bad luck to 'em! what business have they here in the prisoners' country?"[67]

Not only prisoners and emancipists,[68] but Currency Lads

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(64) J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847 etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1848, Vol. I, p.245.

(65) Settlers and Convicts, p.23.

(66) ibid., p.24.

(67) ibid., p.34.

(68) Even wealthy emancipists often shared in the feeling. cf. George Bennett, Wanderings in New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond:1834, Vol. I, pp.56-57: "It is well known that free emigration is detested by most of the convict party, and a wealthy individual of this class once remarked, 'What have the free emigrants to do here? the colony was founded for us, they have no right here;' and that individual, from his wealth, would probably be elected a member of a future House of Assembly."

and poor settlers generally shared in the conviction that the new land belonged, morally, to them. This feeling was deepened, though not initiated, by the official practice of granting (after 1831 of selling) large estates to immigrants with capital.(69) In 1818, for instance, one Benjamin Singleton, a 'dungaree settler'(70) at Windsor, discovered most of the overland route to the Hunter River valley.(71) There he obtained, three years later, a grant of 240 acres at Patrick's Plains.(72) He was made a constable and, by the end of 1823, was depasturing on this very modest holding and on the neighbouring estates of James Mudie and others, between two and three thousand head of cattle most of which were believed to have been stolen.(73) When the wealthy

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(69) S.H. Roberts, "The Wool Trade and the Squatters", in Camb. Hist. of British Empire, Vol. III, Part 1, p.188 ff. and cf. [John Sidney], A Voice from the Far Interior etc., pp.17, 20-21; and 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, pp.90, 112, 224-226.

(70) "... the Poor Australian settler (Or, according to colonial phraseology, the Dungaree-settler) - ..." ('Harris', Settlers and Convicts, p.4)

(71) Royal Aust. Hist. Soc. Jour. & Proc., Vol. XXII, Syd:1936, pp.371-374. (James Jarvis, "The Route to the North".)

(72) ibid., Vol. XII, 1926, p.86 (J.F. Campbell, "Genesis of Rural Settlement on the Hunter".)

(73) N.S.W. Colonial Secretary's Inward Letters, Newcastle (Bundles 19-21, 1823, M.L.), esp. Morisset to Goulburn 25/2/23, Singleton to Close 10/12/23, Close to Goulburn 11/12/23 and Mudie to Close 12/12/23.
And cf. Marion Phillips, A Colonial Autocracy etc., Lond: 1909, Cap.5, esp. p.110: "Naturally the 'emancipists' looked with jealousy on the free settlers, who swallowed up vast estates, while they in turn regarded the 'emancipists' and convicts in the light of labourers for their benefit and resented their establishment upon the land."

immigrant settlers, his neighbours,[74] complained of these depredations, and of Singleton's familiarity with their assigned servants and with ex-convict small settlers, he is reported to have replied that:

> "they would take as many Cattle as they liked and run them wher ever they thought proper in spite of any of us, and that Government had no right to give so much Land to Free Settlers and so little to those that are borne in the Country, and threatened that if Government did not alter their plan that they would not submit to it long, for they would help themselves..."[75]

James Macarthur was voicing the common 'Pure Merino' opinion[76] when he wrote that the origin of the feeling "that the colony was theirs by right, and that the emigrant settlers were interlopers upon the soil," could be traced to Macquarie's pro-emancipist policy.[77] No doubt Macquarie's long reign accentuated the feeling, but there is reason to suppose that basically it was an inevitable response to the conditions

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(74) John Earle had 1500 acres and James Mudie (see his Felonry of N.S.W.) had 4150 acres nearby. Further up the river were 10,000 acres granted, and another 10,000 reserved, for T. Potter Macqueen Esq., an ex M.P. for Bedfordshire. (See R.A.H.S., J. & P., ibid., p.84

(75) N.S.W. Col. Sec. Inward Letters, loc. cit., John Earle to Goulburn, 26/12/1823.

(76) Reflected also in Bigge's Report (Colony of N.S.W.), which Macarthur's book cites as authority (p.148 ff): "The emancipated convicts were thus taught 'to look upon no title to property, in New South Wales, to be so good or so just as that which had been derived through the several gradations of crime, conviction, servitude, emancipation and grant.'"

(77) Anon., New South Wales: Its Present State and Future Prospects: etc., Lond: 1837, p.27. The book has often been ascribed to James Macarthur who actually provided much of the material for it and commissioned its writing by Edward Edwards. See John Metcalfe, "Edward Edwards", in R.A.H.S., J. & P., Vol. XXXVIII, Part IV, 1952.

under which the new land was settled. Indeed, some of Macquarie's actions such as his spreading of his own and other old country names across the map, were felt by contemporaries to militate against the already emerging national feeling. In 1824 Edward Curr wrote:

> "There is already a degree of nationality in Van Diemen's Land; people begin to talk of the good old times with which the old names are connected; and a governor might as well abolish the English language by proclamation, as the names which are associated with former days. We still talk of the Fat Doe River, Gallows Hill, Murderer's Plains, and Hell's Corners. These names were principally bestowed upon them by bush rangers and the hunters of the kangaroo, who in fact have been the discoverers of all the good districts in the island."(78)

And James Dixon, who visited Australia in 1820, observed that a distinctive type of Australian speech had already appeared. Oddly enough he found it more euphonious than have most visitors.(79) Dixon wrote:

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(78) An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land etc., Lond: 1824, p.19.

(79) e.g. P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, pp.59-60: "A number of the slang phrases current in St. Giles Greek bid fair to become legitimatized in the dictionary of this colony; plant, swag, pulling up, and other epithets of the Tom and Jerry school, are established - the dross passing here as genuine, even among all ranks, ... In addition to this, the London mode of pronunciation has been duly ingrafted on the colloquial dialect of our Currency youths,... This is accounted for by the number of individuals from London and its vicinity ... that have become residents in the colony, and thus stamped the language of the rising generation with their unenviable peculiarity..."

> "The children born in these colonies, and now grown up, speak a better language, purer, and more harmonious, than is generally the case in most parts of England. The amalgamation of such various dialects assembled together, seems to improve the mode of articulating the words."(80)

The early feeling of "nationality", of which Curr wrote, is difficult to define though his paragraphs give its flavour very aptly. The young W.C. Wentworth dreamed of "a new Britannia in another world",(81) but this culminating line of his poem is significant, upon the whole, of what the feeling was not. In a very important sense, "a new Britannia" was the last thing which convicts and many immigrants, especially if Irish, wished to build in Australia.(82) Wentworth

(80) Narrative of a Voyage to New South Wales etc., Lond:1822, p.46. And cf. George Bennett, Wanderings in N.S.W. etc., Vol. I, pp.331-332: "... for among the native-born Australians, (descended from European parents,) the English spoken is very pure; and it is easy to recognise a person from home, or one born in the colony, no matter of what class of society, from this circumstance." After Bennett practically every writer to mention Australian ponunciation takes the more snobbish view represented by Cunningham (f.n.79 supra). For the first modern objective discussion of Australian speech see A.G. Mitchell, The Pronunciation of English in Australia, Syd: 1946.

(81) Australasia, A Poem written for the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement, July, 1823; Lond: 1823, p.22

(82) cf. the Voluntary Statements of Caroline Chisholm's, taken from assisted immigrants. e.g. from Ellen W - of London, dated Sydney, 11th March, 1846: "Oh, what a difference there is between this country and home for poor folks. I know I would not go back again. I know what England is. Old England is a fine place for the rich, but the Lord Help the poor." Quoted Margaret Kiddle, Caroline Chisholm, Melb: 1950, Appendix C, p.243; and cf. [T.P. Barnard] A Voice from the Bush. The book quotes a letter home from an Irish house-carpenter from Cork (p.39): "Sydney is the finest place in the world. ... bread, and tea, and mutton chops, three times a day, but house rent is dear. A labourer has 5 s.a day - he lives better than a tradesman at home."

also saw "the early blot"(83) of convictism as the main impediment to a true national development. This view of course was the absolute antithesis of the strong lower class feeling we have noticed, that Australia was peculiarly "the prisoners' country." As Hood wrote:

> "The fact of being a drunkard, or a convict, is not looked upon in this country, amongst the class, as any disgrace; on the contrary ... no shame whatever is evinced by the very best amongst them; and they look upon all 'self-imported devils' as beneath them, and not worth consideration."(84)

Similarly that arch-radical, J.D. Lang, with his plans for a democratic Australian republic ruling imperially over the Pacific Islands, was far too individualistic, doctrinaire, too sectarian, too 'political', and above all too respectably bourgeois, really to touch the imagination of early Australian working people.(85) Even the first native-born poet of any significance, Charles Harpur, failed almost completely to touch that in men's hearts which was really new and distinctive of the new country.(86) In any comprehensive study of the

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(83) W.C. Wentworth, ibid., p.15.

(84) Australia and the East etc., p.163.

(85) Freedom and Independence for the Golden Lands of Australia: etc., Syd: 1857 (1st edn. 1852) passim; and cf. The Stockwhip, 13/11/1875, p.638.

(86) See, e.g., Harpur's play, The Bushrangers, 1853, which is Australian in setting but in little else. In style, construction and characterisation the play is pseudo-Shakespeare with a dash of Gay's Beggars' Opera. The "bushrangers" remind one of pompous aides to Falstaff, incomprehensibly transported to the Upper Hawkesbury scrubs.

growth of Australian national sentiment, the tendencies represented by such middle-class people as Wentworth, Lang and Harpur would have an important place, but they have not much bearing on the unselfconscious but deeply-felt outlook of the common folk which is our proper concern.

Before 1850 this sentiment had little to do, directly, with political programmes, and perhaps even less to do with visionary aspirations of a glorious national future. The key to its understanding is that it was a lower class outlook which, towards the end of the century, emerged in somewhat changed form as the main ingredient of a myth truly national in the sense that it was believed, at least to some extent, by all classes. Before the Gold Rush most middle class immigrants, like Henry Kingsley's "Geoffry Hamlyn", thought of Australia as a place in which to make their fortunes before returning 'home' to live in comfort and honour.(87) The point is only underlined by the fact that many of them, like Niel Black, insensibly became more and more involved with

(87) Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn, Syd: 1935 edn., esp. p.463 ff. And cf. G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel etc., p.199; and R. Howitt, Impressions of Australia Felix etc., pp.168-169.
But cf. too L.J. Kramer, Henry Kingsley: Some Novels of Australian Life, Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture, Canberra University College, 1954. As Miss Kramer points out, the heroes of Kingsley's other 'Australian' novel, The Hillyars and the Burtons, are English artisans who "settle down happily in their Australian environment", and who have "no ambition to visit the back streets of Chelsea again."

their Australian interests until the cherished dream of a permanent return 'home' receded into the background.[88] Even Wentworth, most illustrious of the native-born, and most prominent in developing nationalism on the political plane, retired to England for the last ten years of his life. But the strength of the attachment to Australia among working people, and the extent to which it had already begun to affect some members of the middle class, are suggested by the report of a Sydney court case in 1854. A solicitor, who had referred to events in Britain as having occurred "at home", was rebuked by the police magristrate who said, "You may call it at home, but we Currency Lads call it abroad and this is our home."[89] This story, however, probably shows a greater degree of quasi-political awareness in the speaker than was common among his social inferiors. More characteristic is a scene from 'Harris's' novel.[90] Reuben Kable, and a fellow native, Charlie, are driving some cattle along a bush road when they see a:

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(88) Niel Black Papers (P.L.V., MSS.)

(89) Charles Adam Corbyn, Sydney Revels of Bacchus, Cupid and Momus; etc., Syd: 1854, p.128.

(90) In nineteenth century Australia 'native' nearly always meant a native-born white. By contrast, an aborigine was a 'native black' or 'black'.

"young magistrate, and two mounted soldiers, nearing from behind at full speed.
'I wonder what's up, Reuben. I'll be hanged if the lobsters haven't got their shells off. There's something afoot that's not easy.'
'They know their own best, Charlie,' said his countryman, as, after a short, careless gaze, he took his hand off his horse's crupper, and threw himself square again in his saddle.
Nothing further passed between them for the instant. The Australians uniformly take pains to exhibit a contemptuous dislike of the British military. But suddenly Mr. Hurley reined up at their very heels, his horse and himself almost breathless.
'Hollo! young fellow,' said Charlei [sic] 'don't ride into the cattle, without you want to be driven the rest of the way with them.' Reuben Kable, who saw that the newcomer was a gentleman, though acting rather unaccountably, merely rode on without remark, moving his horse a little away.
'In the Queen's name I require your assistance, sir,' cried Mr. Hurley.
'I believe so,' responded Charlie; 'by-and by. Me first; next time you, mate.'
Reuben took very little notice, beyond one of his half audible laughs, followed by a shout to one of his dogs not to go 'possum-hunting before the day's work was done.'"(91)

Currency sentiment expressed itself mainly in a very high valuation of 'practical' virtues so necessary for pioneering a new country, in a marked dislike of authority, particularly

(91) The Emigrant Family or etc., Vol. II, pp.193-195. For Reuben's laconic behaviour, cf. G. Bennett, Wanderings in N.S.W. etc., Vol. I, p.341: "Even among the male Australians there is a taciturnity proceeding from natural diffidence and reserve, not from any want of mental resources: this led one of their more lively countrymen to observe, 'that they could do everything but speak.'"

of soldiers and policemen, in contempt rather than hatred of 'new-chums', especially of those with polished or pretentious manners, and in the ancestral form of what later came to be known as larrikinism.

Samuel Sidney, in 1852, neatly summed up colonial feeling about the first of these matters:

> "Gentlefolks ... with little money and much pride, are the least likely to succeed as emigrants because ... although poverty drives them from Europe, they cling to European prejudices, and continually sacrifice their independence to a short struggle to maintain appearances(92). Action is the first great requisite of a colonist: to be able to do anything, to need the least possible assistance, to have a talent for making shift and being contented - these are golden talents. ... I have known men of an active, energetic disposition, with a rich flow of animal spirits, who, although bred up in luxury and refinement, succeeded better than old fashioned farmers, who were always hankering after the market ordinaries of Old England."(93)

But, thirty years before Sidney wrote, colonial conditions had already evoked in the native born what Cunningham called

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(92) The Three Colonies of Australia etc., Lond: 1852, p.22.

(93) ibid., p.231. And cf. F. Lancelott, Australia As It Is or etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1852, Vol. II, p.72 ff.: "The strong arm and stout heart are more prized, and of more real service to their possessors, than the highest mental gifts or attainments. Little etiquette is practised: all persons act with great independence, and, regardless of appearances. ..." And Lady Franklin in a letter to Mrs. Simpkinson, 28/4/1840: "It is most true that a man who passed well enough at home becomes here an object of ridicule or contempt, people here stand more alone, they can be viewed round about, on all sides, not on that which they like to present to view." (Quoted Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Sir John Franklin in Tasmania 1837-43, Melb: 1949, p.54.)

an "open manly simplicity of character."(94) 'Harris' was strongly impressed by the same trait when he wrote of the "manly independence of disposition"(95) shown by emancipist workmen, and he noted too the practical bent of the colonists:

> "I was awakened by our host coming in from his work to breakfast. It was about eight o'clock, and his brother, who had also been up some time, had lit the fire, boiled a piece of salted beef, baked a cake on the hot hearth, and made the tea. This sort of readiness and activity is a remarkable feature in the character of the working population of the Australian colonies."(96)

The Currency attitude towards authority was, at least from a conventional point of view, less praiseworthy. A colonial Attorney General deplored the fact that native-born youths scorned to enter the Government service in any capacity, much preferring to be stockmen, or even shepherds.(97) Cunningham thought that it was "a sense of pride ... as much as the hostile sentiments instilled into them by their parents, that makes them so utterly averse to fill the situation of

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(94) Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, p.54.

(95) Settlers and Convicts, p.24.

(96) ibid., p.20.

(97) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.155; and cf. J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., pp.152-153.

(98) cf. Memoirs of Joseph Holt etc. (T.C. Croker ed.), 2 vols., Lond: 1838, Vol. II, p.120-122.

petty constables, or to enlist as soldiers."(99) "It cannot be denied," wrote 'Harris', "that the infusion of so much military character and agency into our civil courts in Australia, produces amongst the native race, universally, a most untoward feeling toward the common course of the law."(10 And Melville affirmed that the military barracks were moved "at a cost of £ 60,000" from George Street in the centre of Sydney, to Surrey Hills, because of "the continued squabbles that occurred between the soldiers and the populace."(101) One feels that other reasons may have been at least equally weighty in the minds of the military authorities; but Melville is more convincing when he writes of the army band's performances at the Sydney Domain that they were:

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(99) P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, pp.55-56; and cf. Chas. Macalister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South, Goulburn: 1907, p.67: "Soldiers, in consequence of their being over the convicts, were unpopular in the country, and the author has heard many an old soldier strongly deny that he once wore the Army uniform, or had anything to do with convicts. A similar prejudice existed on the part of convicts and ticket-of-leave men (and women) against free immigrants."

(100) The Emigrant Family etc., Vol. II, p.219.

(101) Henry Melville, Present State of Australia etc., p.25; and cf. Mrs. Eliza Walker, "Old Sydney in the Forties", R.A.H.S., J. and P., 1930, Vol. XVI, pp.315-316: "Often quarrels arose between the soldiers and the civilians. At these times the soldiers would take off their belts with buckles and use them on the civilians. These fights became so frequent that at last the soldiers were not allowed to wear belts when they were going out at night. ... They were sent to the colony to protect the people, but the civilians had very often to be their own protectors."

> "not so well attended as they were in former times, for the military and the inhabitants are on anything but good terms with each other. There is likewise a city band, all the performers are native youths, or what are sometimes called 'currency lads'; these young men perform in an excellent style, and on public festivals they willingly offer their services."(102)

The Currency feeling of scorn for new chums, who were so obviously not at home in Australia, is again well illustrated by 'Harris'. Martin Beck, the Negro overseer who is the hero of 'Harris's' novel, explains to his employer, the new chum, gentleman squatter that:

> "... the emigrants are flats and the others [freed men and natives] are sharps. Of the two I think the sharps are a great deal best worth their wages; they want good looking after, but there's something to be got out of them. The emigrants they send out here always seem more dead than alive, till they've been five or six years in the country; then they begin to be like the rest of the people."(103)

That this sentiment of the native-born was largely convict-derived is suggested by a remark of Frank Fowler's. Writing of the middle 1850's he notes that Victoria, "not having had the equivocal advantage of convict labour, ... the battle of 'old-handism' against 'new-chumism' is not everlastingly waging" there as it was in New South Wales, "where the natives

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(102) H. Melville, op. cit., p.36.

(103) The Emigrant Family or etc., Vol. I, p.49. ('Harris's' treatment of Martin Beck suggests a comparative lack of 'racist' feeling in Australia before the gold discoveries. cf. C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900, Syd: 1955, p.xv; and see Cap. VI infra.)

are more intolerant and intolerable than the bowery boys of America."(104) Fowler continues:

> "The young Australian is systematically insolent to the new-chum; so is everyone indeed. How I, who had pretty well run the gauntlet of London life, was branded and fleeced during the first three months of my residence in Sydney! A new-chum is fair game for anyone. Your villainous bullock-driver in the interior, when he cannot by any stratagem, get his cattle to budge, culminates his oaths and imprecations by striking the leader of the refractory beasts over the head and grunting from the depths of his stomach - 'Oh! you ---- NEW CHUM! move on!"(105)

In songs of the time the raw and gullible new chum was the stock figure of fun. Nevertheless there were new chums and new chums. The hero of the tremendously popular Billy Barlow in Australia(106) is an English immigrant who comes out with a thousand pounds capital to make his fortune as a squatter. The Irish hero of another popular ballad, Paddy

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(104) Southern Lights and Shadows etc., Lond: 1859 (P.L.V. Aust. Pamphlets, Vol. XXI), pp.14-15.

(105) ibid., p.26; and cf. J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., pp.168, 177.

(106) For the full text of this ballad see Appendix X. Derived from a number of British street-ballads on the "street character" of Billy Barlow, the Australian song was composed by a resident of Maitland, N.S.W., and first sung at a performance in the Northumberland Hotel on the evening of Monday 28th August, 1843.

Malone,[107] is a working man who was "coaxed to roam" by an emigration agent. Both are burlesque characters, and both are completely overwhelmed by their Australian experiences; but Billy Barlow has much father to fall and the audience's glee is thereby the greater. All the colonists with whom he comes in contact - a Sydney merchant, bushrangers, a police trooper, a magistrate, a money-lender, and a firm of solicitors - take more or less of sardonic delight in plundering the monied Englishman. The strangeness of the physical environment, although represented as sufficient in itself to cause Billy's downfall, is perhaps the least of the difficulties he has to contend with. In the eyes of Australian working people he labours under three tremendous handicaps. He is English,[108] he is rich and respectable, and

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(107) For full text see also Appencix X. A.B. Paterson's introduction to Old Bush Songs rightly attributes "Paddy Malone" to the pre-Gold Rush period - on purely internal evidence. Corroborative evidence as to dating is supplied by a very finely hand-written copy of the song, with music, preserved in the Mitchell Library's two volumes of collected song sheets titled "Australian Music" (Q 7864). This copy is headed "Paddy Malone celebrated Comic Song arranged for the Pianoforte by J. Turner and sung by him at the Royal Victoria Theatre etc.." There is no date, but the Royal Victoria, Sydney's second theatre, was opened in 1837. (See Paul McGuire, The Australian Theatre etc., Oxford: 1948, p.38.)

(108) cf. Brian Fitzpatrick, The Australian People, pp.27-31. I think Fitzpatrick exaggerates slightly when he implies (p.31) that the derisive slang term "pommy" is never applied to Irish or Scottish immigrants.

he is a new chum. Paddy Malone, being just an Irish new chum, is viewed much more tolerantly. The ballad about him is pure farce, while that on the rich Englishman has an undertone of really bitter feeling. When Paddy Malone loses all but one of the squatter's flock, "the master began and kicked up a big row too;" but for all that forgave him and even gave him a trial at bullock-driving. The last stanzas of each ballad give some idea of the different attitudes adopted toward the two heroes. Free at last from his imprisonment for debt, Billy Barlow begs in vain for work, or even sympathy:

> "Then once more I got free, but in poverty's toil;
> I've no 'cattle for salting', no 'sheep for to boil;'
> I can't get a job - though to any I'd stoop,
> If 'twas only the making of 'portable soup.'
> Oh dear, lackaday, oh!
> Pray give some employment to Billy Barlow."(109)

Paddy Malone, having proved himself completely incapable of measuring up to the demands of Australian life, is rescued by a colonial workman who recognises him as an Irishman and a brother, though a weak one. He receives sympathy, and the

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(109) From the first printed text, that in The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser, 2/9/1843. "The making of 'portable soup'" seems to be a reference to work in the newly invented 'boiling down' establishments for making into tallow unsaleable stock. The stanza quoted is actually the penultimate one in the Maitland Mercury version, though in all other surviving texts it is last.

sound advice that he should return to Sydney as soon as possible:

"I was found the next day where bullocks had threw me,
By a man passing by, upon hearing me groan.
After wiping the mud from my face then he knew me,
Why, says he, your name's Paddy, yes Paddy Malone.
Oh! murder says I, you're an Angel sent down sure,
Says he no I'm not, but a friend of your own,
So wid his persuasion I started for town sure,
And you see now before you poor Paddy Malone.
Arrah, Paddy Malone, you've been cheated Malone,
Bad luck to that agent that coax'd you from home." (110

Contempt, good-natured or otherwise, could hardly go farther. Yet visiting Englishmen often felt a not less justified contempt for the ill-bred behaviour by which many Currency Lads felt it proper to demonstrate their heritage. This peculiarly Australian form of hooliganism was closely associated with another widely noticed trait - the precocity of the native-born youth. (111) Most writers ascribed the latter to the influence of the climate but some, perhaps more realistically, thought it a natural result of the endemic labour

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(110) From the M.L. MS version. (See footnote 107, supra.)

(111) When a Royal Duke visited Australia in 1934 he asked the headmaster of an Adelaide public school whether he noticed any marked difference between Australian and English boys. The headmaster, himself an Englishman, replied that "the Australian boy grows up much more quickly." After some thought the Duke replied, "Ah, yes, of course. The summer comes six months earlier here doesn't it?"

shortage. Mundy tells of a twelve year old boy who filled "the posts of waiter and laquais-de-place"[112] at the Marine Hotel, Wollongong, and of another mite who, at the age of four, was not thought too young to begin acting as a carpenter's mate.[113] Lads of seven or eight often drove bullock drays under supervision, and it was common for youths in their early teens to make long cross-country journeys in charge of teams or stock.[114] Fowler draws a vivid picture of the less happy results on the young of this forcing process:

> "The Australian boy is a slim, dark-eyed, olive-complexioned, young rascal, fond of Cavendish, cricket, and chuck-penny, and systematically insolent to all servant-girls, policemen, and new chums. His hair is shiny with grease, as are the knees of his breeches and the elbows of his jacket. He wears a cabbage-tree hat with a dissipated wisp of black ribbon dangling behind, and loves to walk meditatively with his hands in his pockets, and, if cigarless, to chew a bit of straw in the extreme corner of his mouth. ... He can fight like an Irishman or a Bashi-Bazouk; otherwise he is orientally indolent, and will swear with a quiet gusto if you push against him in the street, or request him politely to move on. Lazy as he is though, he is out in the world at ten years of age, earning good wages,

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(112) Our Antipodes or etc., p.431.

(113) ibid., p.432.

(114) [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., pp.32-33; J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., pp.68-69; J.C. Hamilton, Pioneering Days in Early Victoria, Melb: n.d. (1913), pp.17-19; and cf. Memoirs of Joseph Holt (T.C. Croker ed.), Vol. II, pp.144-146. (At the age of thirteen Holt's son, Joshua, was earning £ 60 a year as overseer of a gang of twenty convicts.)

> and is a perfect little man, learned in all the ways and by-ways of life at thirteen. ... for shrewdness, effrontery, and mannish affactation, your London gamin pales into utter respectability before the young Australian. I should add that your thoroughbred gum-sucker never speaks without apostrophising his 'oath' and interlarding his diction with the crimsonest of adjectives. ... One is struck aghast with the occasional blasphemy of his language."(115)

Such manners were understandable, if not excusable, in children. When carried on into manhood, they often provoked respectable immigrants and visitors to fury. The urbane and well-read Mundy was moved to wish that persons of this class had but one collective nose, in order that it might the more easily be rendered a bloody one. He wrote:

> "These are an unruly set of young fellows, native born generally, who, not being able, perhaps, to muster coin enough to enter the house, amuse themselves by molesting those who can afford that luxury. Dressed in a suit of fustian or colonial tweed, and the emblem of their order, the low-crowned cabbage-palm hat, the main object of their enmity seems to be the ordinary black headpiece worn by respectable persons, which is ruthlessly knocked over the eyes of the wearer as he passes or enters the theatre."(116)

Yet even at its worst, such behaviour should be seen in perspective as the perhaps inevitable concomitant of the

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(115) F. Fowler, Southern Lights and Shadows etc., p.22 ff.

(116) Our Antipodes or etc., p.17; and cf. Mrs. Eliza Walker, "Old Sydney in the Forties," R.A.H.S., J. and P. 1930, Vol. XVI, p.293.
For a real jeremiad on the bumptiousness and sharp practice of the Currency population, by a perhaps excessively cultivated and sensitive English visitor, see D. Puseley, The Rise and Progress of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, etc., Lond: 1858 (4th edn.) p.158 ff.

"readiness", "activity", and "manly independence" noted above. The descriptions quoted, and nearly all other such, are of town roughs, and in all towns of any size rowdyism exists. We have tried to show the main reasons why it took this particular form in Australia. Some allowance should also be made for the fact that nearly all reports on the insufferableness of the 'Cabbage-tree Hat Mob' come from educated, middle-class immigrants, whose own more polished manners may often have been such as to arouse the very worst in the native-born. Here, as so often elsewhere, the testimony of 'Harris', the emigrant mechanic, is particularly valuable, because, almost alone among contemporary writers on Australia, he looked at life quite naturally from a working man's point of view. On the night of his first landing in Sydney, probably in 1825,(117) he went into the tap-room of a Market Street tavern. His description of the drinkers might almost serve as a microcosm of the developing Australian society:

> "Most had been convicts: there were a good many Englishmen and Irishmen, an odd Scotchman, and several foreigners, besides some youngish men, natives of the colony. ... The chief conversation consisted of vaunts of the goodness of their bullocks, the productiveness of their farms, or the quantity of work they could perform."(118)

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(117) C.M.H. Clark, Settlers and Convicts, Foreword, p.ix.

(118) op. cit., p.5.

'Harris' goes on to describe their rough clothes, their almost animal-like force and crudity, and their vast consumption of rum and tobacco smoke; but what impressed him most deeply was "one remarkable peculiarity common to them all - there was no offensive intrusiveness about their civility; every man seemed to consider himself just on a level with all the rest, and so quite content either to be sociable or not, as the circumstance of the moment indicated as most proper."(119) This thorough-going egalitarianism, based on a relatively absolute though minimum economic security, was perhaps the most striking difference between the outlook of ordinary colonial working men and that of their congeners 'at home'. In ordinary circumstances most Currency Lads apparently did not feel called upon, in the manner of the 'Cabbage-tree Hat' roughs, to protest too much their independence.

Finally it is interesting to notice that, in the early period as since, Australians took inordinate pride in their sporting prowess.(120) They early achieved the reputation of

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(119) Settlers and Convicts, p.5.

(120) Folk feeling usually has more influence than officialdom on the choice of colours for sporting teams. It is interesting, and possibly significant, that in international sporting contests the Australian colours are those of Ireland - green and gold. The Eureka rebels chose a sky-blue flag with white or 'silver' embellishments, and in the second half of the nineteenth century there was a very popular song called The Bonnie Native Blue (See [Keighley Goodchild], Who Are You: A Volume of Verse by Keighley, Echuca: 1883, p.92-93.). But red, perhaps because of its association with the British army, seems never to have been a popular colour in Australian symbolism.

being excellent swimmers,[121] and of being passionately fond of boxing, horseracing and cricket.[122] In this last, wrote an observer of the 1840's, "The young Australians think themselves unrivalled. ... and wish Lord's players would come out, and be stumped out."[123] Moreover, though their relative popularity has declined since, in the last century, both before and after the Gold Rush, rowing and yachting were no less keenly loved than cricket and horse-racing, at least in the two old coastal cities of Sydney and Hobart. Describing a Port Jackson regatta in the 1840's, an English visitor wrote:

> "Then it is that the pride of the country oozes out; then it is two to one the 'Natives' against the Yankees - 'them Englishmen can't pull for a spurt like the 'Natives' ...."(124)

The Currency ethos was vividly summed up by E.S. Hall, pre-emancipist editor of the Monitor, in a partisan letter to the Secretary of State. Hall's picture, as all brief generalisations must, fails to take account of complexities and

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(121) e.g. John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1851, Vol. II, p.205: (The author has described a boating accident in Port Jackson) "Next day, four young men, natives of the colony and excellent swimmers and divers, as all the Cornstalks are, went down to recover the bodies, if possible."

(122) J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., p.265; and James Mudie, Evidence to H. of C. Select C'tee on Tptn., 1837, Report with Minutes of Evidence, p.108.

(123) J.P. Townsend, loc. cit.

(124) ibid., p.260.

exceptions, but enough has been said above to show that it contains an important basis of truth. In November 1828 he wrote:

> "The fact is, Sir, the young men of this Colony have feelings just the reverse of those of the Lower Orders in England and Ireland. The circumstances of the parents of most of them having come to the Country in bondage, so far from making them humble, causes them to be the proudest people in the world. They are high-minded even to arrogancy. The circumstance of being free is felt by them with a strength bordering on a fierce enthusiasm. Nothing can induce them to enter the army, nor take office in the police; and few of them settle in our Towns. There seems to be an hereditary hatred among them to all professions. A few indeed were originally apprenticed as mechanics, but generally they prefer to indulge their independence in the wilds of their Native forests, where they can brood over their discontents without restraint or contradiction. There they become humble assistants to our large graziers. ..."(125)

In chapter III we found reasons for thinking that convict and working-class attitudes had a disproportionately strong influence on the nascent Australian ethos. We have now seen that within the Australian working class, before the gold discoveries, Irishmen and native-born Australians exerted a disproportionately strong, and increasing, influence. In the next chapter we shall consider the effect of the 'up-country' environment on those who repaired thither, to "brood over their discontents without restraint or contradiction," and to become not particularly "humble assistants to our large graziers."

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(125) H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol. XIV, p.580.

Chapter V

"UP THE COUNTRY"

"I'll take you round the stations and learn you how to ride
And I'll show you how to muster when we cross the Great Divide."

The crossing of the Blue Mountains in May, 1813, foreshadowed the end of New South Wales as a predominantly convict colony. Yet it was perhaps symbolic that after twenty years of vain effort (1) the barrier should have been conquered by a party consisting of four convicts, and a young Currency lad, in addition to the two immigrant leaders, Blaxland and Lawson. For the next forty years there was to be a significantly higher proportion of convicts, ex-convicts, and native-born Australians on the expanding edge of settlement, as it moved into the interior, than there was in or near Sydney. Moreover, young Wentworth realised that distance and transport costs would for long inhibit the development of agriculture on the Western Plains, which were "much better adapted for all the purposes of grazing and rearing cattle... [and] sheep,

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(1) The first of many abortive attempts was led by William Paterson in 1793. Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. VII, Part I, "Australia", Camb: 1933, Ernest Scott, "The Extension of Settlement", p.109.

the wool of which will without doubt eventually become the principal export of this colony".(2) When the first ten free settlers set out for Bathurst in February, 1818, five of them were Currency and the other five, old hands.(3) In their wake came the great "squatting rush" to the west which reached its flood during the 'thirties and 'forties.(4)

If many of the squatters were, as Gipps thought, "young men every way entitled to be called gentlemen,"(5) most of their working hands were not. From the census returns it can be established that right up to 1851 there were, in the squatting districts beyond the boundaries of location, nearly twice as many convicts, 'old hands' and native-born Australians as there were free immigrants. Of the first three groups the prisoners were the largest in 1841, and the Currency people in 1851, but in this latter year the three groups

(2) W.C. Wentworth, A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of New South Wales etc., Lond: 1819, p.64.

(3) M.H. Ellis, Lachlan Macquarie: His Life and Times, Syd: 1947, p.489; and T.M. Perry, Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol. VI, No.24, May 1955, "Spread of Rural Settlement in N.S.W., 1788-1826", pp.383-384.

(4) S.H. Roberts, The Squatting Age in Australia 1835-1847, Melb: 1935, though unsatisfactory in many ways, is still the standard work on the Squatting movement.

(5) Historical Records of Australia, Series I, Vol. XXIII, p.511. Gipps to Stanley, 3/4/1844. And cf. ibid., Vol. XXI, p.130, Gipps to Russell, 19/12/1840.

together still comprised practically two-thirds of outback people. The following table provides, in these terms, a picture of population distribution during the period:

(6)

Table VII

		Convicts	"Other Free Persons"	Born in the Colony	Total Convicts Emancipts. and Natives	Arrived Free	Convict Emancipist and Native % Total Population
County of Cumberland	1841	7908	7959	16257	32124	25984	55.3
	1851	734	6546	36812	44092	37022	54.4
Other Counties Within the boundaries of Location	1841	13553	7929	11114	32596	14852	68.7
	1851	998	12836	35226	49060	29372	62.6
Squatting Districts beyond the boundaries of Location	1841	3028	2360	1210	6598	2447	72.9
	1851	961	7247	9353	17561	10136	63.4

(6) In this and the following tables in this chapter, figures are compiled from the census returns in Votes and Proceedings of Leg. Council of N.S.W., 1841 and 1851 (Vol. II). All figures include districts which later became part of Queensland, but exclude the districts of Port Phillip and the penal stations of Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay. The figures for 1841 exclude the 2130 persons on board colonial vessels at sea, and those for 1851 include the "reputed County of Stanley" with other counties within the boundaries of location.

It will be seen that, throughout the decade, the proportion of 'Old Australians'[7] in the population increased with distance from Sydney. Transportation ceased in 1840 but for the next ten years new arrivals went far towards keeping pace with the natural increase of Currency people,[8] so that in New South Wales as a whole the ratio of 'Old' to 'New' Australians remained approximately constant at about three to two.[9] 'Up the country' in 1841 this ratio was nearly three to one, and in 1851 at the beginning of the Gold Rush, it was still nearly two to one. In Sydney and its immediate neighbourhood, throughout the decade, the ratio was not much more than one to one. Thus, if there is any validity in the arguments of the preceding two chapters, there is substance also in the traditional belief that the 'true' or 'typical' Australians were the men of the outback, for it was there that, relatively to the total population of each area, most of them were to be found.

In the last chapter we saw also that Irish convicts and immigrants tended to develop an Australian national feeling more readily and rapidly than others. Figures drawn from the

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(7) For the sake of brevity, it may be permissible to refer to convicts, ex-convicts and native-born - the groups among which the embryonic national sentiment was strongest as 'old Australians'.

(8) See Table I, Cap. III, supra.

(9) See Table III, Cap. III, supra.

same two censuses show that Irish, or at any rate Catholic, people also crossed the mountains in disproportionately large numbers.[10]

Table VIII

		Catholics	Presbyt.	C. of E. and Remainder	Total	Cath. % of Total Pop.	Pres. % of Total Pop.
County of Cumberland	1841	15825	4906	37377	58108	27.2	8.4
	1851	23247	6046	51821	81114	28.7	7.5
20 Other Counties Within the Boundaries of Location	1841	13456	5089	28903	47448	28.4	10.7
	1851	24623	8999	44810	78432	31.4	11.5
Squatting Districts Beyond the Boundaries of Location	1841	2961	1009	5075	9045	32.7	11.2
	1851	9029	3111	15557	27697	32.6	11.2

These figures are not at first sight so striking as those in Table VII, but when we remember that a very high proportion of run-holders were Scottish, and a very low proportion were Irish,[11] it becomes safe to assume that throughout the decade well over a third of the outback pastoral workers were of Irish descent.

(10) cf. Margaret Kiddle, Caroline Chisholm, Melb: 1950, p.47; and John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures in N.S.W., etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1851, Vol. I, p.199.

(11) See pp.159-160 supra.

What is the explanation of the peculiarly 'Australian' nature of the outback population? Initially, the 'Government men' who made up the overwhelming majority of the pastoral labour force, were conscripted (12) to the up-country life. Scottish and other flockmasters generally preferred assigned servants to free labourers for the sufficient reason that they were much cheaper, but there is evidence that the government men were preferred for other reasons also.

As late as 1850, at a meeting of Darling Downs squatters called to discuss the re-introduction of transportation, one speaker declared that he "would rather have the pick of the gaols than the refuse of the workhouses." (13) There is no doubt but that the hardships of their servitude made the prisoners, generally speaking, better able than the free immigrants to cope with the rough and makeshift conditions

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(12) Not only did squatters, for economic reasons, take assigned servants to the inland runs, but from 1827 onwards local administrative policy consciously aimed at directing convict labour to the hinterland. (See H.R.A., Series I, Vol. XIII, Darling to Bathurst, pp.136, 166-167; and T.B. Wilson, Voyage Round the World etc., Lond: 1842, p.336: "Indeed, Governor Bourke will not assign a tradesman to any resident in Sydney, for two very efficient reasons, 1st. That free labour may be encouraged there; - and 2ndly. That the various artisans, who serve their time in the interior, may, on obtaining their tickets of leave, or emancipation be induced to settle in the country towns, to their own advantage, and to that of the neighbourhood.")

(13) James Collier, The Pastoral Age in Australia, Lond:1911, p.106. Even in the 1870's Queensland squatters still gave "universal testimony" that assigned servants had been the best possible kind of workmen. (See "An Eight Years' Resident" [Ebenezer Thorne], The Queen of the Colonies; or, Queensland As I Knew It, Lond: 1876, pp.290-291.

of frontier life.[14] As Howitt wrote of two ex-convict splitters whom he employed for a time:

> "Their hands were horny with toil; their faces tanned and tawny; their bodies seemed compounds of iron and leather. Hard workers they were, and hard drinkers."[15]

Moreover the fact that large numbers of convicts reached Australia before there were many free immigrants, meant that the former were, generally speaking, more thoroughly 'colonised. When Cox directed the building of the first road across the Blue Mountains in 1814 and 1815, he chose for the task from among the convicts "well-inclined hardy men, who had been some years in the colony, and accustomed to field labour."[16] Townsend noted that an assigned servant on the frontier of settlement in the 1830's learnt "how to maintain himself in a new country," so that later when transportation to the mainland had ceased, settlers preferred "men so tutored to

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(14) "A Bushman" [John Sidney], A Voice from the Far Interior of Australia, Lond: 1847, p.64 ff. Sidney says that up-country life suited prisoners because they were usually men of over-abundant animal spirits who loved amusement, display, danger and fighting. These tastes, which had caused them to fall foul of the law, were just those which they could indulge harmlessly in the bush where conditions provided them also with few temptations to lawbreaking, yet provided them with plenty of money for a periodical debauch in Sydney.

(15) R. Howitt, Impressions of Australia Felix etc., Lond: 1845, p.105; and cf. J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847, 2 vols., Lond:1848 Vol. I, p.216 ff.

(16) A Narrative of the Proceedings of William Cox, etc., p.1 (N.L. Pamphlets, Vol. I, No.20). [My italics.]

emigrants; who, on their first arrival, [were] comparatively but 'babes in the wood'."(17) And John Sidney, perhaps with the exception of 'Harris', the most acute contemporary observer of outback life, undertook to prove, "if necessary, before a committee of either House of Parliament ... that for flock-masters and cattle-breeders, prisoners have always been the best servants."(18)

Naturally, then, the hardest and most highly-skilled kinds of work were usually performed by old hands and native-born youths. Generally speaking, the management of cattle required more skill, and was more spiced with danger and romance, than that of sheep; and there is some evidence that, except in certain areas like the Western District of Port Phillip, cattle and cattlemen tended to precede sheep and shepherds. In 1838 an observer wrote:

> "Cattle I find are the pioneers for sheep, they prepare and also ameliorate the country for their reception, eating off the long coarse grass, and hardening the ground; but as fast as sheep come,

(17) J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations in N.S.W., etc., Lond: 1849, p.220.

(18) [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior, etc., p.64. And see F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey Round the World, etc., 3 vols., Lond: 1853, Vol. II, p.271; Niel Black, MS Journal, 14/10/1839, (P.L.V.): "Whether it is true I cannot say, but it is the universal opinion here that a convict is a much preferable servant to a highlander." H.S. Russell, Genesis of Queensland etc., Syd: 1888, p.171; and Edward M. Curr, Recollections of Squatting in Victoria, Then Called the Port Phillip District (from 1841 to 1851), Melb: 1883, p.444.

> cattle must retire before them, for they eat so close that they soon starve out cattle. The cattle are now indeed almost driven out of the colony, sheep encroach so fast, and it is difficult to find where to put them, without going beyond the boundary line."(19)

'Harris' writes, as though it were the usual thing, of a large group of stockmen who were nearly all ex-convicts,(20)

and Haygarth testifies to the skill and prestige of native-born stockmen.(21) At cattle-mustering, he writes,

> "our most powerful ally, our sheet anchor, was 'Amos' ... a native-born white ... a man who could not be wholly domesticated; his slab hut was all that he required at night, and his home was abroad in the saddle. ... Sparing of his speech ... though he was ever most ready to assist, he never interfered with his neighbours. His whole ambition seemed to be to be what he was - an oracle upon all subjects connected with his own peculiar occupation, and the most fearless rider in the district, one who, let the animals pursued go where they might, had never yet failed to 'head them', or refused to follow them down anything 'short of a precipice'."(22)

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(19) Thomas Walker, A Month in the Bush of Australia etc., Lond: 1838, p.10. Walker's statement was probably generally true only in the sense that, in proportion to the total numbers of cattle and sheep in the colony at any given time, there tended to be more cattle on the most distant and inaccessible runs.

(20) See p 236 infra.

(21) H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., Lond:1848, p.62, and cf. J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings, etc., Vol. II, p.283: "Stock-keepers and bullock-drivers are not, in general, newly-arrived emigrants, as a knowledge of the country is necessary to fill their situation." By about 1850 the majority of cattlemen were Currency lads rather than old hands. (See D.G. Jones [?], Bushmen, Publicans and Politics, Deniliquin: 1869, p.6). Jones wrote that the native-born were "alike smarter (in the American acceptation of the term), and more impulsive ... than their northern parents. ... Early accustomed to horseback and the handling of cattle, we find they furnish the largest proportion of stockmen, drovers, rough-riders, horsebreakers and bullock-drivers. In former days they had almost a monopoly of these occupations."

(22) H.W. Haygarth, op. cit., p.96 ff.

"Bullock-driving in the bush being almost a science," wrote Sidney, "we say, 'any man can knock bullocks about, but very few can drive them'."(23) And Byrne recorded that,

> "Old convicts generally make the best bullock-drivers; their knowledge of the country and their rough habits seem to have formed them for this employment. The wages of bullock-drivers are somewhat higher than that [sic] of other general servants."(24)

The profanity of bullock drivers was already legendary.(25) Splitters and sawyers, usually known as tiersmen, were also famous for their rough habits, debauchery, skill, and hard work.(26) They, too, were usually old hands.(27) On sheep stations, shearing was the most specialised and skilled occupation. Perhaps because it was also the most completely

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(23) [John Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.48.

(24) J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. I, p.215. And cf. C.R. Thatcher, MSS of script for a diorama (P.L.V.) "Bullock drivers then consisted of two classes those who had been convicted and those who ought to have been." And Samuel Sidney, The Three Colonies of Australia etc., Lond: 1852, p.306.

(25) A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W., etc., Lond: 1847, pp.57-58; G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., Lond: 1855 (3rd edn.), p.221; and H. De Castella, Les Squatters Australiens, Paris, 1861, p.137-138.

(26) F. Lancelott, Australia As It Is etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1852, Vol. II, pp.115-117; John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures in N.S.W., etc., Vol. I, pp.124-127.

(27) ibid., and Chas. Griffith, Present State and Prospects of the Port Phillip District, etc., Dublin: 1845, p.77.

nomadic of all outback jobs, it seems to have attracted a higher proportion of old hands than any other.(28) In Port Phillip wrote Joyce, "there were two classes of shearers, the Derwenters from Van Diemen's Land, and the Sydneys. The former were the better shearers but the latter were the faster."(29)

The fact that they were the pioneers, and their higher average level of skill, gave to the old hands and the Currency lads an influence and a prestige among their fellows out of all proportion to their numbers. There is a description of the proceedings at a Land Commissioner's Court of Inquiry, which amusingly illustrates the point. Each of the squatters, who were parties to the dispute, called in turn on witnesses who swore to their master's prior claim to the land. Finally,

> "A. now brings forth his reserve, a man who, by his own account, is of so long standing in the neighbourhood as to have been what is called in the colony a 'first fleeter'. He declares that he has been originally in the service of the actual explorer and earliest

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(28) J.C. Hamilton, Pioneering Days in Western Victoria, Melb: N.D. [1913], p.75, and James Butchart, Letter 10/12/1843, (MS, P.L.V.), "The sheep are shorn by men (almost all emancipated prisoners) who go about the country shearing. When they have finished at one place they shoulder their baggage consisting of a blanket and a quart pot to boil their tea, and off they go to some other station. ... Some of them gain 10/ or 12/ a day, all going as meanly dressed as possible. Many of them will go to town and spend between £ 50 and £ 100 in a single week and return to their labour without having bought as much as a new shirt. This they term 'knocking down their tote'."

(29) Alfred Joyce (ed. G.F. James), A Homestead History, Melb: 1942, p.67.

> occupant of the run, ... and all the other witnesses are put to silence, and listen in admiration to their more enterprising companion'."(30)

Although 'government men' were originally conscripted to the ranks of the pastoral proletariat, a glance at Table VII strongly suggests that after becoming free a great many of them voluntarily remained in the outback, and that others purposely went thither. Between 1841 and 1851 the number of old hands in the County of Cumberland fell by about half. During the same decade the number in the twenty counties almost doubled, while in the remote squatting districts it more than trebled. The table shows that native born people also were drawn in disproportionate numbers to the outback. What caused these men to <u>choose</u> the hardships and loneliness of outback life?

First, there was always, even in the depths of the depression of the early 1840's, an absolute labour shortage in the far interior. Looking back a few years, Sidney wrote in 1847:

> "Where ship-loads of emigrants were idling in the government barracks, and starving in the streets of Sydney, at the McIntyre, 500 miles in the Bush, I,

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(30) H.W. Haygarth, <u>Recollections of Bush Life, etc.</u>, pp.92-93.

> in common with many of my neighbours, was badly put to for hands, [and] obliged to leave sheep to pasture without a shepherd."(31)

This picture exaggerates the distress in the capital. A few pages later, referring again to the depression, Sidney himself says that it was felt chiefly by "the master class," and stresses that the labouring classes in New South Wales had "never known distress in the European sense of the term - want of food or clothing."(32) But the picture of labour scarcity far 'up the country' is accurate. It meant that wages were usually higher in the bush(33) and this fact, of course, attracted many thither.

Probably more important was the fact that the outback offered something nearly approaching absolute economic security, albeit at what was, from a middle-class point of view, a relatively low level. Gargantuan quantities of mutton,

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(31) Voice from the Far Interior, etc., 1847, p.18 and cf. J.O. Balfour, A Sketch of N.S.W., Lond: 1845, pp.72-73 and p.76; J.J. Knight, In the Early Days etc., Brisbane: 1895, pp.179-181; and Margaret Kiddle, Caroline Chisholm, p.59: "The select committee of the Legislative Council appointed on the 18th August, 1843, ... reported .... that they were unanimously of opinion that the supply of shepherds and agricultural labour was inadequate to the wants of the colony..."

(32) [J. Sidney], op. cit., p.35.

(33) ibid., pp. 20, 24; and Niel Black, Journal MS, (P.L.V.), 10/12/1840, 30/9/1846, 21/11/1850, et passim.

damper and tea,[34] and sufficient rough slop clothing, were always available to a competent workman unencumbered by wife or children. If a man did not like his work, or his employer, he could always leave without trouble or notice, sure of being able to find another position at a neighbouring station. Even if he could not find work or, to a certain extent, if he did not want it, he still had no need to fear starvation. The customary right of every traveller to receive rations, at least of flour, at each station was early established.[35]

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(34) [D.L. Waugh], Three Years' Practical Experience of a Settler in N.S.W. etc., Edinburgh, 1838, pp.32-33: "The auld wives who put a tea-spoonful to each person and one to the pot, would be astonished beyond measure to see a man put his hand into a bag and bring it out full of tea for two or perhaps three..." The intake of P. Snodgrass, six quarts per diem, was not excessively unusual. (See George Mackaness (ed.), The Correspondence of John Cotton, Victorian Pioneer, 1842-49, Part III, Syd: 1953, p.44. And cf. George Fletcher Moore, Diary of Ten Years Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia, etc., Lond: 1884, p.119.)

(35) R. Howitt, Impressions of Australia Felix, etc., pp.260-263 gives an amusing satirical description of a visit to his station by a man who would later have been termed a "sundowner". He walked in and took his seat by the fire without saying anything. After a long silence Howitt asked him whence he came and whither he was going. "From the last station," and "To the next," he answered. He also observed that "if food was set before him, he ate it; or drink, he drank it; or tobacco, he smoked it." As Howitt churlishly "did not presume to offer him anything," he at length departed.

And cf. 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, pp.22-23; J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations in N.S.W., etc., p.80; and Niel Black, Letter to T. Gladstone, (MS, P.L.V.) 10/12/1840: "They ... return into the bush indifferent whether they are employed or not as they live comfortably at the expense of the settler. At each station they meet a brother who will freely share with them and 'Master must find more'."

This basic economic security meant that pastoral workmen could afford to be even more 'independent' towards their employers than their brothers in Sydney. Almost every contemporary observer (36) of outback manners either lauded the "independence" or complained of the insubordination of the up-country workmen. A conservative Scottish squatter wrote in 1840:

> "One would almost be inclined to think it a mistake in the arrangements of providence when he sees so many of the most refined in consummate villainy swaggering and bustling about with a parade of independence and boasting themselves free men, while the Master stands quietly by watching their humour and Screwing his wits to get on the Sunny Side of them. Whilst in Scotland many an upright honest man begs a brother of the earth to give him leave to toil."(37)

And even Sidney, who understood and sympathised with bush-workers, wrote:

> "Within the boundaries labouring men are frequently most grievously oppressed. In the Bush, masters are almost entirely at the mercy of their free servants."(38)

Where labourers were so scarce, and magistrates often several days' or even weeks' journey distant, even the draconic (39)

(36) e.g. G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc.,pp.142-143.
Chas. Griffith, Present State and Prospects, etc.,pp.77-78.
H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.9, 25 ff.
John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures, etc.,Vol.I,p.304

(37) Niel Black MS Journal (P.L.V.), 2/3/1840 et passim, e.g. Letter to T. Gladstone, 21/9/1840: "The veriest blackguards that move upon the earth and I believe in circumstances the most independent of any class of labouring men alive..."

(38) Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.19.

(39) See pp.148-149 supra.

Masters and Servants Acts were often of little avail to the employers. J.C. Byrne's troubles in 1839, on an overlanding trip from Yass Plains to Adelaide, graphically illustrate the point. He and his friend set out with 973 head of cattle, four drays, and sixteen men who were "chiefly old hands." When they came to the bark shanty at the Gundagai crossing of the Murrumbidgee, Byrne's workmen fell in with some old companions who were sprawled on a pile of split timber, drinking rum from a bucket in tin pint pots. "Next day twelve out of the sixteen were uproariously drunk, and loudly expressed their determination not to proceed one step further on their journey without an advance of 2 l. per man, and time to spend it at the inn." Byrne and his friend finally had to make the best of the matter because, as he says, "there were no other hands to be obtained," and the nearest police station and magistrate were at Yass, about seventy miles away.(40) Sometimes in frontier districts,(41) the labour shortage was so severe,

(40) Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. II, p.216 ff.; and cf. Rev. David Mackenzie, The Emigrant's Guide: or Ten Years' Experience in New South Wales, Lond: 1845, p.94; and E.M. Curr, Recollections of Squatting in Victoria etc. pp.77-81, 97-99.

(41) The 'frontier', of course, moved further away from the capital as time passed. For instance, when Wentworth wrote in 1820, the Illawarra from Bulli to the Shoalhaven was a frontier district "unoccupied by any but large stockholders." (Statistical etc. Description of N.S.W., p.73). About twenty-five years later the Illawarra had become mainly a small farming district, and J.P. Townsend considered that "'the bush' commenced at the Shoalhaven." (Rambles and Observations etc., 1849, p.80; and cf. T.M. Perry, Historical Studies: Aust. and N.Z., Vol.6, No.24, May 1955, "Spread of Rural Settlement in N.S.W., 1788-1826", pp.389-390.)
Thus, prior to about 1820, the whole of Van Diemen's Land beyond the immediate environs of Hobart and Launceston was a frontier district.

and effective state control so remote, that even ticket-of-leave men and assigned servants dared to combine against their masters.(42)

The very remoteness of the frontier was, in itself, an attraction for some men. Old hands and others who wished to 'keep out of trouble', or to be forgotten, could do so most easily by removing themselves as far as possible(43) from the temptations of the capital, and from the provocation to

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(42) Edward Curr, An Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land etc., Lond: 1824. Appendix 8, p.161, quotes a V.D.L. Government Proclamation of 5/1/1822: "Complaint having been made to the Lieutenant Governor, that in several instances at the late harvest crown prisoners holding tickets of leave demanded excessive wages or payment for their labour; they are now warned, that ... any ... ticket-of-leave man ... refusing to accept work at a just and reasonable rate of payment ... will forfeit the indulgence of holding a ticket-of-leave. The settlers are earnestly recommended to ... act in unison with each other in preventing the imposition..." And James Backhouse Narrative of a Visit to Australian Colonies, Lond: 1843, p.335: "One of the prisoners at the house where we lodged, having been flogged by order of a magistrate, for allowing the sheep to ramble over a piece of marshy ground, the whole of those at the establishment refused to come to the reading of the scriptures last evening. I went to them this morning, and gave them some counsel, which was well received."

(43) New South Wales: Its Past, Present and Future Condition etc., "by a resident of Twelve Years' Experience", Lond: 1849 (P.L.V. N.S.W. Pamphlets, Vol.XXXIX), p.42: [The squatter] "is compelled to pay the highest price for labour, which is generally of the very worst description, as good man prefer remaining in the settled districts, where their character is known, and where they have formed attachments, and only those of bad or suspected fame are tempted to go into new countries."

violence which the sight of a police uniform represented to many of them.(44) This desire for obscurity no doubt accounts largely for the back-country usage, which persisted well into the present century, by which most working men were known, to mates and masters alike, only by nicknames. As Haygarth reported,

> "In the bush of Australia, aliases are frequently as prevalent among the labouring classes as in the English collieries. ... A neighbour of ours had a stockman who ... was only known, probably from his rough-riding feats, by the title of 'Go by 'em'; and I remember that ... when it was necessary to discover the real name of a man ... for the purpose of taking out a warrant against him, for having aided and abetted a party of bushrangers ... we could get no further, for some time, than the sobriquet of 'Terrible Tommy'."(45)

Up-country life had one other attraction which, though immaterial, seems to have been very important. It is easy,

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(44) A.B. Pierce, Knocking About etc., Yale, 1924, pp.84-85. Pierce, an American, was skipper of the Lady Daly, in 1865 one of the first river steamers to navigate the Darling. At Menindie he went ashore in his resplendant uniform to sell some kegs of beer to the publican, one Quinn, who had completely exhausted his supplies of alcohol. The bar, writes Pierce, was filled with "men of the toughest variety," many of whom "had been sent out for penal servitude. ... Mistaking the uniforms for those of the police, the dirtiest and drunkenest of the mob rushed up and struck me squarely in the face. ... A free fight ensued, in which the crowd exerted all its power to show the respect in which it held the representatives of Her Gracious Majesty. The battle was shortly ended, however, by Quinn's forcing his way to me, shouting that the boat was in, and explaining the uniforms. The attack immediately ceased, and abject and profuse apologies were in order, my first assailant wishing to kiss me and make up."

(45) Recollections of Bush Life, etc., p.92; cf. Alfred Joyce, A Homestead History (ed. G.F. James), pp.99-100.

and at present fashionable, to wax ironical over the freedom and simplicity of life in the 'wide open spaces'; but for certain types of mind these charms were very real, and were felt by masters and men alike. Haygarth communicates the feeling very accurately in the following passage:

> "This sensation of absolute freedom, which is one of the chief attractions of this sort of life, some might say its only one, gains a strong hold upon many minds; and it is certain that in a new country, such as Australia, there are few men who, after leading a pastoral life, would be able to content themselves with the less exciting and less independent occupations of agriculture, such as it is pursued in the more thickly populated parts of the colony, or in the vicinity of the capital."(46)

Nearly a hundred years later bushmen in the Northern Territory felt just the same about frontier life.(47)

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(46) Recollections of Bush Life, etc., p.21. And cf. F. Fowler, Southern Lights and Shadows etc., Lond: 1859, p.107; "William Burrows", Adventures of a Mounted Trooper in the Australian Constabulary etc., Lond: 1859 (new edn.), p.139.
[Thomas Walker], A Month in the Bush of Australia, etc., pp.19, 27-28, 39; R. Henty, Australiana or My Early Life, Lond: 1886, p.156; F. Eldershaw, Australia As It Really Is, in Its Life, Scenery, and Adventure: etc., Lond: 1854, pp.148-149; and 'A. Harris', A Guide to Port Stephens etc., Lond: 1849, p.187.

(47) I spent some months in the Territory on two occasions in the mid-1930's prospecting, road-making, etc. Most men, when asked why they stayed there, answered, however inarticulately, in some such terms as the above.

High wages then, and a vagabond life of freedom from conventional restraints, attracted many men to the bush; but more were repelled by its strangeness, hardships and loneliness. Generally speaking, newly arrived immigrants did their best to remain in or near Sydney, at any rate for some years. They feared real difficulties, and some others which were largely illusory.(48) "The far bush is not popular with emigrants," wrote Sidney. "They are afraid, and prefer lingering at lower wages in the settled districts; if they get up, they are not of much use at first, lose your sheep and bullocks, and themselves..."(49) This low estimate of newly arrived immigrants' fitness for bush work is confirmed by Niel Black. Though he hated the arrogant independence of the old hands,

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(48) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.454, tells of meeting an Irish immigrant in Sydney who "seemed much tickled by my account of the life of the provinces, and above all of the Saturday serving out of the weekly rations to the labourers - 'the mate, and the tay, and the like'; - 'but the snakes, my darlin', the snakes!' he continued; and having once stumbled on this unlucky subject, he gave up all idea of rural employment."

And cf. Margaret Kiddle, Caroline Chisholm, p.102: "As late as the beginning of 1850 a resident of Sydney scornfully described the 'weak and fantastic minds' of the immigrants, who 'conjure up a thousand Hobgoblins in the shape of Blacks, Snakes, flying foxes, Squirls, Mad Bulls and other dreaded Animals as equally ridiculous." (In fairness to the immigrants, it should be remembered that the Bunyip was still taken seriously at this time by many experienced bushmen who should have known better. (See J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. II, pp.271-277; and Hobler's MS Journal, M.L.)

(49) Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.68.

And cf. the ballad Paddy Malone (Appendix X), and J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., pp.184, 236-237; and G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel in the Far East, Lond: 1846, pp.200-201.

he was forced to recognise that most immigrants were "very stupid and ignorant respecting the business at which they are employed, and unless they improve I fear they will be no great acquisition."(50)

"The business at which they were employed" was usually shepherding, an occupation held in tremendous contempt by stockmen, bullock-drivers, shearers and other skilled bush workers.(51) Before the Gold Rush all outback runs were unfenced. The shepherd's duties consisted of little more than to wander about with his flock by day, remaining wakeful enough to see that none of them strayed too far away from the main body, and to count them at night into a temporary

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(50) Letter to T. Gladstone, 10/12/1840, MS (P.L.V.).

(51) H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.45; G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.153; and J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., p.211.
cf. Rolf Boldrewood, The Squatter's Dream, Lond: 1890, p.67: [A Chinese asks a stockman if he is a shepherd] - "You be hanged! Do I look like a slouchin', possum-eating, billy-carrying crawler of a shepherd? I've had a horse under me ever since I was big enough to know Jingaree mountain from a haystack, and a horse I'll have as long as I can carry a stockwhip." "Crawler" seems first to have meant simply any lethargic person (Settlers and Convicts, p.1). Then it came to mean a convict employed in an 'iron-gang', and later a shepherd who 'crawled' in front of his flock to stop the leaders from straying. It acquired the present meaning of 'toady' much later.

fold made of brushwood hurdles. Usually he shared his bark hut with a mate, the hut-keeper, who slept in a kind of portable sentry-box beside the flock to protect it from dingoes.(52) But much of what active work was required of both shepherd and hutkeeper was performed by their dogs.(53) The life was so lazy, lonely and monotonous that many shepherds became a little mad.(54) These, especially when their eccentricity took the form of preference for a solitary life, came to be known as 'hatters'. Partly because of the extreme loneliness,(55) and partly because they considered that the inactivity unfitted them for any other work, experienced bushmen

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(52) See P. Cunningham, Two Years in N.S.W., etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1827, Vol. I, pp.266-269 for a good early description of shepherding. The evidence suggests that, in and before the decade 1820-1830, efficient sheepdogs were much scarcer than they later became. In the earlier part of our period, too, it was quite common for there to be two or even more shepherds at one hut-keeper's "station". (This was the earliest meaning of the latter word.)

(53) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.225: "We came upon several fine flocks - one of them consisting of 3,000 sheep, a strong brigade under one commander and his staff, that is, a single shepherd with two or three collies," and cf. David Mackenzie, Ten Years' Practical Experience etc., pp.84-85.

(54) G.C. Mundy, loc. cit. "Another shepherd ... could no more understand my plain English than if it had been so much Sanscrit - it seemed as though his rare communion with mankind had deprived him of half his mental faculties." And "A University Man" [George Carrington], Colonial Adventures and Experiences, Lond: 1871; p.69: "The life is frightfully lonely, and is apt to dull the faculties, both of mind and body. ... Indeed squatters assert that the best shepherds are those who are more or less mad, and consider a little crack in the understanding to be a great qualification." And cf. William Howitt, Land, Labour and Gold: or etc., 2 vols., Lond:1855, Vol.I, pp.356-361.

(55) [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.61.

would usually accept employment as shepherds only as a last resort.(56) Thus it was that a good number of newly arrived immigrants found their way to the bush as 'crawlers'. Mechanics possessing any degree of skill could usually find work in or near Sydney, but unskilled labourers, operatives or clerks, for whose services there was comparatively little demand, sometimes had to go up country to find work, whatever their fears may have been. And there is evidence that many of them made good shepherds, especially townsmen and sedentary workers, who had no old-world preconceptions to unlearn of how rural work should be performed.(57)

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(56) H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.45 ff.: "It is the usual complaint of men who have followed sheep for any length of time, that the listlessness and inactivity produced by their mode of life gradually, but surely, unfits them for any other more laborious occupation. ..."
And Alfred Joyce, A Homestead History, (ed. G.F. James), p.112.

(57) Alexander Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W. etc., p.35 ff. Marjoribanks quotes a resolution carried unanimously by a meeting of "almost all the stockholders" in the Bathurst District on 30th July, 1841. The resolution ran in part - "That this meeting would recommend the extension of the Bounty System to ... hand-loom weavers, and other manufacturing artisans, being of opinion that these individuals frequently make the best shepherds, having no prejudices to surmount, nor former habits to unlearn."
And John Stephens, A Voice from Australia etc., Lond: 1848, p.15.
But cf. R.V. Billis and H.S. Kenyon, Pastures New, an Account of the Pastoral Occupation of Port Phillip, Melb: 1930, p.80: "Very few [of the old hands] married, and the best of them preferred to live on the remote stations to become the silent, solitary shepherd." This opinion makes sense if one supposes the word "best" to be synonymous with "most lethargic" and "un-enterprising."

If one may apply locally a rather cosmic idea, Professor Toynbee's concept of 'challenge and response'[58] seems apposite to the situation. 'Up the country' greater security, of a kind, and certainly greater freedom or 'independence', awaited old hand, currency man, or free immigrant alike - if he could summon up the physical and spritual resources necessary for assimilation to the strange and hard environment. For the staid, the timid or the vicious,[59] the settled farming lands near the coast or the slums of Sydney were more tempting. It is not too much to suggest that outback conditions exercised a kind of natural selection upon the human material. The qualities favouring assimilation were adaptability, toughness, endurance, activity and loyalty to one's fellows - just those traits already noticed as being typical

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(58) A.J. Toynbee, A Study of History, Vols. I and II.

(59) T. Potter Macqueen, Australia As She Is and As She May Be, Lond: 1840, p.19: Speaking of thoroughly hardened convict prostitutes, Macqueen, who was a magistrate in the Singleton District, wrote: "As to imprisonment in the third class of the factory [at Parramatta], they laugh at it, well knowing the demand for female servants to be so great, that their turn will soon come round, when they will be again returned to the rum bottles and gin shops of the metropolis. I soon found that the only system they dreaded, was to make an order that they should in future, only be assigned to settlers far in the interior, and entirely removed from large towns."
And cf: [Edward Edwards] "James Macarthur," N.S.W., Its Present State etc., Lond: 1837, p.43: "... the idleness and profligacy of the convict population, - more particularly that portion of it, which is exposed to the temptation and contaminating influence of the towns."

of the convict and currency elements of the population. This is not to deny that some newly arrived immigrants made good bushmen. There must have been many cases of "natural inborn fitness" for outback life, such as that recalled by an old Queensland pioneer.(60) Nor is it to suggest that the typical bush worker was a noble being sans peur et sans reproche. We shall see that he was callously brutal to the aborigines to whom he owed so much of his knowledge of the country, that he habitually shielded those who stole certain kinds of property from squatters and others felt to be beyond the pale of his tribe, and that he was even more profane, improvident, and (when opportunity offered) drunken, than Australian city-dweller

Nevertheless, there is convincing evidence that convicts and old hands were morally improved, if not entirely made over to the Lord, by up-country conditions. Sir Thomas Mitchell, who always chose convicts or old hands to accompany him on his exploring expeditions, thought highly of their

(60) Nehemiah Bartley, Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences, Brisbane: 1896, p.191 ff.: "A gentleman who ... was on a run-hunting expedition to the far north-west ... engaged a newly-arrived immigrant, a hard-headed, resolute-looking Yorkshire farming man. ... He was taciturn, and, perhaps, a little surly in manner, but readily learned the work of a stockman, and became a good and bold horseman. ... It was certainly a case of natural inborn fitness for life in a new country. The blackboy was ... far less useful than the new arrivel ... he really knew less of the ways of cattle, and in everything except tracking, the new chum, in a month, was his master."

qualities,[61] and testified that all but six of a large party chosen from those in irons at Cockatoo Island, "the worst and most irreclaimable of their class, ... gave the highest satisfaction, submitting cheerfully to privations, enduring hardships, and encountering dangers."[62] Bennett, who in his earlier chapters takes a very low view of convict and emancipist morals in Sydney, felt constrained to admit that the picture was idfferent along the remote upper Murrumbidgee. He:

> "remarked with some degree of pleasure, that although most of the stations are solely under charge of assigned servants, (convict is an obsolete word in the colony), yet the huts are clean and well arranged. The men in most instances take care of the property entrusted to their charge..."[63]

Macqueen, during his five years as a large settler, actually kept the following statistical record of the two hundred odd "convicts and ticket-of-leave men" he employed during the period:

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(61) T.L. Mitchell, Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia, etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1838, Vol. I, pp.16-18.

(62) idem., Journal of an Expedition into the Interior of Tropical Australia etc., Lond: 1848, pp.417-421. And, for an extreme view, cf. Patrick Leslie, quoted in H.S. Russell, The Genesis of Queensland, etc., p.166: "We had twenty-two men, all ticket-of-leave, or convicts, as good and game a lot of men as ever existed, and who never occasioned us a moment's trouble: worth any forty men I have ever seen since." [Leslie's party was looking for a run on the Darling Downs in 1840.]

(63) George Bennett, Wanderings in New South Wales, etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1834, Vol. I, pp.263-264.
And cf. G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.155.

"Become free or enjoying their ticket, married, and thoroughly reclaimed 14
Become free or holding ticket, single, and thoroughly reclaimed 49
Become free from expiration of sentence, but worthless 7
Become free, reclaimed, and returned home 1
Well conducted men, as yet under sentence 62
Indifferent - not trustworthy 29
Depraved characters - irreclaimable 7
Sent to iron gangs and penal settlements, for robbery, absconding, etc. 11
Escaped 1
Died - one old age, two casualties 3
Given up at request of Government 2
Returned to Government hospital from ill health 4

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To this number may be added about 15 lately arrived, and not yet classed."(64)

Although Macqueen's pamphlet was largely a piece of partisan pleading for transportation, these figures are (in spite of his faulty arithmetic), broadly consistent with most

(64) T. Potter Macqueen, Australia As She Is etc., p.13.

other contemporary opinion on the point under discussion.(65)

As E.M. Curr wrote, justly but realistically:

> "Station life not only put a stop to drunkenness and theft by the absence of grog and of anything worth stealing, but the constant absence of temptation had a tendency to throw the convict's mind into a better groove. ... Probably, also, the possession of a reasonable freedom went towards creating a healthier tone of mind."(66

(65) e.g. J.T. Bigge, Report on the State of the Colony of New South Wales, Lond: 1822, p.99; [John Sidney], A Voice from the Far Interior etc., pp. 58-60, 64 ff.; G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., pp.142-143, 155; [D.L. Waugh], Three Years' Practical Experience etc., pp.48-49; J.O. Balfour, A Sketch of N.S.W., etc., pp.66-67; James Demarr, Adventures in Australia Fifty Years Ago, etc., Lond: 1893, p.209; and 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts, pp.127-128, estimated that only about one prisoner in twenty was irreclaimable.

And cf. J.C. Hamilton, Pioneering Days in Western Victoria, p.75: "From the time we came to this country - 1841 to 1850, or a little later - most of the labourers were of the convict class, and I must say in their favour that a large proportion of them were really good, well-disposed men." (The statistics, and Miss Kiddle's work in progress on the Western District of Victoria, show that most workers there during this period were free immigrants. However, Hamilton's station was on the extreme edge of occupied country near the S.A. border. His statement, then, is one of many which suggest that, within the squatting districts as a whole, the old hands tended to congregate most thickly on the farthest-out runs. cf. [Thomas Walker], A Month in the Bush of Australia etc., pp.18-19.

(66) Recollections of Squatting in Victoria etc., pp.438-439.

Yet, after all, the effect of the outback environment was perhaps not so much to 'reform' those who went thither, as to accentuate and develop certain characteristics which they brought with them.[67] Frontier conditions fostered and intensified the growth of the distinctively Australian outlook whose beginnings we have considered above.

Take, for example, the strongly egalitarian sentiment of group solidarity and loyalty, which was perhaps the most marked of all convict traits.[68] This was recognised as the prime distinguishing mark of outback workers fifty years before Lawson and others wrote so much about mateship.[69] In 1845 Griffith, who had "always considered the observation of the effects produced on" pastoral workers by the up-country environment "as a most interesting study", wrote:

> "They have a strong esprit de corps, which is kept up by their speaking a language so full of cant expressions as to become almost a separate dialect. Their best trait is their liberality towards each other... Though amongst this class of men the standard of morality is very low, yet they are not without their rude notions of honour, modified, however, by a kind of public opinion amongst themselves, which exercises a considerable influence over their actions. ... A man guilty of crimes of a mean

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(67) The different conditions of the American frontier naturally conditioned a different outlook. See Chapter X infra.

(68) See p.122 ff., supra.

(69) F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey Round the World etc. Vol. III, p.12.

> and unmanly nature is despised by them; and one who robs from his fellows, but especially from his mate, is regarded as infamous. On the other hand ... [they are not] very scrupulous on the subject of honesty, if the person injured be not a poor man. Defrauding one not of their own class they seem to regard as a spoiling of the Egyptians."(70)

'Harris', in one of his most penetrating passages, pointed to the environmental pressures towards such behaviour. After describing how to succour him, his mate had walked "full forty miles" in twenty four hours, carrying a fifty pound pack across the mountains, he observes:

> "Looked at in an abstract point of view, it is quite surprising what exertions bushmen of new countries, especially mates, will make for one another, beyond people of the old countries. I suppose want prevailing less in the new countries makes men less selfish, and difficulties prevailing more make them more social and mutually helpful."(71)

We have already seen that actual "want" - of the basic necessities of life - was almost unknown in the interior. On the other hand, what 'Harris' called the "difficulties" of outback life were abundant. They made the practice of a collectivist 'mateship' essential, just as the abundance of basic food-stuffs made it possible. The hazards and hardships, but above all the loneliness (72) of up-country life were such

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(70) The Present State and Prospects etc., pp.79-80.

(71) Settlers and Convicts, p.176.

(72) H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life, etc., p.135; and James Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit etc., p.434; and [J. Sidney], A Voice from the Far Interior, etc., p.12 "Isolation is the essence of pastoral life..." et passim.

that, to make life tolerable, often merely to preserve it, every man had habitually to treat every other man as a brother. In cases of accident or illness the individual depended completely on whoever was nearest. Even apart from these contingencies, the mateless man was likely to become a 'hatter.

The strength of this tradition is perhaps best shown by that "free and easy hospitality that became everywhere in the interior a sort of public right."(73) It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that it amounted, at least within the circle of 'the nomad tribe',(74) to a kind of primitive Communism, or primitive Christianity as described by Paul of Tarsus:

> "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common."(75)

"I really believe," wrote a German traveller who walked through the Riverina in 1850:

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(73) William Westgarth, Victoria: late Australia Felix, or Port Phillip District of New South Wales; being an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Colony and Its Gold Mines etc., Edinburgh: 1853, p.89.

(74) There was, of course, a gulf fixed between the squatter's or superintendent's 'house' and the men's huts, so that bush hospitality existed on two separate planes, as it were. See F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey etc., Vol. III, p.12 ff: "In no place is the aristocratic influence so strong..."
But cf. Samuel Sidney, Gallops and Gossips in the Bush of Australia, Lond: 1844, p.58: "Now, living in the Bush, and especially while travelling, there is not the same distance between a master and well-behaved man, although a prisoner, as in towns."

(75) Acts of the Apostles, Cap. 4, Verse 32.

"there is no country in the world where hospitality is carried to a greater extent than Australia. [sic] Poor shepherds ... allow strangers to stay with them maybe three or four times every week. They will never turn them from their doors, nor ask the least remuneration for the shelter and diet they have provided; indeed, they seem ashamed to take money from the traveller, and feel insulted at the offer. Should he chance to have tobacco with him, they will thankfully accept a little."(76)

'Harris's' evidence is even more striking:

"Immediately you get into the country parts of the colony every door is without bolt or lock, and every hut ready to receive you for the night. You enter the first that suits you about sundown, whether the owner is there or not, and light your pipe, and unsaddle your horse, and bring in your equipments. When the residents come in, they will neither ask you who you are, nor stare at you; the only notice they take of your trespass is a courteous good evening, and putting down an extra quart-pot at the fire. The traveller, on the other hand, does not ask them whether they are free or bond; but if he judges they are prisoners, or free men and in want of anything, he shares his own stock of the article with them. The best accommodation in the hut is usually allotted to the stranger."(77)

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(76) F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey etc., Vol.III,p.5 ff

(77) 'A. Harris', Guide to Port Stephens etc., p.75. 'Harris's' statement that "every door is without bolt or lock" should be taken literally. See John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures etc., Vol. I, p.204: "The hut we lived in was only a few feet square, barked and slabbed, and having an earthen floor. ... The door always stood open, having, indeed, no fastening, a common case, and yet strange in a country full of hostile blacks, convicts, and bushrangers. But the huts are otherwise so insecure that a fastened door would afford little protection."

And see [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., pp.26-27; and James Demarr, Adventures in Australia Fifty Years Ago etc., p.99.

So strong was this tradition that it influenced even bush publicans and shanty keepers who, as a class, were by-words for ruthlessness and greed.(78) In the remotest frontier districts they usually charged working men nothing for food, tea and shelter, relying for their profits on the bar trade, and board paid by travelling 'swells'. In 1850 a Darling River shanty keeper explained that,

> "eating and drinking (that is tea) they did not count upon; a man must have that, and they were not going to take advantage of a poor devil who had to carry his bundle through the world; but if a gentleman travelled on horseback, it was another thing."(79)

Half a century later the same practice still obtained at Dunstan's Hotel on the then mining frontier at Marble Bar, Western Australia, a couple of thousand miles away.(80)

There is a passage in 'Harris's' novel which shows both the strength and the derivation of this outback sentiment, so graphically that it must be quoted in full. The scene is a stockman's bark hut not far from the present site of Canberra:

> "A voice of that mixed accent which distinguishes the offspring of Dublin parents of the lowest class born in one of our great English cities, was singing, with the richest licence of droll intonation, a composition of which we retain only the concluding verses, but which might be not inaptly entitled 'The Family Man': - a phrase signifying, in the 'flash dialect', a 'thief'

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(78) F. Lancelott, Australia As It Is etc., Vol. II, p.112.

(79) F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey etc., Vol. III, p.12

(80) G.F. Young, Under the Coolibah Tree, Lond: 1953, pp.152-153.

or 'cross-man'. The fragment will at once illustrate their sentiments, and identify the melodist himself with that portion of the population whose right of passage to the colony is presented to them with so many grave public ceremonies at the various Old and New Bailies.

There's never a chap - Bob, Arthur, or Dan -
Lives half such a life as the Countryman;
He scours the city, he sweeps the road;
Asses laden too heavy he helps to unload.
He spends all he gets, and gets all he can,
Does the rattlin', roarin', Family Man.

There's never a chap - Bob, Arthur or Dan -
Half such a chap as a countryman;
If you've little or none you may share in his mess,
If you've got too much he'll help you to less;
He gets all he spends, and that's all he can,
Does the rattlin', roarin', Family Man.

To these lyric stanzas, a rolling chorus was supplied by six or seven voices repeating the first couplet of each at its conclusion; a short interlude being supplied in the same manner after the chorus by deafening shouts - 'Good song, Dubbo!' - 'Here whet thee whistle lad!' - 'I'll back Mikkey for a strave against all Morrumbidgee! 'Silence' - 'Attention' - 'The song, gentlemen.' 'Bob!' shut up: - go on, Dubbo.'

These scenes and sounds, which may be supposed to be novel to the reader, were to Martin Beck habitual and familiar in the daily experience of many years ... almost everyone [of the singers in the hut] had the stockwhip either in his hand, or hung round his neck, or near him on the ground."(81)

The song itself is not Australian, but neither is it an English folk-song of the type of Adieu to Old England or Van Diemen's Land. There is none of the underlying melancholy

(81) The Emigrant Family: or, the Story of an Australian Settler, 3 vols., Lond: 1849, Vol. I, pp.121-124.

and overt conventional moralising, typical of the latter genre. The Family Man[82] is a "flash song", typical of those sung in their "bowsing kens"[83] by the submerged class of professional thieves and prostitutes of London and other large British cities. The whole passage illustrates strikingly not only the pastoral workers' spirit of easy-come, easy-go egalitarianism and mateship, but also its derivation from convict, Irish and lower class sources. 'Harris', in a footnote, says of the term, Countryman, "We apprehend this term must be of similar signification with the other" (i.e., Family Man); but as Countryman does not occur in James Hardy Vaux's glossary[84] of thieves' cant, nor in other available slang dictionaries, it is reasonable to suggest that it may here be a sign of acclimatisation, introduced by the singers to give up-country significance to the lines. Though not part of the song itself, the nickname "Dubbo", and the symbolism of the stockwhip, show how thoroughly at home the singers had already become in their new environment.

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(82) cf. for example the "old flash song" quoted by Pierce Egan in his Tom and Jerry, (Life in London etc.), edn. 1869, (1st publ. 1821), pp.267-268; or The Song of the Young Prig, quoted by G.C. Ingleton, True Patriots All, Syd: 1952, p.89. It is significant that these true thieves' songs, unlike most British folk-songs of the period, exhibit the same light-hearted disregard for authority and conventional morality which characterises most Australian folk-songs. (See Appendix XI).

(83) Low taverns or grog shops.

(84) Included in the Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux, etc. (1st edn. only) Lond: 1819.

Adaptability was another convict trait which was accentuated and developed by frontier conditions. In 1905, on the cover of the first edition of Paterson's Old Bush Songs, there appeared the following four lines of an old ballad, the remainder of which had apparently been forgotten:

"Stringy-bark will light your fire
Green hide will never fail yer,
Stringy-bark and green-hide
Are the mainstay of Australia."

If rough and ready improvisation were convict traits they were also, in the outback, often necessary conditions of survival. Where population was so scattered and specialist services of all kinds practically non-existent, a man had to be a jack-of-all-trades (85) who knew how to make do with whatever scanty materials were to hand. In the first stages of settlement masters and men alike sheltered from the elements in bark huts or "gunyahs", adapted from those of the aborigines. (86) As nails, and indeed ironmongery of all kinds, were very scarce, strips of untanned hide were used to fasten the

(85) cf. A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W., etc., p.244.

(86) J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations in N.S.W., etc., p.52.

bark together, and for a hundred other purposes.[87] Thus, "stringy bark and green-hide" early became a symbol of the outback, or "Australian", capacity for improvisation. In the 1820's "inland settlers" were already known by the soubriquet of "stringy barks."[88] And by the 1840's the saying that "if it were not for green hide and stringy-bark the colony would go to [hell]"[89] had already become traditional. The above quatrain obviously derived from the following song,

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(87) Settlers and Convicts, pp.18-19. Alfred Joyce, A Homestead History (ed. G.F. James), pp.80-81: "For common work, such as cow-sheds, stables, and cart-sheds, the roofing material was nearly always bark. It was never nailed except in one place, in the middle, on account of its great shrinkage, but was fastened to the ridge pole with strips of hide. This same green hide was of universal use as the general cordage, dray ropes of four plaits, hurdle-ties, etc. To keep the bark firmly on the roof, logs were laid on it, suspended from saddle-poles, and all fastened together with strong wooden pegs. Very few nails were used, greenhide and pegs being the usual fastenings..."

(88) James F. O'Connell (ed. from his verbal narration by 'H.H.W.'), Boston: 1836, A Residence of Eleven Years in New Holland and the Caroline Islands, pp.49-53.

(89) J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., p.208. And cf. David Mackenzie, Ten Years' Practical Experience etc., pp.135-136. This author lists twenty nine uses for green hide and concludes: "But time would fail me to enumerate half the virtues and uses of green hide. Suffice it to say, that green-hide, horses, and stringy-bark, are the grand support and stay of Australia; without them the whole fabric would totter and fall."

which was apparently composed in 1866:(90)

"I sing of a commodity, it's one that will not fail yer,
I mean the common oddity, the mainstay of Australia;
Gold it is a precious thing, for commerce it increases,
But stringy bark and green hide can beat it all to pieces.

Chorus: Stringy bark and green hide, that will never fail yer,
Stringy bark and green hide, the mainstay of Australia.

If you travel on the road, and chance to stick in Bargo,
To avoid a bad capsize, you must unload your cargo;
For to pull your dray about, I do not see the force on,
Take a bit of green hide, and hook another horse on.

If you chance to take a dray, and break your leader's trace,
Get a bit of green hide, to mend your broken places;
Greenhide is a useful thing all that you require,
But stringy bark's another thing when you want a fire.

If you want to build a hut to keep out wind and weather,
Stringy bark will make it snug, and keep it weel together;
Green hide if it's used by you, will make it all the stronge
For if you tie it with green hide, it's sure to last the longer.

New chums to this golden land, never dream of failure,
Whilst you've got such useful things as these in fair Australia,
For stringy bark and green hide will never, never fail you,
Stringy bark and greenhide is the mainstay of Australia."(91

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(90) In the songbook which contains "Stringy Bark and Green Hide" there appears another song called "The Rush to Glanmire." The N.S.W. Govt. Gazette of 12 March, 1866, (Vol. 1, p.746) contains an application from one Edward Combes for the registration of the "Glanmire Gold Mining Company Ltd."

(91) Song No.8 in No.1. The Sydney Songster: A Collection of New, Original, Local and Comic Songs by: George Chanson, As Sung at the Sydney Concert Rooms, n.d., (but internal evidence suggests 1866) Syd: D. Roberts, Bookbinder, Pitt Street. This song is prefaced by a special announcement: "(A character song as sung by Mr. J.S. Brice at the Theatre Royal, Maitland, Lambing Flat, Forbes, etc., - Published by request.)" The virtues of stringy-bark and green-hide are still celebrated in folk-lore. (cf. Dal Stivens, Ironbark Bill, Syd: 1955, pp.10-11, "The Chamption Buckjumper".)

A nomadic habit of life was another prominent convict trait which was accentuated by conditions in the interior. Like a soldier or sailor under orders, a convict had, and could have, no permanent abode. If he did not abscond from a bad master, he was always liable, at a moment's notice, to be re-assigned, or "returned to Government" on account of illness or bad behaviour, or moved from one penal station or road gang to another, quite apart from being moved to different working parties and different quarters within the same establishment.(92) Tom Petrie tells a significant story of an old hand whose ill treatment during the Logan regime at Moreton Bay(93) had left him "not quite in possession of his senses in all things. He would never sleep in a bed, but would 'camp' beside the kitchen fire, or, if a lime kiln were burning, there for a certainty would he be found, rolled up in a blanket, surrounded by dogs."(94)

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(92) Consider, for example, the life of the hero (and other convicts) in James Tucker's Adventures of Ralph Rashleigh, (ed. Colin Roderick, M.A., Ph.D.) Syd: 1952.

(93) For other references to the tradition of Logan's "reign of terror" at Moreton Bay, see Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland, Recorded by His Daughter, Brisbane: 1932 (2nd edn.), pp.232-233; H.S. Russell, Genesis of Queensland etc., pp.212, 610-614; and cf. "Frank the Poet's" well-known ballad (Appendix IX).

(94) Tom Petrie's Reminiscences etc., p.311; and cf. Settlers and Convicts, p.87.

There is evidence that the old hands were the most foot-loose of outback workers,(95) but even if no 'government man' had ever crossed the Great Divide, other factors would have imposed a wandering habit of life on most bushmen. A pastoral economy always tends to create nomads(96) just as agriculture tends to wed the farmer to his own plot of soil. In Australia this tendency was reinforced by the vagaries of the climate, which were always making it necessary to move stock from one area to another, by the sparsity of settlement, by the temporary and insecure title to runs resulting from the land laws, and by the seasonal or occasional nature of much bush work such as shearing, fencing, splitting, clearing, tank-

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(95) C. Griffith, Present State and Prospects etc., p.78: "They are very fond of change, wandering about the country generally in pairs, and rarely remaining more than a year in one service. They are to be found more at the distant stations and in newly-settled country where wages are higher, and there is more difficulty to contend with, than in the more civilised parts where the emigrants have in a great measure superseded them."
"A Clergyman" [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is; or etc., Lond: 1867, p.222: "They have been the most migratory class of the community, and will be found dispersed over all the Australian colonies..."
James Butchart, Letter 10/12/1843 (MS, P.L.V.), says that "almost all" shearers were "emancipated prisoners."
Joyce (A Homestead History, p.61), is in implied agreement; and J. Henderson (Excursions and Adventures etc., Vol. I, pp.198-199), says that shearers were "free or ticket-of-leave men" and that many of them were "sons of Erin."

(96) D.N. Kachkarov and E.P. Korovine, La Vie dans Les Deserts, (Trans. from the Russian by T. Monod), Paris: 1942, Cap. XI.

sinking and so on.[97] 'Harris' noted that already in the 1830's there was "a peculiar characteristic" about "the free labouring population of Australia: it is in a state of constant migration. The man who has a contract job and is a hired servant here this year, probably spends the next at the other end of the colony."[98] And John Sidney, in a more colourful phrase reminiscent of Gipps' famous statement,[99] wrote that "you can no more change shepherds and herdsmen into citizens and gardeners, than you can turn wandering Arabs into weavers and drapers."[100] The stock reason, given by the men themselves, for their endless movement, was that they liked "to see the country."[101]

Two other aspects of outback life, both of which had important consequences on the outlook of the pastoral workers,

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(97) cf. a very interesting recent article by Flora Eldershaw on "the nomadic tradition so strong in Australian writing". (T. Inglis Moore ed., Australia Writes: an Anthology, Melb: 1953, "The Landscape Writers," pp.22-30.)

(98) Settlers and Convicts, p.67. (My italics.)

(99) "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." (Gipps to Russell, 19/12/1840, H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol.XXI, p.127.)

(100) Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.16, and cf. ibid., p.22.

(101) 'A. Harris', Emigrant Family; or etc., Vol. I, pp.38-39.

were the tremendous shortages of women and of clergymen. Among the convicts also women had been scarce, and though clergymen had been relatively plentiful, they seem on the whole to have had a negative influence. Cunningham, a very acute observer, wrote that "the only real signs of religion [he] ever saw among convicts, were amongst a portion of Catholics on board."(102) The official status of early Anglican clergymen as chaplains to convict establishments made them, in the eyes of the prisoners, part of the government machinery of repression.(103) The result was that, in Crowley's words, "the practice of religion was an object of ridicule and part of the punishment."(104) There is no reason to suppose that Kingsley was exaggerating much when he made one of his characters - a well-disposed old hand working on an outback station - say:

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(102) Two Years in N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, p.245.

(103) Eris O'Brien, The Foundation of Australia 1786-1800 etc., pp.64-65.
But cf. C.A. Browning, The Convict Ship and England's Exiles, 2 parts, Lond: 1847 (2nd edn.). The book gives an account of Browning's six voyages as surgeon in convict transports in the early 1830's. He was an extremely devout man who worked unremittingly towards the spiritual conversion of prisoners, and who believed that God had changed the hearts of 108 out of 264 on his fifth voyage (Earl Grey), and 156 out of 220 on his sixth voyage (Theresa). [See pp. iv, vii, 169]. However, comparison of the whole book with those of Cunningham, T.B. Wilson and other transport surgeons, makes it seem highly probable that most of the conversions were either illusory or very temporary.

(104) Working Class Conditions in Australia 1788-1851, Melb. Ph.D. thesis, 7/11/1949, p.110.

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> "These prisoners hate the sight of a parson above all mortal men. And for why? Because when they're in prison, all their indulgences, and half their hopes of liberty depend on how far they can manage to humbug the chaplain with false piety. And so, when they are free again, they hate him worse than any man. I am an old prisoner myself, and I know it."(105)

The prisoners' anti-clericalism was increased by the fact that in the early days of the colony several Anglican priests(106) sat on the Bench as magistrates. The Rev. Samuel Marsden, for long the principal chaplain in New South Wales, was notorious among the 'government men' for his severity. Bigge wrote:

> "Without, however, impeaching the moral feelings of Mr. Marsden, and without stating it as my opinion that he has acted with undue severity, it is in proof, that his sentences are not only, in fact, more severe than those of the other magistrates, but that the general opinion of the colony is, that his character, as displayed in the administration of the penal law in New South Wales is stamped with severity..."(107)

The practice of appointing clergy as magistrates seems to have come to an end during Governor Darling's regime,(108)

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(105) Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn, Syd: 1935 edn., p.232.

(106) Including, besides Marsden, Revs. Cartwright, Fulton, and Redall. (See J.T. Bigge, Report on the State of the Colony of N.S.W., Lond: 1822, pp.96-97; and H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol. XIII, p.59.)

(107) J.T. Bigge, op. cit., p.91.

(108) J.D. Lang, Historical and Statistical Account of N.S.W. etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1834, Vol. II, p.248. A search of H.R.A. failed to reveal Bathurst's despatch to Darling, to which Lang refers. But there were still two clerical magistrates in 1827 (H.R.A., loc. cit.), and none are listed in the N.S.W. Calendar and General Post Office Directory, 1834.
The first move against appointing clerical magistrates seems to have been made by T.H. Scott, in a letter to Bathurst dated 22 Aug., 1823. In the following year Scott became first Archdeacon of New South Wales. (See E.C. Rowland, A Century of the English Church in New South Wales, Syd: 1948, p.46.)

but the tradition of the savagery of 'flogging parsons' persisted for over a century. J.D. Lang wrote in 1834:

> "Under so preposterous and so enormous a system, well might the miserable wretch, whose back was still smarting under the Saturday's infliction, join in the oft-repeated prayer of the Litany on the Sunday morning, 'Lord, have mercy upon us!' and well might he add from the bottom of his heart, 'for his Reverence has none!'"(109)

In 1899 it was recorded that the prisoners had thought:

> "the clerical magistrates were generally far more cruel than the lay magistrates, and this opinion was crystallised into a cant phrase which was current among the old hands many years later. It was 'The Lord have mercy on you, for his reverence will have none.' This phrase was used on all occasions, whether it was appropriate or not to the subject or the circumstances of the time."(110)

And the tradition has been immortalised by a living Australian poet.(111)

Symbolic of the convicts' hatred for the kind of religion offered them was an event which took place during Hunter's governorship. When in 1798 he compelled the convicts to attend religious services, incendiaries burnt down the Church. He offered to any informer, even one serving a life sentence, a free pardon and passage home, plus a reward of £ 50. But the group loyalty of the government men was equal to the

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(109) Historical and Statistical Account of N.S.W. etc., Vol. II, p.248.

(110) Geo. Boxall, Story of the Australian Bushrangers, Lond: 1899, p.49.

(111) Kenneth Slessor, One Hundred Poems 1919-1939, Syd: 1944, p.113, "Vesper-Song of the Reverend Samuel Marsden".

occasion. "One would have thought that irresistible," Hunter said sadly, "but it brought no evidence. I never learnt who it was; it was a designed thing."(112)

The extent to which this hostility, or at best indifference, to organised religion, like other convict attitudes, influenced the whole of early colonial society, may be gauged by the contrast between Melbourne and Sydney Sabbaths in the 1840's. A Presbyterian clergyman observed that in Sydney, Sundays were "spent by many in 'boating', driving, riding, drinking, visiting, &c.," and "most of the churches" were "more than half empty." In Melbourne the churches were "well attended, the people dressed in their best attire, the shops shut, the streets as quiet as in an English town," and there were "no visible symptoms of riot or drunkenness."(113) A lay observer, though less disturbed by the facts, thought

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(112) H. of C., Report from Select Committee on Transportation, 1812, Appendix No.i, Hunter's Evidence.
David Collins, Account of the English Colony in New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1802, Vol. II, p.130, says that the reward offered was £ 30, still an immense sum for most convicts. In January of the following year the Sydney gaol was burnt (ibid., pp.197-198), and on Christmas eve the gaol at Parramatta (ibid., pp.276-277). "The rewards which had been formerly held out upon similar occasions" were again offered, but as usual brought no response.

(113) Rev. David Mackenzie, Ten Years' Practical Experience etc. pp.30, 51. However, "It was a common saying in those early days that Sunday did not extend any distance out of Melbourne and not at all into the distant bush..." (Alfred Joyce, A Homestead History, pp.108-109).

Sydney's churches even emptier, estimating that not more than 5,000 out of Sydney's then population of 45,000 ever attended church at all.(114) He wrote:

> "The people of that country, however, do not seem to trouble themselves much about religion. ... Instead of dining on cold meat, and anything else, to save the trouble of cooking on the Sunday, and the sin of doing so, as some think in this country, the Sydney people, particularly the working classes, make that the great day for feasting; and the quantity of pies and roasted meats, of every description, to be seen carrying through the streets at one o'clock on the Sundays, from the different ovens throughout the town, would rejoice the heart of many a poor starving creature in this country. After three o'clock the nobility (alias mobility) and gentry start in their carriages and gigs along the Parramatta Road, for an airing in the country, and the multitudes of people riding on horseback in that country are perfectly astonishing."(115)

The clergyman could attribute the contrast between the two ways of keeping the Sabbath to "nothing else than the comparative absence of convict influence" [in Melbourne];(116) but the higher proportion there of members of his own faith, and of newly arrived immigrants from a Britain already feeling the influence of the Evangelical movement, were probably also contributory causes. In spite of the profane influence of the

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(114) A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W., etc., p.44.
(115) loc. cit.
(116) Mackenzie, op. cit., p.31.

Gold Rush on Melbourne,(117) the same sort of difference between Sundays there and in Sydney is still noticeable to-day.

The attitude of most people towards the clergy seems to have ranged from indifference, through cynicism, to hostility. Backhouse, the Quaker missionary, reports that when in the middle 1830's, a young man who was helping him went visiting houses in Sydney:

> "One man, who professed to be a Roman Catholic, told him, that he liked his own religion best, because he could get drunk two or three times a week, and then confess to one of their priests, and obtain absolution which set all to right again! Another, calling himself a Protestant, said, he supposed no-one would engage in such labour without being pretty well paid for it; but he thought the diligence of the young man, in going from house to house, was more than most would exercise for their money, and that he therefore deserved attention."(118)

And Balfour, an intelligent and respectable settler of moderate views in most matters, wrote sardonically that -

> "The clergymen, in addition to their government pay, receive handsome subscriptions from their congregations, and their outward appearance certainly does not proclaim them as belonging to Pharaoh's lean kine. They are, perhaps more frequently than any other class of persons

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(117) Even at the height of the gold mania in 1853 one observer "marvelled to witness ... the air of quiet serenity and decorousness which pervaded the capital on the Sabbath morning;" though he realised that "in reality, the odour of sanctity was not in the ascendant." (William Kelly, Life in Victoria, or Victoria in 1853, and in 1858; etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1859, Vol. I, pp.105, 109-110.)

And cf. B.A. Heywood, A Vacation Tour to the Antipodes etc., Lond: 1863, p.34.

(118) Narrative of a Visit etc., p.454.

in the colony, to be seen either in their carriages, or mounted on handsome and well-groomed horses.(119)

Most of those who crossed the mountains took this anti-clerical attitude with them to the outback, where it was accentuated by the almost complete absence of religious facilities.(120) In the early 1840's, for instance, there was not a single church nor a resident clergyman in the four hundred odd miles between Yass and Melbourne.(121) To the north

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(119) Sketch of N.S.W. p.114.

(120) In 1839 there were no clergymen stationed beyond the boundaries of location. In the remainder of N.S.W., excluding the relatively populous counties of Cumberland, Camden, Northumberland (Hunter River District), and the penal settlements, there were nine Anglican, nine Roman Catholic, and eight Presbyterian clergymen. (See W.W. Burton, The State of Religion and Education in New South Wales, Lond: 1840, Appendix No.XII.)

For a picture of up-country irreligiousness at the same period in Western Australia, see E.W. Landor, The Bushman: or, Life in a New Country, Lond: 1847, Cap.IX.

In 1844 there were sixty Anglican clergymen in the whole of Australia, excluding Tasmania. Of these 27 were in the County of Cumberland; 8 in Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne Portland Bay, Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island; 11 in the Newcastle-Hunter River district; and 14 in the rest of the twenty counties within the boundaries of location. There were none beyond the boundaries. (See T.H. Braim, A History of New South Wales etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1846, Vol. II, pp.164-166.) Braim, Principal of Sydney College, later became Archdeacon of Portland.

(121) Rev. D. Mackenzie, Ten Years' Practical Experience etc., p.48.

Alfred Joyce (A Homestead History, p.109), reports an itinerant minister in his district, "but, unfortunately he did not remain faithful to his charge, disappearing one day with the collection and his patron's horse."

west, once the relatively closely settled Hunter River District and its immediate hinterland were left behind, the situation was no better.(122) Men were born, and lived, without entering a church or hearing a sermon or prayer.(123) Of those lucky enough to find helpmeets, many lived, permanently perforce, in an unhallowed state of concubinage.(124) One man, "in the simplicity of his heart," went through the form of marriage "by way of securing the woman," for his brother who had been detained 'up the country'.(125) Even in death, the vast majority of bushmen had to do without professional spiritual assistance. This description, from the Geelong Advertiser of 24th March, 1848, of a typical bush worker's funeral was truthful, if melodramatic:

> "... splints of green wood for his coffin, a bush carpenter his undertaker, a bullock dray his hearse, reckless and hardened men his mourners, and the wild forest or open plain his burial place."

It cannot be said that most bushmen consciously deplored the situation.(126) If they did so unconsciously, the result

(122) [John Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., pp.21-23.

(123) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.165.
D. Mackenzie, op.cit., p.48 ff.
H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., pp.32-33.
J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc.,p.140.
F. Lancelott, Australia As It Is etc., Vol.I, p.264.
"Religious Destitution in the Interior" was a common theme in the colonial press. (See, e.g., a leading article with this title in the Sydney Morning Herald, 18/5/1844, and a long letter following on 29/5/1844.

(124) D. Mackenzie, loc. cit.

(125) id., pp.62-63.

(126) id., pp.49-50; and J. Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit etc., p.500.

was to make them more actively scornful of the defaulting clergy and, perhaps, to reinforce their already strong capacity for mutual aid - for mateship. On his walk through the Riverina in 1850, Gerstaecker came to a station where the squatter had put forward a plan to bring to the district an itinerant minister whose salary was to be supplemented by donations from the working hands. "On this subject," he wrote, "I heard opinions so very freely expressed that I am quite sure the Murray Scrub is not a soil favourable for preachers." (12
But 'Harris', the thoroughly practical bushman who was also sincerely religious, gives on this subject, as on so many others, the most penetrating evidence. Writing of the "society" of outback working people, he says:

> "Very few of its members cherished any religious thoughts; and those who did said nothing about them. Those who had none were the chief orators upon the subject; and they, of course, would suffer nothing like expression of pious sentiments to pass without malignant jeers. Perhaps, had the question been made a practical one, divested of all ingredient of the conventionality of sects, it would have been given in favour of the claim of religion to respect. But, unfortunately, it was the fanatical form into which religious sentiment is sometimes thrown, that was assumed to be the true and intrinsic manifestation of its character. And this no

(127) F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey etc., Vol. III, p.12.
And cf. Rev. John Graham (ed.) Lawrence Struilby: or Observations and Experiences during Twenty five Years of Bush Life in Aust., Lond: 1863, p.65.

one who regarded his reputation for sound sense cared to be the advocate of."(128)

It is worth noting that 'Harris' goes on to make a partial exception of Catholic bushmen, many of whom he says, were sincerely religious. These were usually not mocked, because of a feeling that their religion was both so deeply ingrained, and yet so purely formal, that ordinary canons of judgment did not apply to them.(129) No doubt their relative immunity from the mockers derived also from the fact that itinerating Catholic priests were seen in the bush more often than were those of any other denomination.(130)

The famine of females in the interior was remarked even more widely, and deplored more deeply, than that of clergymen. Sidney records, for example, that in the early 1840's, both sides of the "Barwen" river for 300 miles were occupied by stations, and that "there was not one white woman in the whole distance." These creatures were, he adds feelingly, "as scarce as black swans in Europe."(131) From the Census

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(128) 'A. Harris', A Converted Atheist's Testimony to the Truth of Christianity, etc., Lond: 1852, p.78 ff.

(129) loc. cit.

(130) [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior, etc., p.23; J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., p.140; George Mackaness (ed.), Correspondence of John Cotton etc., Part III, p.44. And cf. Margaret Kiddle, Work in Progress on Victorian Western District.
In Western Australia also, during the 1840's, there were believed to be more Catholic priests than Protestant clergymen. (See E.W. Landor, The Bushman: or etc., pp.113-114.)

(131) Voice from the Far Interior, p.27.

returns may be drawn figures which show that the position was not quite so black as that.

Table IX

Masculinity of White Population in 1841 and 1851

(N.S.W. excluding Port Phillip)

		Males	Females	Total	% of Males
County of Cumberland	1841	33,763	24,345	58,108	58.0
	1851	42,035	39,079	81,114	51.8
Other Counties Within the Boundaries	1841	33,322	14,126	47,448	70.2
	1851	44,975	33,457	78,432	57.3
Squatting Districts	1841	7,551	1,494	9,045	83.5
	1851	19,219	8,478	27,697	69.4

Assuming women to be distributed more or less evenly through the different economic groups of the outback population, it is obvious at a glance that, even at the end of the decade, four out of every seven men must still have been doomed to bachelorhood. Actually, of course, the proportion of single men among the nomad tribe of pastoral labourers was very much higher than this.(132) Squatters, managers, overseers, shanty keepers, and others of relatively fixed abode and high income, naturally found it easier to attract wives from among the few marriageable girls available.

(132) cf. [D.L. Waugh] Three Years' Practical Experience etc., p.37.

The absolute shortage of women stemmed initially from the transportation days, but it was exacerbated in the outback by other factors. The rough life of a pioneering community always makes for a population predominantly masculine in composition and outlook, but the fact that the economy was almost purely pastoral accentuated the tendency. In the older and more fertile areas of the 'nineteen counties', there were some small agricultural holdings worked by family groups. But even in the remoter parts of the settled districts, climate, land laws and distance from markets combined to make such forms of land-holding unusual at this period.(133) Beyond the boundaries of location individual small holdings, worked by family groups, were almost unknown.

As though all this were not enough, the short-sighted selfishness of all but a tiny minority of squatters was such as to make them most reluctant to employ married men. J.D. Lang, Caroline Chisholm, and other thoughtful contemporaries might agree on the need for settling in the bush "a numerous, industrious and virtuous agricultural population",(134) but still the squatters advertised for men and

(133) The Atlas, 14/6/45; 3/6/48: "If small proprietors are the backbone of any state, then surely New South Wales cannot be classed among the vertebrata." (Quoted S.H. Roberts, History of Australian Land Settlement, Melb: 1924, p.108.)

(134) J.D. Lang, Emigration: considered chiefly in reference to the practicability and expediency of importing and of settling throughout the territory of N.S.W., a numerous, industrious and virtuous agricultural population; etc., Syd: 1833, p.18 et passim.

and more men with "no encumbrances."(135) J.C. Byrne did not exaggerate when he wrote:

> "Settlers and squatters will never engage, if they can help it, men with families of children; the support of the useless mouths they do not like; so it is advisable that immigrants should have as few encumbrances as possible. The morality of the bush might and would be much improved, if woman was more frequently there, but that is out of the question, if, on first arrivel, they are surrounded by a number of young children; a master will avoid them, as he would a black snake, for he 'does not wish to support, and bring up other people's children'."(136)

Even Mrs. Chisholm, the arch apostle of family migration, was moved to warn Britons that "no man ought to think of emigrating to this colony who has more than three children except some of them are above nine years of age."(137) And

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(135) R. Howitt, Impressions of Australia Felix, etc., pp.212-213.
And cf. T. Murphy, Letter to S.P. Winter, 21/12/1845; and Arbella Cooke, Letter to S.P. Winter, 28/10/1852: "So many children all able to eat rations will be a heavy expense on this establishment. ... Mrs. G.Winter promised to take one of the girls and I hope Mrs. Williams will take the other. Now unless the other four children die very soon they will eat up all the profits of the station..." (MSS Winter Cooke Papers, Murndal Station, Victoria. Copies in possession of Miss Margaret Kiddle.)

(136) Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. I, pp.213-214. And cf. ibid., Vol. II, pp.280-281.
John Hood, Australia and the East etc., Lond: 1843,p.225; and Chas. Griffith, Present State and Prospects etc., p.73.

(137) Margaret Kiddle, Caroline Chisholm, p.60.

squatters like Charles Campbell of Duntroon, who encouraged farming families to settle on parts of his land,(138) were almost as rare as the Bunyip.(139)

This deprivation of female companionship had very important effects on the behaviour and outlook of bush workers. Among the convicts, especially those incarcerated at Norfolk Island and other penal stations, sodomy had been very common,(140)

(138) L.F. Fitzhardinge, "Old Canberra and District, 1820-1910" Chap. 2, Pt. 1, of Canberra A Nation's Capital, (ed., H.L. White), Syd: 1954, pp.21-22.

(139) The Sydney Morning Herald of 31/5/1844, reported proceedings at "a well attended public meeting of the settlers and squatters" of the Queanbeyan and adjoining districts, held on 20/5/1844. The meeting unanimously condemned Gipp's new land regulations. In what the Herald described as a "long and somewhat pedantic speech which began with the words, "Rising as he did to oppose almost all by whom he was surrounded", Charles Campbell moved an amendment to the resolution before the meeting. The burden of his amendment was that the new regulations were good because they would tend to encourage the subdivision of land among petty agricultural families, either as tenants or freeholders. The amendment lapsed for want of a seconder, and in a sub-leader on the following day, 1/6/1844, the Herald scathingly denounced Campbell's singular views, concluding its attack with the peroration: "If we stand gazing through this vista of unborn generations, and delighting our imaginations with scenes [of a happy and prosperous peasantry, etc.] that may arise when our bones shall have mouldered into dust, instead of minding our own business, and making the most of such resources as the Creator, has actually placed before us, we shall, to use the worthy speaker's own language, be 'fit only to be the inmates of one vast lunatic asylum'."

(140) H. of C. Sel. C'tee. on Tptn., Report with Minutes of Evidence, 1837, pp.44-45, 66-69 (Evidence of Jas. Mudie, and of E.A. Slade, Superintendent of Sydney Prisoners' Barracks, 1832-33.)
And cf. W. Ullathorne, The Catholic Mission to Australasia, Liverpool: 1837, pp.30-31, 40; and F.K. Crowley, Working Class Conditions etc., p.37 ff.

as it must be wherever large numbers of men are segregated together for long periods. Most contemporary writers were silent upon the subject of sodomy in the outback, but none denied its prevalence and a few hinted broadly that it was common among the old hands and tended to spread to other elements of the tribe. One of the more outspoken was Byrne who pointed out that the disproportionate numbers of males and females in the colony, though striking enough (141), gave little idea of the true position. From the 1841 census returns he prepared figures showing the very much more striking disproportion between single, adult males and females (142). His figures, however, are incorrect (143). The true state of affairs in both 1841 and 1851 is shown below:

Table X

		Single Males 14 and over	Single Females 14 and over	Single Male 14 and over per Single Female 14 and over
County of Cumberland	1841	15,839	6,485	2.4
	1851	12,504	8,875	1.4
Other Counties Within the Boundaries	1841	20,664	2,253	9.2
	1851	15,959	4,687	3.4
Squatting Districts	1841	6,083	160	38.0
	1851	11,113	825	13.5

(141) cf. Table IX, supra.

(142) Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. I, p.108 ff.

(143) Byrne's figures are apparently based on the quite unwarrantable assumption that all persons under 21 years of age were both free and single. The Census returns give the ages of the population in the following groups: Under Two, Two and Under Seven, Seven and Under Fourteen, Fourteen and under Twenty-one, Twenty-one and under Forty-five, Forty-five and under Sixty, Sixty and Upwards. In the above Table it seemed more realistic, under the circumstances, to make the break at Fourteen and Upwards, though of course the disproportion would be even greater between single adult men and women.

Though the ratio of single men to single women in the outback decreased so much during the decade, this is partly accounted for by the growth of hamlets on the inner edge of the squatting districts. In the 'farthest-out' district of Maranoa there were for instance, in 1851, 65 single males over 13 years of age, and no single women of the same age group. There were also three married men and four married women. Of New South Wales as a whole Byrne wrote:

> "It is no wonder, therefore, that in such a state of society, deep-seated vice should exist, and abominable offences be practised to an appalling extent. Religious education can have but little effect on those minds already steeped in and accustomed to vice, where the great disproportion of one sex presents an insuperable obstacle to the gratification of one of the most natural desires bestowed on man - that of taking to himself a helpmate."(144)

We have seen how much more scarce both "religious education" and potential "helpmates" were in the squatting districts.

Yet though white women were scarce, Aboriginal women were not. The exact number of Aboriginal inhabitants during pioneering days will, of course, never be known; but even according to the lower estimates there must have been, in 1841, nearly as many black women as there were white men

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(144) Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. I, pp.108-109. And cf. [J. Sidney] Voice from the Far Interior, etc., p.30. And Niel Black, Journal (MS., P.L.V.), 27/3/1840: "Last week I engaged a sort of thing in the Shape of a man - But certainly not a man among men - as Hut-keeper @ 15/- per week of wages. And thought myself fortunate in getting him."

beyond the boundaries. As with sodomy, most contemporary writers thought it good to say nothing of sexual relations between pastoral workers (and their employers) and the native women, but there are enough exceptions to make it certain that Mackenzie was not exaggerating when he wrote of,

> "black women cohabiting, with the knowledge and consent of their sable husbands, in all parts of the interior, with white hut-keepers."(145)

The direct results of the practice were that the aboriginal race was rapidly decimated by veneral and other diseases as the white men advanced, and that countless thousands of unwanted half-caste babies were murdered.(146)

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(145) Ten Years' Experience etc., p.210; and cf. H. of C. Sel. C'tee on Tptn., Report with Minutes of Evidence, 1837, pp.42-44.
And G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., pp.164-165: [Describing Aborigines at Mr. Maxwell's Narrigal Station in the Orange district] "From the half-drunken looks of some of the men, the greedy begging of others, and certai indications of good understanding between their women and the station men, (not a single white woman was to be seen there), I set them down as one of the many families of tribes of the Aborigines who have nothing to thank the English for but demoralisation and deeper degredation." And [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.30; and F. Eldershaw, Australia As It Really Is etc., p.87.

(146) Id., loc. cit.; and cf. Jas F. O'Connell, Residence of Eleven Years etc., p.83; G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel etc., p.158: "These men live all the year round on salt beef and bread, the latter baked by themselves: they have no change either of diet, or employment, or of anything else; ... It is under these circumstances that those unhappy connections are formed with native women, the offspring of which are invariably killed by the mother." And J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc, pp.93-94: "Although the gins cherish some of their children, they certainly kill many, and, almost invariabl the male half-breeds; and when children, born during the residence of the mothers with the stockmen, are put to death, there can be no doubt that these men are parties consenting to the deed. The old villanous [sic] gins assemble at the birth, and carry away the child, and destroy it."

Infanticide and syphillis probably account for the fact that there were relatively few half-caste people in the Interior, despite the widespread miscegenation.

Many writers have attempted, either from ignorance or sentimentality, the scarcely possible task of making this picture blacker by implying that the 'gins' were usually unwilling victims of the white man's lust. In fact Aboriginal custom, generally speaking, restricted a woman's sexual intercourse to that with her husband, but tolerated, under certain conditions, some casual connections with other men in his kinship group. In addition women were regarded as the husband's property, and wife-lending or wife-bartering, and even something like what we should call prostitution, were common.(147) Moreover, tribal custom had no relevance to the white invaders who were neither within nor, necessarily, outside of the kinship groups, and in any case tribal mores broke down very rapidly under the impact of the more complex and technically advanced culture. As long as the women were paid for their services with food, tobacco, or liquor, they and their

(147) E.M. Curr, The Australian Race etc., 2 vols., Melb: 1886, pp.106-140.
Herbert Basedow, The Australian Aboriginal, Adelaide: 1925, (2nd imp. 1929), pp.218-224.
A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them, Syd: 1948 (4th edn.), pp.101-124.

husbands were usually content.(148) Bad feeling or murder resulted when the white men ill-used or cheated the 'gins', as they very often did. There is every reason to think that Niel Black only stated the bare truth in his journal when he wrote:

> "I may here state that even one instance of Natives attacking a Home Station has never yet been known in the Colony, and Several of the men on this establishment are now very ill with the Native pox which Shows how they Acted with the Blacks. Notwithstanding the bad name they had here, I am told it is no uncommon thing for these rascals to sleep all night with a Lubra (Native Female) 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 which has frequently occurred."(149)

As might be expected, sodomy became far less common where, as in most outback areas, there was a sufficient supply of gins.(150) Byrne writes that, wherever the advancing pastoralists came into contact with the Aborigines:

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(148) John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures etc., Vol. II, p.114: "They will frequently offer to lend it, meaning the gin to the convict-servants, for tobacco, &c. When a gin has had intercourse with a European, and produces a half-caste child, they say, 'That been patter (eaten) white bread'."

(149) 23/3/1840. "Native pox". The irony was presumably unconscious. cf. 'Spanish pox', 'the French disease', 'un cap anglais' etc. There were, of course, exceptions to this rule of outback behaviour. See,e.g. H. Melville, The Present State of Australia, etc., Lond: 1851, p.105: "... yet there are many settlers that are as much attached to the black women as others are to those possessing fair skins: and are equally fond of their half-caste children as if they were pure white."

(150) Sir T. Brisbane's Letter Book (M.L.)Vol. 2, Apr. 1825, pp.230-233. (Quoted F.K. Crowley, Working Class Conditions, etc., 7/11/49, p.113)

"their gins (wives), or daughters, are taken from them; and the diseases of the white man, extended without remorse, destroy and daily diminish the race of Aborigines as the squatter advances. Seldom, indeed, ... is the face of a white woman seen. ... This further promotes vice, and where black gins are unobtainable, there is alas! too much reason to believe, that the sin for which God destroyed 'the doomed cities' prevails amongst the servants of squatters. ... The lessons imbibed in the chain gangs and penal settlements are diffused without control or hindrance, by the expirees of the party; and if there is any free man or immigrant among the number, his feelings are soon laughed away, and he is taught to regard without horror the most appalling crimes."(151)

No doubt most of the few white women to be found on the stations were faithful to their marriage vows, but some of those who were not fell low indeed, as the following passage shows. Mrs. Johnston was the cook at Ballangeich, before she left to work on a neighbouring station. Her employer wrote in a letter to Niel Black:

"I have been told since that Mrs. Johnston's only object on going would have been to make a little money on her own bottom for such a whore I never heard of I am told my Station during her stay was a complete whore's shop, your men used to come to the tree on the Run and my fellows went to fight them while the lady was at the command of the highest bidder. They nearly knocked down the Pigs' house among them that was a favourite resort of hers and her motto was 'Ready aye

(151) J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. I, p.192 ff.

Ready' and the cuckold rascal [her husband] was quite agreeable as long as it paid and let him go idle."(152)

It may be suggested that one important, thoug indirect, result of the absence of good women was to generate the cult of mateship in its more restricted and personal sense. The other conditions of outback life, plus convict tradition, as we have seen, are sufficient to account for the extraordinarily close class solidarity, and the strong tendency to mutual aid, displayed by outback workers.(153) But these factors do not account for the tradition that a man should have his own special 'mate' with whom he shared money, goods, and even secret aspirations, and for whom, even when in the wrong, he was prepared to make almost any sacrifice.(154 Casual cohabitation with Aboriginal women, or with a Mrs. Johnston, might allay what St. Paul called the pricks of the flesh, but could never, as a rule, begin to provide that

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(152) Niel Black Papers (MS P.L.V.), "Colonial Letters, 1840's" Capt. John Eddington to Niel Black, 11/6/1847. And cf. "Outward Letters, 1850's", Niel Black to T.S. Gladstone, 29/3/1859; and H. of C. Sel. C'tee on Tptn., Report with Minutes of Evidence, 1837, pp.39-41. (Jas. Mudie, gentleman settler in the Hunter River district from 1822 to 1836, says that ex-convict wives, "with few exceptions", behaved like Mrs. Johnston.)

(153) supra, and cf. my article, "Collectivist Notions of a Nomad Tribe", Historical Studies, May, 1955.

(154) cf. R.M. Crawford, Australia, Lond: 1952, pp.152-153.

close psychic companionship which men seek in a wife.(155) Perhaps, as the habit of freedom and independence increased his self-respect, the typical bushman, blessedly ignorant of psychological theory, appeased this spiritual hunger by a sublimated homosexual relationship with a mate, or a number of mates, of his own sex. And probably, for the majority of men, the quite unconscious sublimation would not have occurred if there had been no gins and no Mrs. Johnstons.

On the conscious level bushmen naturally denied this 'soft' side of their nature by protesting, perhaps too much, their masculinity.(156) Describing an encampment of bullock-drivers at a waterhole, Mundy writes of the:

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(155) This relative absence of romantic sexual love is still reflected in Australian literature. cf. Kylie Tennant, "Men without a Love Life", (Review article, Sydney Morning Herald, 9/7/1955.)

(156) Furphy and Lawson, the two greatest Australian writers, both had a profound intuitive understanding of this ambivalence in the bushman's soul. The work of both men derives much of its power from the contrast between the uncompromising and taciturn masculine hardness on the surface and the unavowed, almost feminine love beneath it. But in Lawson, the 'softness' is nearer the surface and at times teeters over into a sentimental bathos, embarrassing to the modern reader though not, perhaps, to his contemporaries. cf. e.g., two stories of children lost in the bush: 'Tom Collins', Such Is Life, Syd: (1948 edn.), pp. 233-249, and Henry Lawson, Prose Works of, 2 vols., Syd: 1935, Vol. II, pp.130-148.

> "strange, wild-looking, sunburnt race, strong, rough, and taciturn, they appear as though they had never lived in crowds, and had lost the desire and even the power to converse. So deeply embrowned were the faces, naked breasts, and arms of these men, and so shaggy the crops of hair and beard, that a stranger had to took twice to be certain they were not Aborigines."(157)

Another observer thought that the cedar-sawyers on the North Coast of New South Wales lived in a way "compared with which the life of the lumberers, or wood-cutters in Canada, is civilization itself."(158)

It may be doubted whether outback life was in fact any rougher in these obvious ways than life in other pioneering communities, but the almost complete absence of female influence certainly helped to make it rougher in another way. Almost every visitor to the interior was struck by the needless hardship and monotony which bushmen inflicted wilfully, it seemed to many, on themselves. Rough and ready male ways

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(157) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., pp.66-67.

(158) Clement Hodgkinson, Australia from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay; etc., Lond: 1845, pp.10-11.

of living and working, even of dressing,(159) and scorn for feminine fripperies and embellishments were carried to the extreme. Perhaps it was unconsciously felt that women are impressed by the latter, but since there were no women it was best to impress one's mates by an exaggeratedly spartan mode of life. In the early period these considerations affected not only the working hands but also the squatters. As one of them wrote:

> "[The squatter] becomes careless of his appearance and manners; nay, he becomes heedless even of those comforts of life which are within his reach. With hundreds of cattle, he has no butter, or cheese, and very often no milk! With a rich soil around him, he has no garden; not any vegetable or fruit to drive away the scurvy. With grain, he has no poultry; ... He certainly has good reasons for not making his station too attractive [the reference is to the insecurity of the squatters' tenure], but it cannot be denied that his

(159) cf. the dress and accoutrements of an Australian stockman with those of an American cowboy, though the latter's glorious appearance probably stemmed more from the Mexican influence than from the relatively greater number of women in the American West. The differences are amusingly brought out in Lawson's "A Word to Texas Jack", (Poetical Works, Syd: 1947, pp.376-380). Hood (Australia and the East etc., p.115) deplores the "total disregard of all appearance now in fashion among squatters".

Yet some bushmen in the early period, especially stockmen, did take pride in their appearance, the beribboned cabbage-tree hat and stockwhip being equivalents of the American 'ten-gallon hat' and revolver. Sam. Sidney, Gallops and Gossips etc., p.100, writes: "A young bushman, in his broad-leaved hat, with two yards of taffeta flying; his brown, intelligent face - hair, beard and mustachios neatly trimmed; blue or red woollen shirt, loose trousers, broad belt; seated like a centaur on his half-bred Arab, is perhaps, as picturesque a figure as you may see anywhere in a voyage round the world." Even so, the early Australian stockman was, in appearance, but a drab and colourless predecessor of the later American cowboy.

> life is often much more cheerless and comfortless than it need be."(160)

The wife of a squatter who accompanied her husband to the newly opened Western District of Victoria in January, 1839, wrote that after a few weeks in the country she:

> "began to be a little astonished at the dirty and uncomfortable way in which the settlers lived. They seemed quite at the mercy of their hutkeepers. ... We had neither milk nor butter at any station we were at; nothing but mutton, tea and damper, three times a day. Every meal was alike from one week to another, and from year's end to year's end. I was so sick of it, I could scarcely eat anything."(161)

If this was the squatters' mode of life that of their employees can best be imagined. 'Harris' records that shepherds often reduced the number of fleas in their bark huts by driving the sheep into them for a period so that some of the vermin might be carried out by the flock.(162)

The absence of women also helped to establish firmly the old bush tradition of 'work and burst'. Like so many more outback customs, this was originally no more than a

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(160) John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures etc., Vol. II, pp.272-273; and for a description of the same phenomenon in Western Australia at the same period, see E.W. Landor, The Bushman: or etc., p.244 et passim.

(161) "A Lady" [Mrs. Kirkland], Life in the Bush, N.D. [Edinburgh: 1845], p.6. The authoress records a striking exception to the general squalor - Mr. Anderson's hut, kept by an old woman hut-keeper, was "one of the most neatly-kept I ever saw." (p.7) And cf. G.H. Haydon, Five Years' Experience in Australia Felix etc., Lond: 1846, pp.122-123.

(162) Settlers and Convicts, p.127.

continuance of the convicts' habit of submerging their troubles, whenever opportunity offered, beneath a sea of raw rum. The appalling monotony and loneliness of up-country life would alone have been enough to encourage the bushmen on holiday to engage in a 'spree'. The fact that he usually had no wife or children dependent on his earnings made it easier still for him to spend them in the nearest grog shanty or in the inns of a country township, or best of all in "the big smoke",(163) where prostitutes "swarmed" in the streets.(164) And the universal system of paying wages, at the end of a term of work, by cheque, made it much easier for the publican, who obligingly cashed the cheque, to plunder the man who had earned it.(165)

Moreover most bush workers seem to have felt that there was little point in saving money, as they believed that the land laws made it almost impossibly difficult for a poor man to become a landowner, even in a small way. The two most

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(163) This slang synonym for the city had already been taken over from the Aborigines in the 1840's. (See H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.6.)

(164) J. Pitts Johnson, Plain Truths Told by a Traveller Regarding Our Various Settlements in Australia and New Zealand etc., Lond: 1840, p.48 ff.; and cf. [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.28.

(165) E. Shann, Economic History of Australia, pp.114-115.

acute contemporary observers of up-country life, Sidney and 'Harris', shared the popular belief, and both thought that bad land legislation was the principal cause (166) of the already proverbial (167) thriftlessness of the pastoral proletariat. On the other hand most wealthy squatters agreed with Niel Black, who wrote of the pastoral employees:

> "With Three or Six Months Wages (the usual term) in their pockets they gird their cangaroo Skin Knapsacks upon their backs containing their whole stock on hand say a blanket, shirts and stockings. Thus equipt they journey often 150 miles to the next Grog Shop where they have 'a bright flare up' for a few days. ... Yet if they did not go regularly to the Grog Shop we should have no labour at all; they would save and have properties of their own."(168)

Shann concurred with this view, writing that most of the pastoral employees were "expirees too weak in initiative [to work for] wages till they could buy 'blocks'." (169) It is difficult to see why. Before the Gold Rush, as he correctly states, (170) shepherds and hut-keepers were rarely paid more than £25 per annum plus rations. More highly skilled bush workers such as shearers and stockmen, were of course paid somewhat more, but like the shepherds they too had to pay, often at inflated prices, for "all clothing and extras" issued from the squatter's store. (171) Even the most highly paid and

(166) [J. Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., pp.12, 21, 40 ff.; 'Harris', Settlers and Convicts, pp.224-226.
(167) [Sidney], op. cit., p.12; 'Harris', op. cit., p.86.
(168) Journal (MS, P.L.V.), 23/3/1840
(169) E. Shann, Economic History of Australia, p.114.
(170) loc. cit.
(171) loc cit., and cf. [Sidney], op. cit., p.19.

virtuously abstemious worker could hardly have had more than £25 cash left to show for his year's work. From 1831, when land was normally sold in minimum 640 acre lots at a minimum price of 5 s. per acre, (172) the shepherd who saved every

(172) Largely as a result of agitation by Wakefield and his 'systematic colonisers', the 'system' of making free grants of land was finally abolished in 1831, when the squatting rush was just getting under way. From that year, Crown lands in New South Wales and Port Phillip were auctioned at a minimum price of 5/ per acre, but in 1839 the minimum price was raised to 12/, and in 1842 to £1. From 1832 onwards until 1851, land was generally sold only in lots of 640 acres, although the Government proclamation of July 1st 1831 provided that "smaller lots than 640 acres may, under particular circumstances, be purchased, on making application to the Governor in writing, with full explanations of the reasons for which the parties wish to purchase a smaller quantity." The 1842 regulations, theoretically, reverse this ruling, providing that land would not normally be sold in lots of more than 640 acres; but in practice, under both the 1831 and 1842 regulations, land seems to have been sold, usually, only in blocks of one square mile. In any case, the higher price after 1842 more than offset any possible gain to the small, would-be purchaser.

There is ample scope for much detailed work on the matter of sale in minimum square mile lots, and its effects. Although contemporary sources constantly invite attention to it, the question has been almost entirely ignored in later secondary works like those of Shann, Roberts, Fitzpatrick, and even Coghlan. The above note is based largely upon H.R.A., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pp.850-851; Sam. Sidney, Three Colonies of Australia, p.293; E.W. Landor, The Bushman: or etc., p.255; J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. II, Appendix pp.376-399; T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia etc., 4 vols., Oxford: 1918, Vol. I, Pt. II, Cap. V, and Pt. III, Cap. IV; S.H. Roberts, History of Australian Land Settlement (1788-1920), Melb: 1924, pp.94-109; and Brian Fitzpatrick, British Imperialism and Australia 1783-1833, Lond: 1939, p.320 ff.; and id., The British Empire in Australia etc., Melb: 1941, pp.144-147.

penny of his wages would have been able to buy (173) his own "block" after seven years, for most of which time he would presumably have required sufficient "initiative" to go naked. Perhaps another seven years' self-denial would have provided sufficient initial working capital for stock and implements. And from 1842 onwards, when the minimum price of land was raised to £1 per acre, the quantum of initiative would have been increased accordingly. Of course there were more ways of achieving a competence than by buying blocks of land. Wages were often paid, at least partly, in cattle and sheep; and a poor man who gathered enough stock might become a legitimate squatter if fortune favoured him. Nevertheless, the working men's view of their situation seems to have been at least as realistic as Professor Shann's.

Whatever the prime cause of outback drunkenness, there is no doubt that a traditional pattern of behaviour, so stereotyped that it can only be described as a ritual, grew

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(173) Within the boundaries of location, small lots of land could be leased for both agricultural and grazing purposes; but even there the law was shaped and manipulated by the landed magnates, so as to increase the difficulties inherent in the small farmer's situation. (See K. Buckley, "Gipps and the Graziers of New South Wales, 1841-46", Historical Studies, May 1955, pp.396-412.)

up very early among up-country workmen.(174) Sidney's description of it is as apt as any, but more concise than most:

> "After starving for ten or twenty months on salt beef and damper, and tea without milk, often without sugar, the bushman goes down to Sydney to spend, like an ass, in a month's revelry, money he has worked for like a horse, or say a bullock. The people of Sydney who furnish information for Parliamentary petitions, debates, and Acts of Parliament, know no more about our interests, pursuits, wants, and wishes, than the people of London."(175)

Sidney here points also to the isolation, (176) both physical and spiritual, which was noted in Chapter II as one of of the essential characteristics of ballad communities. Perhaps he exaggerates somewhat, but the mere physical difficulties of communication with the capital were alone sufficient to induce in outback workers an awareness of themselves as a distinct community.(177)

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(174) cf. e.g. Settlers and Convicts, pp.86-87; C. Hodgkinson, Australia from Port Macquarie etc., pp.10-11; G.C.Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.96; C. Griffith, Present State and Prospects etc., p.79; H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.29 ff.; James Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit etc., p.310. N. Bartley, Australian Pioneers etc., p.45; James Butchart, MS Letter, 10/12/1843, (P.L.V.); John Graham (ed.), Laurence Struilby or etc., p.65; G.H. Haydon, Five Years' Experience etc., pp.162-163.

(175) Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.12.

(176) cf. [David L. Waugh], Three Years' Practical Experience etc., p.33. After describing pastoral life in a letter to relatives in Scotland, the author concludes: "The people of Sydney know no more about all this than you do. ..." And Copy of a Letter from Robert Dawson to George Arnott Esq., Moneroo, Dec. 10, 1842, (Broadsheet, N.L.)

(177) J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations etc., pp.23-24.

For working men, before the Gold Rush, the normal means of travelling was by foot or by bullock dray.(178) Either was about as slow and wearisome as the other. Hood tried to bring the facts home to English readers when he wrote:

> "My Australian son's dray has just started from this place [Sydney] with his stores for one year; and provided none of the bullocks are lost, and no mishap befalls it it will reach Connobolas near [Orange] in twenty days. This may appear a long time for goods of such a nature to be on the road, but it is a short sprace indeed, compared with that occupied by some of my acquaintances in carrying home their stores. One, in particular, has just sent his purchases off by sea to Maitland, where his drays are to meet them, and after a journey of at least two months, under the most favourable circumstances, he hopes to arrive with them in the county of New England. Others whom I am acquainted with pass three months and upwards in conveying stock and stores to their stations in the new country to the southward, called Corner Inlet."(179)

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(178) Modern illustrations usually depict bullock drays as four-wheeled vehicles similar to American covered wagons. Prior to the Gold Rush they were nearly always heavily-built, two-wheeled drays, capable of carrying loads of up to two or three tons. In 1850 even the Royal Mail 'coach' to Melbourne, from Yass onwards, was a two-wheeled cart. Until American gold-seekers proved the contrary it was believed that no four-wheeled vehicles could possibly negotiate up-country tracks. (See Sidney, Voice from the Far Interior, p.37; Gerstaecke Narrative of a Journey, etc., Vol. II, p.300 ff.; Joyce (ed. G.F. James), A Homestead History, p.110; Wm. Howitt, Land, Labour, and Gold etc., Vol. I, p.88; and contemporary sketches by J.W. Lewin, illustrating Macquarie's progress over the Blue Mountains in 1815 (P.L.V.), and by Govett (Nan Kivell Collection, 775, No.11, N.L.). F. Lancelott, Australia As It Is etc. (1852), Vol. II, pp.91-93, writes that "there are both two and four-wheeled drays" but in the context it seems likely that he is referring to Melbourne and its immediate neighbourhood.

(179) Australia and the East etc., pp.290-291.

Journeys of this order were, in important respects, much more like long ocean voyages under sail than like travelling at home in Britain.(180) And as we have seen(181) the pastoral workers were constantly travelling, if not from the bush to Sydney and back again, then from one station to another in search of more congenial work, or merely for a change of scene.(182) This constant moving about, itself largely a result of the extreme isolation of bush life, helped in the psychological conquest of that isolation. Men came to know and to trust each other much more fully than city dwellers do and, in reaction to the dividing distances, they developed a strong sense of community. Griffith records that he knew of several instances of loans of two or three pounds being made to old hands, but never of a case in which the money was not repaid.(183)

Contemporaries noted also that bush workers had a passion for reading and versifying.(184) Next to a glass of rum, the

(180) Contemporaries were often struck by the strong resemblance between the life of bushmen and that of seamen, and indeed between the lonely monotony of the bush and that of the ocean. e.g. [John Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior, etc., p.11; H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.135; and R. Henty, Australian or My Early Life, p.156.

(181) pp.241-242 supra.

(182) Chas. Griffith, Present State and Prospects etc., p.78.

(183) ibid.,p.80.

(184) R. Howitt, Impressions of Australia Felix, etc., pp.254-257; and G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.225.

loan of a book was the greatest favour one could bestow on a bushman.(185) In view of the complete absence of ready made forms of amusement, this is scarcely surprising. Yet figures drawn from the 1851 census(186) show that the illiteracy rate in the squatting districts was much higher than that in the environs of the capital, though slightly lower than that in the nineteen counties:

Table XI

Literacy in 1851

	Illiterate	Literate	% of Illiterate
Cumberland	24,773	56,341	30.5
Nineteen Remaining Counties	29,525	48,907	37.6
Squatting Districts	10,212	17,485	36.9

However, one does not have to be able to read to enjoy reading. At a certain out-station one day in the early 'fortie a man arrived "with a joyful countenance" and a copy of Nicholas Nickleby. In the hut that night another man began reading to a company consisting mainly of old hands who, however, "advised that the reading should be stopped, until the men of two or three stations near us, had been invited"

(185) [J. Sidney] A Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.23.

(186) Literate means "Able to Read and Write", not merely "Able to Read". The 1841 and previous censuses did not record literacy figures.

to share in the feast. By the light of "a piece of twisted rag stuck into a pint tin of melted fat" the book was read on successive nights to a full hut, and if the reader "could have read till daylight" the audience would not have tired. (187)

More often, because of the absence of either books or readers, the nights must have been passed in singing and story-telling. 'Harris' describes several such evenings in bush huts, and it is interesting to notice that the stories told were usually not nostalgic reminiscences of the old life i Britain but "some tale of the olden time, when but few white men were in the colony", or stories of bushrangers, new runs, or the feats of working bullocks. (188) Thus these men, without consciously planning to do so, acclimatised themselves in the new land.

It is not surprising that this remote and vagabond existence should have given rise to a distinctive school of balladry, just as did the life of deep-water sailormen a hundred years and more ago. It was natural for shearers on

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(187) James Demarr, Adventures in Australia Fifty Years Ago etc., p.119.

(188) The Emigrant Family or etc., see p.236 supra; and Settlers and Convicts, pp.197-198. On this occasion 'Harris' noted, "Next came out the cards, for there is hardly a station where these are not to be found; some men carry a pack in their pocket wherever they go, and amuse themselves with them wherever they can." And ibid., pp.22-23.

the spree in a grog shanty at the end of the season, (189) for stockmen watching the cattle at night, or for bullock-drivers met by chance at a favourite camping place, to improve the occasion by singing, and sometimes making, ballads. Even the solitary shepherd was accustomed to relieve the monotony of his existence by playing tunes to himself. Mundy wrote that he sat -

> "all day 'sub tegmine gum-tree', playing on the Jew's harp or accordion; or sleeps supine, while his dog does his master's duty with one eye open. The importation and sale of the above instruments - substitutes for the ancient shepherd's reed - are immense; five hundred accordions and fifty gross of the harps of Judah are considered small investments by one vessel. A shepherd has been known to walk two hundred miles from a distant station of the interior, to purchase one of them at the nearest township."(190)

Among bushmen in the early days, stockmen and bullock-drivers enjoyed a certain pre-eminence, not only as the most highly skilled workers,(191) but as composers and singers of ballads.(192) One who had often met bullock-drivers on the

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(189) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or Etc., p.161: The Vice-regal party spent the night at the Molong Hotel, the bar of which was filled by "a dozen regular bush-boys - great hulking fellows" spending their cheques. These "boisterous, half-drunken clowns continued to dance together the greater part of the night, apparently as much inspired by the cracked violin, the 'real Old Tom' and the rough-muzzled partner, redolent of rum and 'nigger-head'" as the "dandy with his ... iced Roman Punch, and the belle of the season as his associate in the valtz. Uncouth as they appeared, these good fellows were civil in their way ..." cf. pp.264-265 supra.

(190) op. cit., pp.153-154.

(191) See pp.211-212 supra.

(192) See 'Harris', The Emigrant Family etc., quoted p.236 supra, and cf. Charles Macalister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South, Goulburn: 1907, pp. 35, 139.

road wrote:

"This bullock-driving cannot be a very pleasant life, although there is a certain smack of romance in camping out at night with a mob of oxen bellowing around, and the companion drivers on watch attending to the fires - where the damper is cooking and the iron kettle boiling for to-morrow's breakfast - or only leaving their warm occupation for the warmer one of driving in 'strays', with song and shout loud enough to make the deserters scamper. These bullock-songs are uncouth snatches generally improvised by the drivers themselves, but not destitute of a wild runic poetry, as the following verses from one of them will show:-

"Olle! Heigh ho!
Blow your horns, blow,
Blow the Southern Cross down if you will;
But on you must go,
Where the fresh gullies flow,
And the thirsty crane wets his red bill.

Olle! Heigh-ho!
Drink, boys, as we go,
Pass the brandy - let each take his fill:
On 'Strawberry' on,
Run, 'Blossom', come run,
There is light enough left for us still.

Olle! Heigh-ho!
'Blossom', gee-woh,
There is water spread out for us here,
Fill horns while you may,
There is no one to pay,
But Mine Host up above, for such cheer!"(193)

One feels unhappily certain that this song was composed by an extraordinarily genteel bullock-driver, or that it has been edited out of recognition by the writer who recorded

(193) Frank Fowler, Southern Lights and Shadows etc., p.107 ff.

it.(194) However, there is another surviving bullock-drivers' song which is unquestionably genuine.

The Old Bullock Dray like most true folk-ballads, has been added to and changed by many singers, so that it contains references to John Robertson, promoter of the Free Selection Acts, and to other post-Gold Rush events: but there is little doubt that the body of the song belongs to the earlier period. Macalister, who drove bullock-teams on the Great South Road in the 1840's, quotes a version of the chorus of: "that early Australian song, The Old Bullock Dray, as sung in the formative years:

> "So it's roll up your blankets, and let us make a push,
> I'll take you up the country, and show you round the bush;
> I'll take you round the stations and learn you how to ride,
> And I'll show you how to muster when we cross th' Great Divide."(195)

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(194) The latter alternative is possibly the more likely. Fowler goes on to say that he was particularly struck by the sentiment of the last line which he considered not really objectionable - "Strange that the boisterous fellow who, in these Australian solitudes, first thundered out the song after his loitering cattle, should have thought of Mine Host at all." This sentiment, if not its expression, at least rings true. In 1935 I was one of a party of four, driving an old truck through the Musgrave Ranges in the extreme north of S.A., when we came to lonely station one evening. One of my companions gushed considerably over the beauty of the mountain sky-line, silhouetted against the sunset. An elderly stockman answered drily, "Yes. The Old Bloke made a good job of them up this way." The same egalitarian and familiar, yet not essentially sacreligious, attitude to the Deity is embodied in the popular Australian invocation during a fall of rain - "Send 'er down, Hughie!"

(195) Charles Macalister, Old Pioneering Days etc., p.35.

This chorus differs from later versions precisely in the way that one would expect. It shows with unusual directness the pride of the old hands in their newly acquired mastery of the outback environment, and what one might call the ballad's didactic function of assisting acclimatisation. Moreover, in all versions, the ballad tells of a bullock-driver calling at the Female Immigrants' Depot at Parramatta to choose a wife to return up-country with him. The female immigrants were housed in the old Female Convicts' 'Factory'; and it had been very common for bushmen to select a wife from among the prisoners at this institution. O'Connell gives a very realistic and amusing picture of what happened on such occasions, and says that after the drunken up-country wedding party, the bride usually deserted her husband for the lights of Sydney Town.(196) But female immigrants, who felt drawn to the streets of Sydney, had no need to enter holy matrimony as a short cut thither; and those who sincerely wanted a husband would not usually have been desperate enough to accept an unknown bullock-driver from the perilous interior - as indeed the song itself makes sufficiently plain:

(196) James F. O'Connell, Residence of Eleven Years, etc., pp.49-55. And cf., f.n., (59) supra.

"Oh! the shearing is all over, and the wool is coming down,
And I mean to get a wife, boys, when I go up to town.
Everything that has two legs represents itself in view,
From the little paddy-melon(197) to the bucking kangaroo.

Chorus:

So it's roll up your blankets, and let's make a push;
I'll take you up the country and show you the bush.
I'll be bound you won't get such a chance another day,
So come and take possession of my old bullock dray.

Now I've saved up a good cheque, I mean to buy a team,
And when I get a wife, boys, I'll be all serene.
For, calling at the depot, they say there's no delay
To get an off-sider(198) for the old bullock-dray.

Oh! we'll live like fighting cocks; for good living
I'm your man.
We'll have leather jacks, johnny cakes, and fritters in
the pan;
Or, if you'd like some fish, I'll catch you some soon,
For we'll bob for barramundies round the banks of a lagoon

Oh! yes, of beef and damper I take care we have enough,
And we'll boil in the bucket such a whopper of a duff,
And our friends will dance to the honour of the day,
To the music of the bells around the old bullock dray.

Oh! we'll have plenty girls, we must mind that.
There'll be flash little Maggie, and buckjumping Pat,
There'll be Stringybark Joe, and Green-hide Mike(199)
Yes, my Colonials, just as many as you like.

Now we'll stop all immigration, we won't need it any more;
We'll be having young natives, twins by the score.
And I wonder what the devil Jack Robertson would say(200)
If he saw us promenading round the old bullock dray.

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(197) A small marsupial of the kangaroo family, once very common. The word is a corruption of Aboriginal "Padimal

(198) A bullock-driver's mate or assistant was known as his 'off sider', from the practice of his walking of the 'off side' of the team.

(199) These two lines, in the version collected by Dr. Percy Jones, read:
"There'll be Buck-jumping Maggie and Leather-Belly Pat
There'll be Stringy-Bark Peggy and Green-Eyed Mike."

(200) John Robertson, like W.M. Hughes at a later period, was famous in the 1860's for advocating that Australians should concentrate on increasing the birth-rate, as the primary means of populating the country adequately.

Oh! it's time I had an answer if there's one to be had,
I wouldn't treat that steer in the body(201) half as bad;
But he takes as much notice of me, upon my soul,
As that old blue stag off-side in the pole.(202)

Oh! to tell a lot of lies, you know, it is a sin,
But I'll go up country and marry a black gin.
Oh! 'Baal gammon white feller,' this is what she'll say,
'Budgery you and your old bullock dray'."(203)

In one respect this early, indigenous bush song is a-typical. Very few Australian folk-songs mention women at all. Yet the mere fact that women were scarce in the interior hardly explains the omission. Women were equally scarce, at the same period, in the fo'c's'les of deep-water sailing-ships, but the sea shanties yearned over "ladies of Spain" and other parts, frequently and sentimentally enough. The Old Bullock Dray gives some hint of why the subject was almost taboo. There is an undertone of irony in the picture of the bushman casually picking up a wife in Sydney. To judge from their nicknames all the bridesmaids will be Aboriginal gins, and the bride is, perforce, to be the groom's off-sider in his daily work of bullock-driving. Moreover, the penultimate stanza makes it clear that the lady is not at all interested

(201) 'In the body' or middle part of the bullock-team.

(202) Most bullock-drays had a single pole instead of shafts. The pair of bullocks yoked one on each side of the pole, and known as "polers", were in a good position for idlin inconspicuously, at the expense of the rest of the team. Hence, presumably, the still current Australian slang expressions, poler, poling, etc.

(203) This version from A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs (last edn.), pp.6-9.

in the proffered billet. And the last stanza admits, with typical sardonic realism, that a black gin is the only kind of wife who would be likely, either to accept the position, or to fill it satisfactorily.(204) Translation of the last two lines from old Australian pidgin to modern Australian slang gives the gin's sentiments as:

> "'No kidding, white feller?' This is what she'll say,
> 'Good on you, and your old bullock dray.'"

Barbarous and crude as he was in many respects, it would seem that the average bushman felt a creditable shame over his intercourse with Aboriginal women. To judge from present day practice in the Northern Territory(205) it is not improbable

(204) There were of course some married bullock-drivers, whose wives did accompany them on their dry-land voyages. See, e.g., G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.67.

(205) Bill Harney, well-known bushman and writer of Darwin, N.T was most reluctant to send me texts of such songs. When he did send two fragments his letter (24/3/53) read in part: "As with most songs in this land they are about th dark girls. I have cut out the real rough parts." Thus expurgated, the chorus and one stanza of one of these songs, "written by Woodcroft of the Tennant Creek Telegraph Station many years ago," runs as follows:

> "Now the Australian nigger is a lazy bugger,
> He sits in the shade all day,
> He won't hunt tucker, his wife you'll want her,
> And give your tucker away.
> He sits in the shade that his lubra made
> Far better than the white fellow can,
> You might think you're clever, but by hell you'l never
> Get the better of her Benjamin.
>
> Chorus: But the bushman's gin is a very fine thing,
> A very fine thing to have
> Gleaming hair and pearly teeth,
> Ways that would shock an Irish Priest,
> Ways that are always naive,
> Rollicking, rolling, rollicking, rolling,
> Real Australian maid."

("Benjamin" is bush slang for an Aboriginal husband. See Mrs. Campbell Praed, My Australian Girlhood etc., Lond: 1902, p.89.) cf. W.E. Harney, North of 23° Ramblings in Northern Australia, Syd: n.d. [1949] p.81.

that bawdy songs were made and sung about this side of bush life, but, for obvious reasons, all that has survived in written form are occasional hints such as the above.

In other respects The Old Bullock Dray is typical of the pastoral workers' ballads, the great majority of which date from the later, post-Gold Rush period. Implicit in it are the basic elements of that outlook which later came to be thought of as 'typically Australian' - a comradely independence based on group solidarity and relative economic plenty, a rough and ready capacity for 'stringy-bark and green- hide' improvisation, a light-hearted intolerance of respectable or conventional manners, a reckless improvidence, and a conviction that the working bushman was the 'true Australian', whose privilege it was to despise 'new chums' and city folk. We have seen that this ethos sprang mainly from convict, working-class, Irish and native-born Australian sources; but that these streams coalesced "beyond the Great Divide" where remoteness and the peculiar geographic, economic and social condition transmuted them into something new which yet included them all. In the next chapter we shall seek to estimate the influence of the Gold Rush on the outlook of 'the nomad tribe.'

Chapter VI

THE GOLD RUSH

"With my swag all on my shoulder, black billy in my hand,
I travelled the bush of Australia like a true-born native man."

Between 1850 and 1860 the population of all Australia nearly trebled, growing from 405,356 to 1,145,585.(1) It goes without saying that such a vast influx of immigrants had very important effects on Australian life; yet in some ways the influence of the newcomers has been both exaggerated and misunderstood. Shann speaks of the new arrivals "swamping the old colonists",(2) and Portus writes that "the most significant results of the gold discoveries are to be found ... in the change in the quality of the population."(3) Such statements are perhaps broadly true, but in conjunction with what has been said above, the following tables suggest that they apply justly to Victoria rather than to New South Wales

(1) Commonwealth Year Book 1953, estimates.
(2) E.G. Shann, An Economic History of Australia, 1948 ed., Melb., p.167.
(3) Cambridge History of the British Empire, Camb: 1933, Vol. VII, Cap. IX, p.270.
Recently M. Hartwell and I.D. McNaughton have both dissented from this view of the Gold Rush's revolutionary effects. (See Australia: A Social and Political History, Syd: 1955, pp.46-49, 98-99.) McNaughton writes: "With the perspective of a century it can be seen that the diggers' era left a fainter impress on Australian life than the first ten years of the squatting age."

or Australia generally, to city rather than to country-dwellers, and to political and economic rather than to social life:

Table XII (4)

(Increase of Total Population in Mainland Eastern Australia

	1841	1851	% Increase	1861	% Increase
N.S.W.	116,988	187,243	60	380,919 (350,860)	103 (87)
Vic.	11,738	87,345	645	540,322	520

Table XIII

(Increase of Native Born Population)

	1841	% of Total	1851	% of Total	1861	% of Total
N.S.W.	28,657	24.5	81,391	43.5	174,808 (164,992)	45.9 (47.0)
Vic.	792	6.7	20,470	23.4	157,911	29.2

(4) In all these tables the figures are taken from the official Census Returns of the Colonies of New South Wales (1841, 1851, and 1861), Victoria (1851 and 1861), and Queensland (1861). The 1841 figures omit the 2130 persons on board Colonial vessels at sea, of whom the Census recorded nothing but their existence. The figures shown for 1841 under "Victoria" are of course those for the then Port Phillip District of N.S.W. For the sake of formal statistical consistency the N.S.W. figures for 1861 include those for the newly separated colony of of Queensland; but the 1861 figures for N.S.W. proper are placed for comparison in brackets. It should, of course, be remembered that the average age of the native-born people was lower than that of the population as a whole; but on the other hand that of the convict-emancipist group was higher.

(5)

Table XIV

(Group Comprising Native-Born, Convict and Emancipist Population)

	1841	% of Total	1851	% of Total	1861	% of Total
N.S.W.	73,367	62.7	110,713	59.1	194,000 (183,000)	50.9 (52.1)
Vic.	2,456	20.9	20,470+	?	157,911+	?

(5) The 1861 Census in N.S.W. ceased to distinguish emancipists from other persons born in Great Britain. In Table XIV therefore the figure for N.S.W. in 1861 is an estimate (to the nearest 1000), calculated on the assumption that between 1851 and 1861 the convict-emancipist population decreased at the same rate as it had done in the preceding decade, during which there had also been virtually no transportation of felons to the colony. In fact, it seems likely that the rate of decrease in the convict-emancipist population would have been greater in the second decade. Victorian censuses never distinguished emancipists from other persons born in Great Britain, and as the absolute number of these people in Port Phillip in 1841 was so small, it seemed futile to attempt estimates of their numbers in that colony in 1851 and 1861. Nevertheless, contemporary records make it clear that a great many ex-convicts from Van Diemen's Land and quite a number from N.S.W., emigrated to Victoria during the period. For instance, J.C. Byrne, (Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847, 2 vols., Lond: 1848, Vol. I, pp.325-326), estimates that in two years, 1845 and 1846, about 4,000 ex-convicts emigrated from Van Diemen's Land to Port Phillip. And William Howitt, (Land, Labour, and Gold: or Two Years in Victoria, etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1855, Vol. II, p.8), claims Van Diemen's Land "official sources" for his statement that 9,023 ex-convicts emigrated to Victoria in 18 months of 1852 and 1853.

From Table XII it is clear that although the rate of increase in the population rose in the mother colony during the Gold Rush decade, it was, when compared with the very high 'normal' rate of the previous ten years, by no means to be likened to a flood "swamping" the already firmly rooted social mores. In Victoria, according to the official figures, the rate of increase in the population actually fell during the golden decade, but this is of little significance beside the tremendous absolute increase in numbers. In round figures it may be said that while the population of New South Wales doubled, that of Victoria increased six times. From Tables XII and XIII, however, it can be seen that the rate of increase of the native-born population, even in Victoria, was significantly higher than that of the population as a whole; while Table XIV shows that this former rate was higher still, if to the native-born be added the ex-convict population. If we consider these two categories of people as a single group bearing the leaven of 'Australianism', it is clear that they always comprised more than half the population of the mother colony, for at the next census in 1871 the 308,673 native-born alone made up 61.2% of the people.(6) By the same year 49.0% of Victorians had been born in Australia.(7)

(6) Journal of N.S.W. Leg. Council 1872, p.1296, Census Returns.

(7) Vic. Parliamentary Papers 1872, Vol. II, Census Returns.

When Portus writes:

> "Before the Gold era, Australia was regarded in the main as a kind of outlandish suburb of Britain at best; at worst as a place of exile for those Britons who had to live there. After that time there is apparent in Australia the consciousness of a distinct national identity."(8)

he seems, in the context, to be suggesting that an important effect of the Gold Rush was to accelerate, if not to cause, the growth of a distinctively Australian national feeling. It is broadly true that Britons regarded Australia in the way he describes before the Gold discoveries, but surely most of them continued to regard Australia in much the same light for long afterwards. If his words are meant to apply to Australian attitudes, they seem to obscure rather than to clarify the picture. We have seen above that Australian working people, at least, developed a distinctive national feeling before 1851. The great flood of new immigrants hastened the granting of responsible government and democratic institutions,(9) but there is prima facie cause to

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(8) Cambridge History of the British Empire, Cap. IX, pp.270-272. And, for a more qualified statement of this view, cf. Charles S. Blackton, "The Dawn of Australian National Feeling," Pacific Historical Review, Vol.XXIV No.2, May 1955.

(9) Pakington to Fitzroy, 15/12/1852, V. and P. Leg. Council of N.S.W. 1853, Vol. I (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900, pp.325-326.) And cf. R. Gollan, Radical and Socialist Ideas in Eastern Australia 1851-1910, Ph. D. thesis, Lond: 1950.

think that it actually delayed the growth of national awareness. Radical politicians, like Higinbotham in Victoria, often appealed to nationalist sentiment, but this emerging political nationalism,(10) like that of Wentworth or J.D.Lang in the earlier period,(11) differed in important ways from the deeply-felt but largely un-intellectualised social attitudes of the lower orders. Nevertheless, the leaven (or virus) of pre-Gold Rush 'Australianism' was not "swamped", but rather temporarily and superficially overlaid. It went on working, up-country more than in the cities, to emerge stronger than ever in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when it tended to coalesce with, and colour deeply, middle class political and literary nationalism. More than any other single group in the community its carriers were the semi-nomadic pastoral workers. In the broad context of the population changes outlined above, what was the effect of the gold discoveries on these people?

First, it can be said with certainty that they influenced the newcomers a great deal more than they were influenced by them. That this should be so was inherent in the

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(10) See, e.g. Higinbotham's speech and resolutions on a proposed unofficial London conference on colonial affairs in 1869 (E.E. Morris, A Memoir of George Higinbotham etc., Lond: 1895, pp.158-189); and cf. J.A. La Nauze, Political Economy in Australia: Historical Studies, Melb: 1949, pp.119, 122-123.

(11) See pp.184-186, supra.

situation. Though the total number of new immigrants was, in Victoria, so overwhelming, their arrival was spread over ten years and each gold-seeker, on landing, found himself a single individual, or one of a small party, in a strange land inhabited by people many of whose ways of acting and thinking were new to him. In such circumstances there are two normal human reactions, not mutually exclusive. One is to seek shelter in a community grouping of one's compatriots:[12] the other is to merge oneself among the general body of citizens by learning their strange ways as quickly as possible. In Australia during the Gold Rush the Chinese were the only foreigners whose numbers made the first course really feasible, just as the great differences between their culture and that of the colonists made it almost inevitable. For British immigrants, the second course was natural and easy. There was no language barrier, and the differences in outlook between the newcomers and the old colonists were, after all, relatively slight. Yet just because of these facts, the distinction between a new chum and an old hand was usually painfully clear.

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(12) It is well-known that newly arrived Italian or Jewish immigrants to America tend to remain for some years, or even generations, among the semi-autonomous communities of their compatriots in New York.

There is no evidence that the old colonists, excepting perhaps a tiny minority of the more cultivated, were ever embarrassed by this difference. On the contrary, they considered themselves ineffably superior to the newcomers, and the more uncultivated they were, the more sure they felt of their moral ascendancy. W. Craig records an amusing story of an old hand at the diggings who was robbed by a newly arrived Scotsman - a

> "'chuckle-headed, porridge-eating, lime-juicing son of a sea-cook' (as he fumingly designated McInnes) ... If he had been thus tricked by an 'old hand' he would not have grieved so much over it. As he confessed later on, McInnes's apparent simplicity had, as in our case, completely deceived him. He considered that a reflection had been cast on his discernment and 'professional' skill, and he took the affair much more to heart than did the rightful owners of the property."(13)

Generally speaking (14) this 'moral' ascendancy seems to have been taken for granted by the immigrants who, indeed, strengthened it by paying to the colonists the supreme compliment of imitation. As one level-headed observer wrote:

> "It was and is a constant source of ambition among 'new chums', especially the younger ones, to be taken for 'old hands' in the colony, and they endeavour to gain this point by all manner of expedients, by encouraging the growth of their beards and moustaches to a prodigious

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(13) W. Craig, My Adventures on the Australian Goldfields, Lond: 1903, pp.81-82.

(14) Exceptions were usually cultivated middle class people, old enough to be set in their ways, like William Howitt, author of Land, Labour, and Gold; etc.

length, as well as by affecting a colonial style of dress, and wearing dirty, battered cabbage-tree hats; but their efforts to appear 'colonial' are not always so harmless, and, as swearing is an unusually common habit among the colonists, new arrivals often endeavour, and most successfully too, to become proficient in this easily acquired art, and soon add the stock of oaths peculiar to the colony (and very peculiar some of them are) to the 'home' vocabulary. But with all these attempts, it is very seldom indeed that they can impose upon a colonist of even a few years' standing. The old-country greenness is sure to sprout out somewhere; perhaps, though a man's dress may be quite a la bush in every other respect, a neatly-made, thin-soled pair of boots - such as no old colonist would dream of wearing in the bush- may betray the fact that their cockney owner has never been accustomed to rougher walking than London pavements, or macadamized roads..."(15)

The very fact that the search for gold drew the immigrants 'up the country'(16) for a long or short period, was itself

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(15) Rev. Arthur Polehampton, Kangaroo Land, Lond: 1862, pp.60-61; and cf. Memoirs of Robert Neil, quoted John A. Graham, Early Creswick - The First Century, Melb: 1942, p.183.

(16) William Westgarth, Victoria: Late Australia Felix, or etc., Edinburgh: 1853, p.vii: "It is well known that the mass of diggers ever consists of the more newly arrived colonists, who, from love of adventure, insatiate curiosity, or the want of other employment, proceed in many instances straight from the ship to the goldfields." And Mrs. Charles Clacy, A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53 etc., Lond: 1853, p.281: "The masculine portion of these emigrants, with few exceptions, started off at once to the diggings..."

a potent factor in 'colonising' them.[17] On the goldfields the first arrivals from overseas met a higher proportion of old hands than they would have done in or near the capital cities, for it was inevitable that the congenitally vagabond and adventurous pastoral workers should have been among the first diggers to arrive at every new field.[18] By the time later immigrants came, their predecessors had already been strongly influenced by the indigenous outlook.

A diarist gives an interesting picture of the great prestige enjoyed by the old hands who had been on the fields from the beginning:

> "A curious meeting sometimes takes place around the Evening campfire. The new chum sits on the logs about the fire listening to the tales of crime and

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(17) Robert Caldwell, The Gold Era of Victoria etc., Lond: 1855 p.42, writes that in the early days of the gold fever "three years were required to make an old chum, who was expected in that time to cultivate a moustache, and to wear a dirty, cabbage-tree hat." This suggests that the rate of acclimatisation, or at least the wish for it, was more acute than in the earlier period when one of 'Harris's' characters spoke of immigrants beginning to become "like the rest of the people" in five or six years. (See p.192, supra.) And cf. H.S. Russell, The Genesis of Queensland etc., Syd: 1888, p.183: " the 'new chum', ... after his conventional seven years, was emancipated, which meant acclimatized, like the surrounding ironbark trees." The passage refers to the early 1840's.

(18) "A Clergyman", [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is: or etc., Lond: 1867, p.161: "... the majority of those who were first at the diggings - wonderfully successful old convicts...," and cf. C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did at the Australian Goldfields, Lond: 1853, p.11 et passim. (Read, who later became a Victorian Gold Fields Commissioner and Magistrate, was at the Turon (N.S.W.) field before the end of 1851.)

> adventure of some 'old hand' or convict. Some of these men have now great quantities of Gold and now that they are independent, boast of their former bad deeds. The greater the criminal the more he is respected amongst his own class. A murderer, stands first, then comes the housebreaker, and thence declines into the petty thief whom they denominate as tinpot men, frying pan men, cockatoos, etc..."(19)

Moreover the business of alluvial gold-digging itself evoked just those 'practical' qualities and skills which had for long been recognised as typically 'Australian'. On his way to the diggings in 1852 one digger

> "began to find out the difference between having servants to minister to my requirements, and having everything to do for myself; and I practically experienced the disadvantage, now I was entirely thrown upon my resources, of not having been educated to use my hands in a variety of ways ... I could not harness a horse, cook a beef-steak properly, nor make a damper; the latter a most important accomplishment in Australia, and more especially at a time when the price of bread at the diggings was six shillings a loaf."(20)

Like other new chums, this man quickly learnt from old colonists these and many other arts of bushmanship, such as how to light a fire in wet weather by stripping bark from that "side of a stringy-bark tree least exposed to the rain."(21) Obviously the prestige of the old colonial hands sprang from their mastery of these skills as well as from the less tangible aura of romance which surrounded them.(22)

(19) William Rayment, MS Diary 1852-1860. (P.L.V. Archives) This entry is not dated, but the preceding entry is headed "Melb. 19/10/52."

(20) A. Polehampton, Kangaroo Land, pp.52-53.

(21) ibid., pp.66-67.

(22) Donald McLeod, Goldfields Memoir, published in John A. Graham, Early Creswick, etc., p.221 ff.

Digging in the early days was also, like pastoral labour, essentially a nomadic occupation. As one observer wrote in 1863:

> "Gold-diggers are a very migratory class. If they hear of the discovery of a new gold-field, they will frequently leave their old diggings and rush to the new one, often to return deeply disappointed but without having learnt wisdom. Let a new 'rush' be proclaimed and they are off again. Gold-digging appears to be a never-satisfying employment with the mass of the people who frequent diggings. They will give up good opportunities for a mere chance at a distance."(23)

Mateship, and that curiously unconventional yet powerful collectivist morality noticed above, were two other important elements of the pastoral workers' ethos which were taken over by the diggers. It is true that life on the fields lacked the loneliness of station work, but on the other hand alluvial mining could be performed effectively only by teams of at least two or three men.(24) As company mining developed,

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(23) B.A. Heywood, A Vacation Tour to the Antipodes etc., Lond: 1863, p.64. See also A. Polehampton, Kangaroo Land, p.93; Alfred Joyce (ed. G.F. James), A Homestead History, Melb: 1942, p.194; A.F. Mollison, MS Letter to relative in England, dated 'Sandhurst 11/7/1859' and later in same letter, 'Castlemaine 13/7/1859' (P.L.V. Archives); C.R. Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did etc., pp.45-46 and 145; [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It is: etc., p.163; and cf. Rodman W. Paul, California Gold, Harvard: 1947, pp.84-85: "If the miners had one universal sin, it was their unwillingness to remain in one spot for a reasonable period of time. They were forever abandoning one district and hurrying off to another. ..."

(24) On some "wet" claims, for example, in the bed of diverted creeks, as many as ten to fourteen men were necessary to work effectively. (See William Howitt, Land, Labour, and Gold: etc., Vol. I, pp.177-178.)

diggers showed a very strong disinclination to work for wages, and sought instead to continue working claims in small, co-operative groups of half a dozen or more.[25] The customary arrangement by which one digger acted as tent-keeper and cook, while the other members of his band worked the claim, reminds one of the system of hut-keepers and shepherds at out-stations. The fact that members of these teams were universally known as 'mates', suggests the influence of the pre-existing tradition.[26] On the Californian fields, at the same time, the term used was 'partners', a word connoting a purely business relationship.

This group solidarity was strongly reinforced by the intensely unpopular practice of licence-hunting,[27] for which the Government was responsible. Parties of diggers might quarrel with each other over claim boundaries and other matters but, when a licence-hunt began, the cry of "Joe!"[28]

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(25) "Report of Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Gold Fields of Victoria etc., 29 March, 1855," Minutes of Evidence, pp. 1, 28-29, 51, 72 et passim. (V. and P., Leg. Coun. of Vic. 1854-55, Vol. II.)

(26) cf. Anon. [Mrs. J.S. Calvert, first native-born woman novelist], Cowanda; The Veteran's Grant: An Australian Story, Syd: 1859, p.73.

(27) See W. B. Withers, History of Ballarat etc., Ballarat: 1887, (2nd edn.), pp.74-75.

(28) "The diggers called the police 'the Joes', they being the tools of 'law and order' for Charles Joseph La Trobe." (Unpublished MS of Monty Miller, veteran of Eureka Stockade, quoted by Bill Wannan, The Australian: Yarns, Ballads, Legends and Traditions of the Australian People, Melb: 1954, p.211.)

re-echoed through the gullies as all made common cause against the police. In words that recall Griffiths' remarks about the loyalty of old hands to each other ten years earlier, the Goldfields Commission (appointed after the Eureka rising) reported that (29)

> "Evasion became a practised and skilful art among a considerable number among whom an esprit de corps was ever the strongest sense of honour ... diggers without licences ... were left quietly at work in the pits, while those who had complied with the law betook themselves to flight as if the guilty parties, with all the police at their heels."(30)

Of one such occasion an eye-witness wrote that

> "the orders of the officers could not be heard, from the loud and continuous roars of 'Joe! Joe! Joe!' - 'Damn the b----y Government! - the beaks, the traps, commissioners, and all - the robbers, the bushrangers,' and every other vile epithet that could be remembered, almost into their ears."(31)

In this particular hunt the diversionary tactics of the licence-holders were so masterly that the Commissioner finally had to move away "sullenly with his forces", without having caught a single victim. The chronicler of the incident, though a "respectable upholder of law and order" who approved

(29) See pp.231-232, supra.

(30) Report of Commission into the Gold Fields of Victoria etc. 29 March, 1855, p.xii. For the early appearance of the same technique of licence-evasion on the N.S.W. diggings, see F. Eldershaw, Australia As It Really Is, in Its Life, Scenery & Adventure: etc., Lond: 1854, pp.250-253; and John Mc.Guire, "Early Colonial Days: the Biography of a Reliable Old Native etc., written by W.H. Pinkstone after many interviews and fireside chats," Cootamundra Herald, 9/3/1907.
At the Ophir diggings in 1851 Mc.Guire says that when the police approached, "The signal was 'Yo Ho!' From man to man it would pass along the creek, at the rate of ten miles in five minutes." [This makes it seem possible that the Victorian cry of 'Joe, Joe!' may have originated as a pun on 'Yo Ho!']

(31) William Kelly, Life in Victoria or Victoria in 1853, and Victoria in 1858, etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1859, Vol. I, p.192.

of the licence fee at least in principle (32) was so infected by the universal demonstration of mateship that he was:

> "unable to repress an emotion of gratification at the result of the chase, or an impulse of hero-worship as I sought the sole actor in the successful diversion to offer my congratulations."(33)

The force of collective public opinion is demonstrated also by the fact that it, rather than state power, was responsible for maintaining order - of a sort - on the goldfields. (34) Almost all contemporary observers agreed that this was so, but perhaps the most striking, because unconscious, testimony is supplied by one who was himself engaged in administering 'official' law and order. When this Goldfields Commissioner went to arbitrate between two parties disputing possession of a claim, "a large crowd of men, numbering a thousand or more,

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(32) Wm. Kelly, Life in Victoria etc., pp.194-195.

(33) ibid., pp.193-194. Kelly's account of a licence-hunt is much more coherent and detailed, and not much less colourful, than that of Carboni Rafaello, The Eureka Stockade, etc., (ed. H.V. Evatt) Syd: 1942, p.14 ff.

(34) Contemporaries were so struck by the fact that they often exaggerated when drawing attention to it. Thus W. Westgarth, a respectable middle-class witness, went so far as to say that the gold-fields were orderly "not in consequence but in spite of official supervision." (Victoria: Late Australia Felix, or etc., p.243.)
F. Burchett wrote that there was "no Police protection to speak of and yet outrages in the diggins are unheard of." (MS. letter 2/7/1852, to his parents in England; P.L.V. Archives.)
E.H. Hargraves, the 'original' discoverer of gold, rashly claimed that people on the goldfields lived in "greater security than in the best regulated city in England." (Australia and Its Goldfields etc., Lond: 1855, p.200.)

immediately gathered together" to see justice done. The Commissioner heard evidence from both sides in the proper form, but he remarks that, "it was not difficult to tell by a sort of popular feeling generally, if one really was in the wrong."(35)

On newly discovered or remote fields this "sort of popular feeling" kept order, if not law, and punished wrong-doers, without the assistance of government officials.(36) Soon after Hargraves' initial discovery in 1851 a man who had robbed his mates was "thrashed away from the creek with saplings" by the indignant diggers,(37) and this pattern of behaviour in which the whole body of assembled miners acted as judge, jury and executioner, spread later to the Western Australian fields(38) and still persists.(39) One remarkable

(35) C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw, and Did etc., pp.158-160. (His italics.) This Read should not of course be confused with Rede, the Chief Commissioner at Ballarat during the Eureka troubles.

(36) cf. [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is; or etc., p.160: "Besides, the diggers are not men to be quarrelled with; not one of them would think of crying 'police!.." And "A University Man" [George Carrington], Colonial Adventures and Experiences, Lond: 1871, p.186: "The diggings furnish an unexampled spectacle of order in disorder, and law in the absence of all legal form ..."

(37) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., (3rd edn.), Lond: 1855, p.567; and cf. J. Sherer (ed.), The Gold Finer of Australia etc., Lond: 1853, pp.67-68.

(38) For a good description of a typical 'roll-up' see J. Marshall, Battling for Gold, or Stirring Incidents of Goldfields Life in West Australia, Melb: 1903, pp.140-147 and cf. Sir George Foster Pearce, Carpenter to Cabinet: Thirty-Seven Years of Parliament, Lond: 1951, pp.27-29.

(39) In January, 1937, I attended a roll-up, called spontaneously on the Wauchope Creek wolfram field (N.T.), to organise the 'cleaning up' of the camp site, and thus to negative a police order that it should be moved to a more hygienic but less convenient place two or three miles away. And cf. Ern Barnes, Shirtsleeves to Shirtsleeves, (unpublished typescript autobiography of E.H. Barnes, Geelong, Victoria), pp.234-235.

feature of these 'roll-ups' was that the extreme penalty they imposed was simply a sufficiently rough expulsion from the field.(40) Though in some cases hanging was called for by a turbulent minority, the collective good sense of the majority was such that Europeans were very rarely, if ever, done to death.(41)

Another difference between Australian and American mining camps was that here public opinion usually expressed itself spontaneously in ad hoc agitations. When semi-permanent, organised committees of diggers were set up, their function was to agitate against Government measures,(42) rather than to administer the fields themselves in the manner of the Californian vigilantes. The reasons for the comparative orderliness of the Australian fields have been much canvassed.

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(40) Because of the nomadic habits of diggers, expulsion from one goldfield usually meant exclusion from all fields, fo "wherever the culprit went he found out that someone knew him and 'put him away'." (J. Marshall, Battling for Gold etc., pp.140-147.)

(41) In the case recorded by Marshall (loc. cit.), the thief was very nearly hanged. Another 'near thing' took place on the Ovens field, but in this case the prospective victims were not fellow-diggers but policemen. (See T. McCombie, History of the Colony of Victoria, etc., Lond: 1858, p.241 and Chas. Macalister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South, Goulburn: 1907, p.214.) J. Shaw (A Gallop to the Antipodes etc., Lond: 1858, pp.101-102) stresses the general moderation of diggers in the matter of Lynch law but tells a story of what he believed was an exception - the putting to death of a digger named James Croft said to have murdered his mate for the sake of his gold.

(42) See Bruce Kent, "Agitations on the Victorian Gold Fields, 1851-54: an Interpretation" passim, Historical Studies, Vol. 6, No.23, Nov. 1954.
Even the Ballarat Reform League existed for less than a month and it proceeded from agitation to rebellion without at any stage exhibiting the more deplorable characteristics of a California-style vigilante committee.

Writing a priori in 1851, Mundy pointed to the comparative nearness of the fields to the settled centres of government "already firmly established," the relative homogeneity of the diggers' 'racial' stock, the virtual absence of a warlike aboriginal race, and "the love of order inherent in Englishmen."(43) To these may be added the influence of those "rude notions of honour" supported by "a kind of public opinion amongst themselves," which Griffith had considered in 1845 to be one of the leading characteristics of the 'nomad tribe' of pastoral workers.(44)

The diggings were also a forcing-ground for two other traits already noted as being typical of the outback Australian way of life - adaptability and egalitarian independence. A digger's need for the first quality is implicitly clear in what has been said above.(45) When Read was travelling to the Turon diggings in 1851, some aspiring gold-seekers were unable to adapt themselves to the experience of being catapulted out of the coach when it rolled over an embankment in

(43) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., pp.566 ff., p.584; and cf. F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey Round the World, etc., 3 vols., Lond: 1853, Vol. III, p.123 ff.

(44) See p.231 supra.

(45) See pp.291-292 supra.

the dark beyond Emu Plains. They forswore digging then and there, and returned to Sydney, but others went on to the fields.(46) It is hard to imagine how any body of men could exhibit a more aggressively 'independent' attitude than the pastoral workers of whom squatters complained in the 1840's,(47) but contemporaries thought that the diggers managed to do so. Polehampton both describes and explains digger egalitarianism:

> "The population of Victoria, as I have said before, presents a marked contrast to that of England and Europe generally. As a rule, every man there is, may be, or expects soon to be, his own master; and the consciousness of this causes a spirit of independence to pervade the mass, collectively and individually; this feeling being more especially prevalent on the diggings. Here are no conventionalities; no touching of hats. Men meet on apparently equal terms; and he who enjoyed the standing of a gentleman in England becomes aware, on the diggings, that his wonted position in society is no longer recognised; and the man, who in former days might have pulled your boots off, or served you respectfully behind a counter, shakes hands with you, and very likely hails you by a nickname, or by no name at all."(48)

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(46) C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did etc., p.5.

(47) See pp. 217-19 supra.

(48) A. Polehampton, Kangaroo Land, etc., pp.92-93; et ibid., pp.42-43, 57-58, 88-89, 264; cf. [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is; or etc., p.148; G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p.585; Alfred Joyce, A Homestead History, pp.160-161; W.B. Withers, History of Ballarat, etc., p.140; and Robert Caldwell, Gold Era of Victoria, etc., p.101.

For the continuance on the diggings of the 'up country' habit of anonymity (cf. p.220 supra), see also Chips by an Old Chum: or Australia in the Fifties (n.d. but author was in Vic. from Jan. 1853 till April, 1855), Lond: pp.82-83: "... it is not etiquette on the diggings to make too minute enquiries as to your mates' antecedents."

This attitude differs from that of the pastoral workers not in kind but, so to speak, in quantity. To the minimum security of rations and wages was added the real chance of acquiring riches; and this chance was greater for those who had been accustomed to, say, road-mending, either in Australia or in Britain, than it was for a 'swell' unused to manual labour.(49) Hence the levelling tendencies in society were even stronger than before the gold discoveries. Moreover, the obliteration of class barriers, inseparable from life on the actual diggings,(50) and the constant coming and going between the fields and the colonial capitals, both tended to spread the egalitarian outlook more rapidly outward from the 'nomad tribe' and upward through the middle classes.

There is evidence to show that the less admirable 'outback' habits also were adopted, and even accentuated, by the diggers. Converts to a faith are prone to be more fanatical than those who are born to it. Gambling, profanity and drunkenness tend to flourish in any frontier society

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(49) R. Caldwell, Gold Era of Victoria etc., p.106: "Indeed, to a man used to the luxuries and refinements of life in Europe, the labour of the gold-digger is very irksome ... after all, the navvy is the true digger," and William Westgarth, Victoria and the Australian Gold Mines in 1857, Lond: 1857, pp.144-145.

(50) e.g. T. McCombie, History of the Colony of Victoria etc., pp.216-217; and Lord Robert Cecil's Gold Fields Diary (ed. E. Scott), Melb: 1935, p.14 ff.

where there are few women,[51] but as we have seen,[52] these vices were indulged in the more readily because they were properly regarded as characteristic of the old colonial hands. Although some observers were impressed with the outward decorum of the diggings on the Sabbath,[53] a diarist recorded that even on that day there was:

> "lots of gambling going on ... fellows tossing for nothing less than a £8 note [sic] and perhaps £100 changing hands every toss among the bystanders."[54]

There is no necessary inconsistency here. To-day the streets of Kalgoorlie present an orderly appearance on Sundays, while 'the biggest two-up school in the world' operates raucously but unobtrusively not far away: and even in Newgate prison, a hundred and thirty years ago, the ancestral form of what has been called the Australian national game was played in

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(51) W.B. Withers, History of Ballarat, etc., p.55: "The shout, 'There's a woman!' emptied many a tent of besoiled and hardy diggers. ... But recklessness often marked the life of the time, and the brandy-bottle of the grog-shanty killed some victims then as it does in this later day." But there were relatively more women after a field had become established. (See Wm. Howitt, Land, Labour & Gold, etc., Vol. I, p.113.)

(52) e.g., pp.293-294 supra, for the prevalence of profanity on the goldfields; and cf., C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did etc., p.244: "Such dreadful and horribly disgusting language may be heard expressed by children on the diggings, that I do not imagine could be surpassed by the most hardened adults on Norfolk Island and this does not rest with boys alone, but little girls from eight to ten years of age..."

(53) e.g., W. Westgarth, Victoria and the Australian Gold-Mines in 1857 etc., pp.201-202, 235-236; James Bonwick: Notes of a Gold Digger and Gold Diggers' Guide (1852) (ed. E.E. Prescott), Melb: 1942, p.29; and Lord Robert Cecil's Gold Fields Diary, p.26.

(54) The Life and Adventures of Edward Snell from 1849 to 1859, (MS diary, P.L.V.), Entry of 20/6/52, p.296.

"schools" in "out-of-sight corners" of the prison yard.[55]

Drunkenness could not, in the nature of things, have been more rife on the diggings than it had been in the days of the 'Rum Corps'[56], but at first it was hardly less so. Fearing the conjunction of old hands, rum and gold, the authorities prohibited the sale of alcoholic drinks on the fields.[57] The result was that sly-grog tents, in which more than usually adulterated liquor was sold, sprang up like mushrooms.[58] Two historians of Victoria who visited the fields at the time, thought that on the whole prohibition did moderate the tide of drunkenness,[59] but others thought that

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(55) James Tucker, Ralph Rashleigh (ed. Colin Roderick, M.A., Ph.D.), Syd: 1952, p.28.

(56) This Homeric age of Australian drinking was already legendary in the 1840's at which time there was an "old song", probably English rather than Australian, two verses of which went:

"There's rum and brandy, as I've heard 'em say,
In that blessed island called Botn'y Bay."

(See J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations in N.S.W., etc., Lond: 1849, p.9).

(57) H.G. Turner, History of the Colony of Victoria, etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1904, Vol. II, pp.13-14.

(58) Mrs. Charles Clacy, A Lady's Visit etc., pp.91-93. W.Craig, My Adventures on the Australian Goldfields, p.296 ff.; and for popular contemporary songs, by C.R. Thatcher and others, on sly-grog selling and goldfields drunkenness generally, see Hugh Anderson, Colonial Ballads, Ferntree Gully: 1955, pp.36-43.

(59) W. Westgarth, Victoria: Late Australia Felix etc., p.237; and James Bonwick, Notes of a Gold Digger etc., pp.30-31.

it created more evils than it cured.[60] However this may be, there can be no doubt at all that the sudden changes in fortune, inseparable from the life of a digger, helped to accentuate the already firmly established outback tradition of 'work and burst.'[61] Inns on the tracks to the diggings were the scenes of almost continuous revelry, and "many of the bad old type of landlords, who had graduated in the art of 'lambing down a shepherd', put the capstone to their fortunes"[62] in the first few years after gold was discovered. In Melbourne itself, where the most successful diggers repaired for their sprees, some had bar-counters:

> "washed down with expensive wines as a preliminary ceremony to ordering 'free drinks for the crowd,' and with an imbecile idea of ostentation the poor fool has excited the plaudits of his followers by sweeping all the glasses off the counter with his whip to make the bill worth paying."[63]

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(60) H.G. Turner, History of the Colony of Victoria, Vol. II, pp.13-14; and T. McCombie, History of the Colony of Victoria, p.220. A large majority of memoir-writers agreed with Turner and McCombie.

(61) See pp. 268-73 supra.

(62) H.G. Turner, op. cit., Vol. I, p.372.

(63) loc. cit.

Long before gold was discovered Griffith had noticed that the old hands seemed to regard robbing people not of their own class as a "spoiling of the Egyptians," while they despised a man who robbed his mates.(64) This ambivalent attitude partly explains the contradictory reports about the honesty of diggers. A new chum like Craig, who lived on uneasily familiar terms with a party of thoroughly vicious Vandemonians, was protected by one of the worst of them.(65) On the other hand William Howitt and his gentlemanly party, armed with pistols, bowie-knives and vice-regal letters, though they kept all low fellows at a distance, had the most trifling articles stolen "from their very heels."(66) It is also noteworthy that most of the criminals were ex-convicts from Van Diemen's Land,(67) many of whom must have come straight from servitude to the diggings without any intermediate experience of up-country life. Read, who spent some months on the Turon diggings in their first year when a very high proportion of the diggers must still have been New South Wales old hands, wrote that:

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(64) See p.232 supra.

(65) W. Craig, My Adventures on the Australian Goldfields, Cap. VII-X, esp. pp.133, 145.

(66) W. Howitt, Land, Labour, and Gold; etc., Vol. I, pp.55-56, 99, 146-147.

(67) W. Westgarth, Victoria; Late Australia Felix, or etc., p.166 ff.

> "there was a great deal better feeling existing, than I subsequently observed in Victoria; no one scarcely remained to take care of their tents during the day ... [and]... at night no one ever thought of taking their mining tools away from their claim, and I scarcely ever heard of any being stolen, and no one ever made any hesitation of lending another a crowbar or anything they wanted, no matter whether stranger or not, it was sure of being returned."(68)

In so far as gold brought more people to the bush and led to the growth of country towns, it may be said to have brought the bushmen into closer touch with organised religion; but this was a long-term process. At first the effect of the discoveries was to accentuate the cynical up-country attitude to the clergy. As one contemporary historian wrote, "there was no other passion dominant at this time but avarice."(69) No doubt this was an exaggeration, but too many actual or soi-disant(70) clergymen seem to have acted as though it were literally true. When Read was at the Turon diggings the Bishop of Sydney visited them and laid the foundation stone of an Anglican Church.(71) While it was building a large

(68) C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did etc., p.19.

(69) T. McCombie, History of the Colony of Victoria etc.,p.217.

(70) For interesting factual accounts of the exploits of some bogus clergymen on the New South Wales fields, see Martin Brennan, Reminiscences of the Goldfields and Elsewhere in New South Wales, Covering a Period of Forty-Eight Years' Service as an Officer of Police, Syd: 1907, esp. Caps. IV, V, VII and VIII.

(71) cf. Mrs. Chas. Clacy, A Lady's Visit etc., p.98: "Provisio is made by the Government for the support, at the mines, of two clergymen of each of the four State paid churches of England, Scotland, Rome and Wesleyan, at a salary of £300 a year."
On the other hand, the first Anglican clergyman to come to the Lachlan diggings in 1862 was unable to find a living at Forbes, and eventually had to leave the distric (See M.Z. Forbes, "The Jews of the Lachlan District," Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal, Vol. IV, Part I, Dec. 1954.)

canvas tent, which was crowded with worshippers every Sunday, was used for services; but there were also preachers of many sects who addressed their congregations from tree-stumps and drays. Many of these exhorted their flocks on Sunday to "lay up for themselves treasures in Heaven, saying that gold was one of the devil's temptations," but for the rest of the week they rocked their cradles assiduously, and thereby earnt many "cutting remarks" from passing diggers.(72) As in the previous period,(73) so on the diggings, Catholic priests seem to have maintained much more influence over their flock than did those of other denominations. In the Eureka rising at Ballarat, for example, the exact part played by Father Smyth, the parish priest, and Goold, his Bishop, remains obscure,(74) but it is perfectly clear that they were in intimate touch with what was going on, and wielded great influence over Catholic diggers.(75) By contrast another digger, who had been killed in the fighting, was attended to his grave by a public procession of mourners among whom no clergyman was to be seen. In traditional up-country style the body was carried "between sheets of bark by way of a coffin."(76)

(72) C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did etc., p.41. And cf. Rev. A. Polehampton, Kangaroo Land, pp.168-169; W.B. Withers, History of Ballarat, pp.39-40; Robert Caldwell, Gold Era of Victoria, etc., p.80; and John Sherer (ed.), The Gold Finder of Australia, etc., pp.153, ff.

(73) See p.253 supra.

(74) C.H. Currey, The Irish at Eureka, Syd: 1954, pp.83-84.

(75) ibid., passim.

(76) A. Polehampton, op. cit., pp.224-225.

Another witness to the diggers' belief that most clergymen were canting hypocrites[77] was Charles Thatcher, an immensely popular[78] goldfields entertainer whose work merits closer attention from Australian historians.[79] A witty and well-educated man of middle-class upbringing, he came from Brighton, England, in 1854, to dig for gold in Victoria; but soon found he could earn a more congenial living by composing and singing topical songs to his own accompaniment. Well over two hundred of these survive in booklet or broadside form, and there are many more in the Victorian Public Library's collection of his manuscript material. On 7th April, 1854, the Argus published a despatch from its Bendigo correspondent who declared that Thatcher's songs were,

> "all humorous, abounding in local allusions as a matter of course; and if circulated in England, would give a much better idea of life at the goldfields than most of the elaborately written works upon them do."

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(77) See, for instance, Scene 3 of Thatcher's MS monologue to accompany his diorama of life at the Diggings (Thatcher MS., P.L.V.): "Many a minister feels a special call to the goldfields but fearing the gospel may be inadequately remunerated he intends to combine the recovery of nuggets with the saving of souls and accordingly takes up a cradle with him. [This passage has been struck out and a slightly less critical one substituted, later on in Scene 6.] Also "The New Aristocracy; or Life in Australia." (See p. 322 infra.)

(78) See George Mackay, History of Bendigo, Melb: 1891, p.172; and W.B. Withers, History of Ballarat, etc., p.79.

(79) For further information on Thatcher, see Hugh Anderson's brief article, "Colonial Minstrel", in Overland, Nos. 2 and 3, 1955; and his Colonial Ballads, 1955.

Half a century later Thatcher's song books were still among the favourite stock-in-trade of outback travelling hawkers, and many of his verses were passed on from singer to singer to become genuine folk songs.(80) His work demonstrates what has been said above about the chameleon-like rapidity with which new chums tended to take on the colour of their surroundings. Within two years of his arrival he had produced many songs like the following:

"THE BOND STREET SWELL

(A new original song, written and sung by Chas. R. Thatcher, with unbounded applause).

Tune: Nice Young Man

I'll sing you now just a little song,
For you must understand,
'Tis of a fine young gentleman
That left his native land -
That bid his ma and pa farewell,
And started brave and bold,
In a ship of fourteen hundred tons,
To come and dig for gold.

(80) See 'Giles Seagram' [H.J. Driscoll], Bushmen All, Adel: 1908, p.227 ff. (According to his son, Mr. C.C. Driscoll of Adelaide, H.J. Driscoll, the author of this novel and of Giles Halliday, Stockman, spent about fifteen years in the north of S.A. and west of N.S.W., as a drover and general bush worker in the last years of the last century. He then married and settled down in Port Augusta where the novels were written, appearing first, serially, in the Port Augusta Dispatch. They contain snatches of many folk-songs, some of them well known and some unrecorded elsewhere. H.J. Driscoll wrote also a third novel, Lisa's Love Story, which appeared only as a serial in the Port Augusta Dispatch.) And see Appendix XII.

His dress was spicy as could be;
His fingers hung with rings -
White waistcoats, black silk pantaloons,
And other stylish things.
His berth was in the cuddy,
Which is on deck, you know,
And all the intermediates,
He noted 'deuced low.'

When the vessel left the London Docks,
Most jovial did he seem;
But on the Downs, a change came o'er
The spirit of his dream:
His ruddy cheeks turned very pale,
His countenance looked rum;
And with a mournful sigh, said he,
'I wish I'd never come.'

The ship at length cast anchor,
And he was glad once more;
Six large trunks he then packed up
And started for the shore -
His traps filled quite a whale boat,
So of course I needn't say,
That for the freight thereof, he had
A tidy sum to pay.

He came to town and then put up
At the Criterion Hotel, -
If you've been there, you know the place[81]
And the charges pretty well.
He played at billiards half the day,
And smoked and lounged about;
Until the hundred pounds he'd brought,
Had precious near run out.

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(81) H.G. Turner, History of the Colony of Victoria, etc., Vol. I, p.374: "An hotel in Collins Street, called the 'Criterion' ... had an enterprising American landlord, who laid himself out to attract those who delighted in gaudy colours, much gilding and many mirrors. He fitted up a couple of rooms in this style of meretricious glory, and advertised them as the 'Digger's Nuptial Suite.' At the liberal tariff of £20 per day they were pretty frequently occupied..."

With five pounds in his pocket,
He went to Bendigo;
But when he saw the diggin's,
They filled his heart with woe -
'What! Must I venture down a hole,
And throw up filthy clay?
If my mother could but see me now,
Whatever would she say?'

He went and bought a shovel,
And a pick and dish as well,
But to every ten minutes work,
He took an hour's spell.
The skin from his fair white hands
In blisters peeled away -
And thus he worked, and sunk about
Twelve inches every day.

When off the bottom just a foot,
He got quite out of heart,
And threw his pick down in a rage
And off he did depart;
But when he'd left his hole, and gone,
A cove named Sydney Bob
Stepped into it and soon took out
A pretty handsome 'lob.'

With five shillings in his pocket,
He started in disgust,
And then he went upon the roads,
As many a young swell must.
And if through the Black Forest
You ever chance to stray,
You may see him do the Gov'ment stroke(82)
At eight bob every day."(83)

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(82) This colloquial expression first became common in Victoria at this time. (cf. W. Westgarth, Victoria and the Australian Gold Mines in 1857; etc., p.68.) It would seem to have been a jibe levelled by colonial workmen at 'broken down swells,' rather than the reverse, which it has become since. (ibid., pp.144-145, and Wm. Howitt, Land, Labour and Gold: etc., Vol. I, pp.293-294.) The distinctively Australian custom of taking ten minutes or a quarter of an hour for 'smoke-ohs' in mid-morning and afternoon was also firmly established in Victoria in the early 1850's. (See Robert Caldwell, The Gold Era of Victoria etc., pp.129-130.) Both the phrase and the custom may have originated earlier in N.S.W.

(83) From The Victoria Songster, Melb: 1855. There is a variant version of the last stanza in M.J. Conlon's MS scrapbook. (See p.117, footnote (54), supra.)

Obviously the 'practical' working class values typified by "Sydney Bob" were de rigeur on the "diggin's," and it behoved the gently nurtured new chum to adopt them as rapidly as possible. Thatcher underlines this theme again and again, most interestingly perhaps in the script accompanying his diorama illustrating goldfields life. He is describing typical figures on their way to the diggings.:

> "Then comes a wonderful contrast. Two diggers one an old hand in a stained blue shirt moleskin trousers leather belt & tin pannikin a butcher's knife heavy lace ups Cabbage tree-hat, swag slung across his back horse collar fashion & surmounting it a pick and shovel & an American axe."

But apparently the old hand's prestige had become so great that Thatcher felt diffident about drawing attention to its convict origins. The above passage is crossed out in the manuscript and, with some historical versimilitude, the "old hand" becomes a "real old digger."

> "Then comes a real old digger who has been to Melbourne on the spree with his pile courted a new arrival one day married her the next and who leaves her in Melbourne while he goes up again to try his luck. The other a new arrival in a suit of broadcloth carrying a knapsack to which is attached a Railway wrapper an oilskin coat the inevitable double-barrelled gun as if gold was a thing to be shot at & brought down while the pockets of his coat contain a Cigar case powder flask a compass, sandwich box & other useless trifles the usual treasures of a new chum - "

Then follows another sentence which has also been deleted, presumably from motives of delicacy:

> "Some strange circumstances must have happened for these 2 to be mates for in the language of the old hand 'The Derwenters don't gee well with the New Chums.'"

Thatcher also devotes many songs to what was perhaps the most prominent feature of the diggers' ethos - their hatred for the police. Practically every contemporary writer stresses this feature of goldfields life,(84) and even the most conservative(85) tacitly agree that members of the force, by their venality, arrogance, brutality and incompetence, did much to earn the contempt in which they were held. In the diary of a Bendigo store-keeper we read that -

> "Robberies as daring and cruel as those of the highway-man are hourly committed by the representatives of the Government. The whole system is bad ... the commissioners and all the staff of government officers are miserably underpaid but then every opportunity is afforded them of obtaining money by means of legal plunder."(86)

He goes on to explain that fines for licence-evasion and sly-grog selling were divided between the constable who apprehended the offender, the sergeant of his staff, and the

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(84) cf. Geoffrey Serle, "The Causes of Eureka," Historical Studies, Eureka Centenary Supplement, Dec., 1954, p.16.

(85) e.g., H.G. Turner, History of the Colony of Victoria etc., Vol. II, pp.42-44; and Capt. H. Butler Stoney, Victoria: with a Description of Its Principal Cities etc., Lond: 1856, pp.103-106 ff. (Stoney was a military friend of Capt. Wise who was killed at Eureka.)

(86) Arthur Hall Shum, Diary and Letter Book. (MS P.L.V. Archives.) This entry is undated, but comes between two others dated June, 1853, and 30 July, 1853. And cf., R.R. Haverfield, quoted George Mackay, History of Bendigo, Melb: 1891, pp.9-11.

Gold Commissioners. The consequence was, he says, that to augment their incomes, the commissioners and their underlings privily encouraged sly-grog selling, and made the simple purchasing of a licence "as difficult a matter as to get a letter from the Melbourne P.O. ..."(87) Read, an unusually conscientious commissioner, himself confirms the general accuracy of this picture,(88) as indeed does the report of the Commission which enquired into the causes of Eureka.(89)

(87) A.H. Shum, loc. cit., and cf. The Life and Adventures of Edward Snell from 1849 to 1859. (MS. Diary, P.L.V. Archives) 10/5/1852, p.285: "Tried to get licences [sic] but the Commissioner's tent was so besieged by the numerous applicants that after waiting a considerable time I came away in despair."

(88) What I Heard, Saw, and Did etc., pp.54-58, 83-85 et passim and cf. T. McCombie, History of the Colony of Victoria etc., p.241 ff.; C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, p.52 ff.; Carboni Rafaello, The Eureka Stockade (ed. H.V. Evatt); Syd: 1942, p.18 et passim (inc. Evatt's introduction).

(89) More, perhaps, by its omissions than its statements. (See Report of the Commission into the Gold Fields of Victoria etc., pp.x, xi, xii, xiii, xxiii and xxiv.) Discussing the behaviour of the police after the capture of the Stockade, the report states: "The foot police appear, as a body, to have conducted themselves with creditable temper; but assuredly on the part of the mounted division of that force, there seems to have been a needless as well as a ruthless sacrifice of human life, indiscriminat of innocent or guilty, and after all resistance had disappeared with the dispersed and flying rioters. But the Commission decline [sic] to elaborate this subject furthe cf. A. Polehampton, Kangaroo Land, pp.224-225: "There were still signs of the late disturbances. ... The fighting seemed to have caused little or no ill-will between the soldiers and the diggers, for I saw several of the former strolling about unarmed. ... The horse-police, who it was said, had behaved with needless barbarity, could not show themselves without being insulted."
And cf. "Report from the Select Committee on Police." V. and P. Vic. Leg. Council, 1852-53, Vol. II, p.8. When asked his opinion of the "discharged soldiers and pensioners" who made up a large portion of the force, E.P.S.Stur Superintendent of Victorian Police, replied: "As a body they appear to me to be the most drunken set of men I eve met with; and totally unfit to be put to any useful purposes of Police."

Even the gentlemanly, not to say genteel, new chum, William Howitt, who was kindly received by La Trobe,(90) denounces "Mr. Mackaye, the inspector of police" at the Ovens field, as "a low drunken sot,"(91) and refers to the "Russian sort of way" in which the police carried out their functions. He wrote, nearly two years before the fighting at Eureka, that police behaviour on the diggings was "creating a spirit that will break out one of these days energetically."(92)

Australian policemen had long been noted for bad behaviour when gold was first discovered in 1851. There was a long if not honourable tradition, which still exists, of unusually intense enmity between them and the populace, but this subject will be dealt with in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to note that, as in so many other matters concerning the popular outlook, the Gold Rush did not so much change as intensify the existing tradition. Contemporaries believed that this was partly because to the basic stuff of police force personnel - particularly vicious and venal old

(90) Wm. Howitt, Land, Labour, and Gold etc., Vol. I, pp.51, 183; and cf. H.G. Turner, Our Own Little Rebellion: the Story of Eureka Stockade, Melb: 1912, pp.33-34.

(91) Wm. Howitt, op. cit., pp.182-183.

(92) ibid., p.236.

convicts (93) despised by their fellows - Gold Rush conditions added an upper stratum of

> "the worst class of colonists - young men who have been accustomed to no business habits at home, whose sole capital on coming to the Colony was a letter of introduction to the Governor, or some other party who had interest to appoint them."(94)

Thus, from the point of view of the 'old Australians,' the police force was composed mainly of renegades from their own ranks, and of their natural enemies - new chum 'swells.' (95)

(93) C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did etc., p.85 et passim; Wm. Howitt, Land, Labour and Gold, etc., Vol. I, pp.36-37; and John Singleton, Narrative of Incidents in the Eventful Life of a Physician, Melb: 1891, p.157; and cf. J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol.I,p.14

(94) Robert Caldwell, The Gold Era of Victoria, etc., p.107; ar cf. Latrobe to Grey, 8 July 1852, Further Papers Relative to the Recent Discovery of Gold in Australia, pp.219-221, "Parliamentary Papers," 1852-1853 (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, pp.9-13); T. McCombie, Histor of the Colony of Victoria etc., p.241; Wm Craig, My Adventures on the Australian Goldfields, p.253 ff.; Georg Haverson, Goldfields Memoir, published in John A. Graham, Early Creswick, etc., p.215; "R.P.", Goldfields Memoir, op. cit., p.235; and Martin Brennan, Reminiscences of the Gold Fields etc., p.221 ff.

(95) The 'swells', mainly mounted policemen who wore a cavalry uniform, seem to have accentuated that disjunction betwee the citizenry and their putative protectors which has always been a marked feature of Australian life. cf. Rev. A. Polehampton, Kangaroo Land, Lond: 1862, pp.90-91: "Here comes the Chief Commissioner on horseback, in a kir of undress military uniform, and a mounted policeman or orderly riding at a respectful distance behind: the latte not dressed like his brethren in England, but in a very neat cavalry uniform - a mistake, I think, as for many reasons it is undesirable for policemen to imagine themselves soldiers, or for the public to regard them as such And Archdeacon W. Ashley-Brown. Letter in Sydney Morning Herald, 8/9/1953: "Then we read or hear on the air of 'police and civilians.' It is a feature of the British system that our police are civilians, and their character as such should never be compromised.' The description is wrong in fact and in principle." For a lively sketch of two fictitious but "typical" Gold Commissioners, "Light and Shadow", see Wm. Howitt, Tallangetta, the Squatter's Home, A Story of Australian Life, 2 vols., Lond: 1857, Vol. I, p.282 ff.

The following anecdote illustrates how naturally the old hands' hatred of policemen was passed on to many new chums. When gold was first discovered at Ballarat, an old, Sydney-side ex-convict named Jack was working as shepherd and handyman on a station nearby. For many months he remained at work, held back from the rush by the tongue of his wife who feared that the sly-grog sellers on the field would immediately receive any gold he might find. In the end he left, fell in with three old mates from New South Wales, and rapidly dug £200 worth of gold. With this he took his wife and two bush-bred daughters to Melbourne, where the girls at once found fiancés. At the double wedding Jack provided a tremendous breakfast, of which many guests ate and drank to the point of regurgitation. Dressed in his new suit the proud father opened proceedings by "givin' on 'em a song," the chorus of which was borne by the whole party, "the girls included, who were the most proficient, for they ''ad 'eard father sing it before, many a time.' The chorus was something like the following:

> Oh, the traps, the dirty traps;
> Kick the traps whene'er you're able;
> At the traps, the nasty traps;
> Kick the traps right under the table."

Soon afterwards the host and some of the guests composed

themselves to sleep in the same place while dancing continued until daylight.(96)

A great many of Thatcher's songs also jeer at the police and the military.(97) A stanza from one of them combines a jibe at the new type of imported policeman with one at the clergy:

"Lord Fuzzleby's nephew, who went,
And spent every summer at Nice,
Says, 'now boys, you'd better move on' -
In short, he is in the police.
And the Reverend Frederick Spout,
Who in the Church very high stood;
And split hairs in divinity once,
Gets his living by splitting up wood."(98)

Another of his songs deserves quoting in full, both because it certainly passed straight into oral tradition and because it pictures so neatly the hated practice of licence-hunting:

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(96) James Kirby, "of Minyip, One of the Earliest (If Not the Earliest) Bush Pioneers, of the Colony of Victoria, Now Living," Old Times in the Bush of Australia: Trials and Experiences of Bush Life in Victoria, during the Forties, Melb: n.d. (but 1895), p.223 ff.

(97) See Appendix XIII.

(98) From "The New Aristocracy: or Life in Australia," written and sung by THATCHER, the 'diggers' poet'". (The Victoria Songster etc., Melb: 1855, p.15 ff.)

"WHERE'S YOUR LICENCE?

A Celebrated Parody on 'The Gay Cavalier,' and sung by MR. THATCHER, on the Gold Fields, with great applause.

I.

The morning was fine,
The sun brightly did shine;
The diggers were working away -
When the inspector of traps
Said, 'now my fine chaps,
We'll go licence-hunting to-day.'
Some went this way; some that,
Some to Bendigo Flat;
And a lot to the White Hills did tramp -
Whilst a lot more did bear
Towards Golden Square;
And the rest of them kept round the camp.

2.

Each turned his eye
To the holes he went by -
Expecting down on them to drop;
But not one could they nail,
For they'd given leg bail,
Diggers ain't often caught on the hop.
The little word 'Joe,'
Which all of you know,
Is a signal that the traps are quite near;
Made them all cut their sticks,
And they hooked it like bricks;
'I believe you, my boy - no fear.'

3.

Now a tall ugly trap,
Espied a young chap,
Up the gully cutting like fun;
So he quickly gave chase
But 'twas a hard race -
I assure you the digger could run.
Down a hole he went pop,
Whilst the bobby up top,
Says, 'just come up,' shaking his staff;
'Young man of the crown,
If you want me, come down;
For I'm not to be caught with such chaff.'

4.

Now, some would have thought,
The sly fox he'd have caught,
By lugging him out of the hole;
But this cruster, no fear,
Quite scorned the idea
Of going underground like a mole.
But wiser by half,
He put up his staff,
And as onward he went said he -
'When a cove's down a 'drive,'
Whether dead or alive,
He may stay there till Christmas for me.'"(99)

A mounted trooper who served on the Gold Fields in the 'fifties bears witness to the popularity and truth of the song. He wrote:

> "One favourite dodge to evade taking out licences used to be, for the man on the top of the hole, only, to be provided with a licence, while his mates who were working below had none; these fellows would then jeeringly invite the constable to do his duty in the following words of a then popular song: -
>
> 'Young man of the Crown
> Why don't you come down?'
>
> But the police knew better than go down a hole, among such a lawless set of ruffians, and had to give up the pursuit, in many instances, as hopeless."(100)

(99) This version from The Victoria Songster etc., Melb: 1855. Thatcher's MSS (P.L.V. Archives) contain a somewhat different first draft of the song, together with the script of some very amusing stage 'patter' on licence-hunting. There is a folk-version in M.J. Conlon's scrap-book.

(100) "William Burrows", Adventures of a Mounted Trooper in the Australian Constabulary; being recollections of seven years' experience of life in Victoria and New South Wales," Lond: 1859 (new edn.), pp.9-10. ("Burrows" was a pen-name. The author, who really was a mounted policeman on the goldfields, did not divulge his real name, "for reasons that" he thought it "unnecessary to state" in his preface.)

We have seen that in most ways the bushmen's ethos was not changed by the Gold Rush. There was, however, a new element added to it - that of racial intolerance. Before 1851 the colonial contempt for new chums had sprung mainly from a feeling of nationalism, which was in turn closely associated with a lower class esprit-de-corps. Even an Englishman might be rapidly forgiven his unfortunate heritage provided he did not give himself the airs of a 'swell.' A few middle-class writers in the early period show signs of anti-Jewish prejudice,(101) but 'Harris' clearly thought well of Jews and gives no sign that the up-country workmen he knew so well shared the anti-Semitic tendencies of some of their betters.(102) It is true that the skilled workers in Sydney objected as early as 1843 to the proposed importatio

(101) e.g. G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes: or etc., pp.19-20, 38. L.M. Goldman, The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century, Melb: 1954, implies that there was little, if any, anti-Semitism in Victoria before the gold discoveries, but that prejudice tended to increase thereafter. cf. pp.40-41, 122-123, 146,236 ff.

(102) See his treatment of the up-country Jewish storekeeper and his family in The Emigrant Family: or the Story of an Australian Settler, 3 vols., Lond: 1849. And cf. Moses Hebron, The Life and Exploits of Ikey Solomons, Swindler, Forger, Fencer, and Brothel-Keeper etc., Lond n.d. [c. 1829]. This popular chap-book, aimed at British working-class readers, shows no signs of real anti-Semitism. Ikey is portrayed as a tremendous, but not unlovable, scoundrel, in just the same light as are the non-Jewish heroes of other chap-books. Solomons was transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1830. (See R. Brasch, Star of David, Syd: 1955, p.276.)

of Indian coolies,[103] but at this time their objections were economic rather than 'racial'.[104] They objected to the resumption of transportation, and even to free immigration from Britain, on much the same grounds,[105] but there is no evidence of general working class[106] enmity towards the few Maoris and other coloured people who worked and drank with the Currency men in the ships and streets of early Sydney.[107]

(103) Historical Records of Australia, Series I, Vol. XXII, Gipps to Stanley, 4/8/1843, pp.594-596. The despatch encloses the text of a petition "numerously signed by persons principally of the Working Classes in Sydney."

(104) ibid. Of eleven points made in the petition, ten are based on economic arguments. The other expresses fears of the dissemination of "the vices peculiar to the natives of India," but does not mention colour or miscegenation.

(105) K.M. Dallas, "The Origins of 'White Australia'", Australian Quarterly, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, March, 1955, argues cogently that Australian working class objections to Asian immigration have always been fundamentally economic rather than 'racial' in character. No doubt this is so, but while his article shows the absence, or relative weakness, of colour-prejudice before 1851, it gives little evidence that this state of innocence continued unspotted between that date and World War II.

(106) Middle class attitudes were probably fairly reflected in the Report of the Select Committee of the N.S.W. Legislative Council, appointed in 1837 to consider the importation of Indian coolies. The report sanctioned the shipment of a small number as an experiment. The Committee felt that the immediate economic benefits anticipated, outweighed its apprehensions concerning the "colour" and "paganism" of the Indians. (See Myra Willard, History of the White Australia Policy, Melb: 1923, pp.3-4; and cf. footnote 104 supra.)

(107) P. Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1828, Vol. I, pp.57-58. [This passage does not occur in the two earlier editions of the book.]

The first Australian bushranger was a Negro nicknamed 'Caesar' who "subsisted in the woods by plundering the farms and huts at the outskirts of the towns."(108) He was described by the Judge-Advocate as "incorrigibly stubborn," and as reputedly "the hardest working convict in the country." So popular was he with his fellows that, when captured in June, 1789, Phillip reprieved him from the gallows because his execution "was not expected to have the proper or intended effect."(109) Another Negro named Billy Blue, after whom Blue's Point was named, was for many years the Sydney Harbour ferryman. He was so well liked that a broadside was printed in his honour.(110) A further remarkable piece of evidence of the relative lack of race prejudice in early Australia is provided in 'Harris's' novel.(111) Its central figure, Martin Beck, is a Negro and a station overseer.(112) That, in a work

(108) David Collins, Account of the English Colony in N.S.W., etc., Lond: 1798, p.382.

(109) ibid., pp.70-72.

(110) For a reproduction of the broadside see G.C. Ingleton, True Patriots All or etc., Syd: 1952, pp.151, 270; and cf. 'A. Harris', Settlers and Convicts (ed. C.M.H.Clark) Melb: 1954, p.89.

(111) The Emigrant Family: or etc.,

(112) cf. M. Brennan, Reminiscences of the Gold Fields etc., p.267: "It was my lot in the early days to be acquainted with a Negro named Tom Britt, who had by some freak of the Fates found his way to Australia from a sugar plantation in the West Indies, settled down at Goulburn, and, from his industrious habits, suavity of demeanour, and cleanly person, always found employment."
It seems not unlikely that Tom Britt was the original of 'Harris's' character, Martin Beck, who is represented in The Emigrant Family as working in the Goulburn district, some fifteen years before the time to which the above passage about Britt refers.

of fiction, a coloured man could occupy such a responsible post without causing marked surprise or resentment, is sufficiently remarkable. Much more so is the fact that, although Martin Beck is the villain of the book, neither the author nor his characters betray any feeling that the Negro's villainy may be a function of his race.

It is not argued that Australians prior to 1851 were a peculiarly enlightened people. Their treatment of the Aboriginal race makes a rather wry joke of any such suggestion. But, with the exception of these unfortunates, there were so few foreigners of any one race that they were, as a rule, objects of interest rather than of embarrassment or fear. Moreover, in Britain and in Europe generally, nationalism and its accompanying delusions of racial grandeur were much less marked in the eighteenth century than they became in the nineteenth. It is possible that the remoteness and isolation of Australia fostered a relative prolongation of this aspect of the age of enlightenment.(113)

With the influx of gold diggers all this was changed. Possibly the higher proportion of middle-class people among

(113) But arguments based on grounds of "race purity" were used by liberal middle-class spokesmen before 1851. See Myra Willard, History of the White Australia Policy, pp.5-6.

the new comers[114] had something to do with the rapid growth of race prejudice[115] but nearly all, save a few enlightened or personally interested[117] individuals, shared in the frenz

The fact that most of the Celestials were accustomed to work for wretchedly low wages, and were indentured to capitalists among their compatriots[118] or to squatters whose workmen had left for the diggings,[119] meant that they were a potential

(114) W.D. Borrie, Immigration to the Australian Colonies 1861-1901, Seminar Paper, Australian National University, 30/4/1954. Before 1851 the great majority of immigrant (even excluding convicts) were assisted. Between 1860 and 1890 only about one third received assistance. Between 1851-1861 the proportion of assisted immigrants was lower still.

(115) See, for blatant anti-Semitism, William Kelly, Life in Victoria, etc., Vol. 1, pp.118 ff., and 138. But Kelly defended the Chinese and wrote (Vol. II, p.275), that "the trading community ... appreciated at its proper worth the presence of the Celestial immigrants." And cf Wm. Westgarth, Victoria and the Australian Gold Mines in 1857, etc., p.69-70: "The trading and commercial classes ... are mostly in favour of the Chinaman, and when they have been accustomed to the increase of business which his presence gives, they are very unwilling to lose him."

(116) One squatter, James Robert, fed for several weeks over 1200 Chinese refugees from the Lambing Flat riots. (See Myra Willard, History of the White Australia Policy, p.33.) William Kelly, op. cit., defended the Chinese ably and good-temperedly in a series of letters to The Argus in 1856. (See his Vol. II, pp.300-316.)

(117) e.g. Captain Towns. (Myra Willard, op. cit., pp.11-13); and see footnote 115 supra.

(118) ibid., p.18.

(119) ibid., p.10.

threat to the living standard of colonial workmen and provided a rational basis for complaint. The sudden arrival of forty thousand foreigners,(120) differing so completely from the colonists in culture that even in the long term view their assimilation was doubtful,(121) gave good grounds for worry. Much later they were accused, with some justice, of bringing smallpox and leprosy to Australia.(122) But from these reasonable arguments most people proceeded headlong to indiscriminate abuse and, in many cases, to vicious action.

Although the Chinese usually kept to themselves and ventured only to work in areas already dug over and deserted by European diggers,(123) they were accused of encroaching on

(120) The numbers increased from about 2,000 in 1853 to about 40,000 in 1857 in Victoria alone. (Myra Willard, History of White Australia Policy, pp.21,28).

(121) Another common complaint in which there was at least some substance, was that a very high proportion of the Chinese exported their gold to China, or took it home with them, instead of spending it in the Colony. (See Report of the Commission into the Gold Fields of Victoria, etc., 29 March, 1855, par. 164.) But cf. footnote 115 supra.

(122) Myra Willard, op. cit., p.61.

(123) "Petition on the Influx of the Chinese", V. and P. Leg. Ass. of Vic., 1856-57, Vol. III. (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, pp.70-71); and W. Westgarth, Victoria and the Australian Gold Mines in 1857: etc., p.203: "They [the Chinese] seemed to prefer the re-washing of the old grounds rather than taking up new grounds; being averse probably to the expense, delay, and uncertainty of deep sinking. They are stated to make very little gold ..." Westgarth's explanation of the Chinese "preference" is extremely ingenuous, even for him (cf. p. 306 supra), and W. Kelly, Life in Victoria, or etc., Vol. II, pp.179-180.

the white men's claims. It seems probable that these accusations, in the first instance, were made by Europeans who were wont to 'jump' Chinese claims which showed any sign of richness.(124) Another favourite complaint was that they fouled the creek waters,(125) but on diggings where there were no Chinese, muddied water was accepted without question as an inevitable by-product of cradling operations.(126) Old hands were understandably(127) second to none in attributing to the Chinese monstrous and unnatural vices.(128) Passions rose so high that riots broke out on the diggings. The most disgraceful took place at the Buckland field in Victoria in 1857, and at Lambing Flat in New South Wales in 1861. Wholesale assault, robbery and arson were committed on the unresisting Chinamen, and on their property. Several were either murdered outright or died as a result of ill-treatment and exposure. Miners cut off their victims' pigtails, in some

(124) W. Kelly, Life in Victoria, or etc., Vol. II, pp.275-276.

(125) ibid., p.304; and Mrs. Sewell, Goldfields Memoir, published in John A. Graham, Early Creswick, etc., pp.193-194.

(126) C. Rudston Read, What I Heard, Saw and Did etc., p.22; Charles Streeton, Memoirs of a Chequered Life, 3 vols., Lond: 1862, Vol. II, p.51.

(127) cf. pp.257-259 supra.

(128) "Report of the Select Committee on the Subject of Chinese Immigration", pp.iii-iv, V. and P. Leg. Council of Vic. 1856-57, Vol. II. (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, p.68.)

cases with the scalp adhering thereto,(129) and proudly displayed them as trophies. Although thoughtful colonists were ashamed of these proceedings,(130) juries usually refused, even when confronted with the most incriminating evidence, to convict their perpetrators.(131) Children were encouraged by 'patriotic' parents to revile and stone Chinamen, who were usually too intimidated to protest.(132(Anti-Chinese ballads, composed by Thatcher and others,(133) were widely sung, especially on the diggings and in the back-country. Most popular was a parody of Rule Britannia which Henry Lawson often heard, as a lad, on the New South Wales diggings:

> "Irreverent echo of the old Lambing Flat trouble, from a camp across the gully:
>
> 'Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves!
> No more Chinamen will enter New South Wales!"(134)

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(129) Sydney Morning Herald, 20/7/1861 (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Docuemnts 1851-1900, pp.71-74.)

(130) ibid., and cf. William Kelly, Life in Victoria etc., Vol. II, pp.300-316.

(131) Myra Willard, History of the White Australia Policy, p.33.

(132) W. Kelly, op. cit., Vol. II, p.276; W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening: Thirty Years in the Life of an Australian Agitator, Syd: 1909, pp.48-50, and W. Craig, My Adventures on the Australian Goldfields, p.304 ff. Though few parents then actively encouraged it, the tradition of Chinese-baiting still flourished in the decade 1920-30 in Perth, W.A., when I was a boy.

(133) See Appendix XIV.

(134) Prose Works of Henry Lawson, 2 vols. Syd: 1935, Vol. I, p.210 (from the essay, "Songs They Used to Sing.") And cf., E. Marin La Meslée, L'Australie Nouvelle, Paris: 1883, p.133. The author spent a night at O'Neill's Hotel, Narromine. "Après dîner, la scène devint plus gaie. La buvette se remplit de joyeux teamsters: l'un d'eux, possesseur d'un accordéon, entama un concert de circonstance, et bientôt les notes de l'air national de Rule Britannia résonnèrent dans la nuit." It seems like that the Frenchmen mistook the parody for the original.

From this time the mateship of the pastoral workers rigidly excluded Asians from the nomad tribe, though other coloured people were sometimes accepted. The rules of the Australian Workers' Union, in Spence's day, denied membership to "Chinese, Japanese, Kanakas, or Afghans or colored aliens other than Maoris, American negroes, and children of mixed parentage born in Australia."(135) There seems also to have been less anti-Semitic prejudice among the bushmen than among many of their social 'superiors.'(136) An anonymous Kelly Gang folk-ballad shows this 'racism' at its most disgusting. At the Royal Hotel, Jerilderie,

> "They mustered up the servants and locked them in a room,
> Saying, 'Do as we command you, or death will be your doom
> The Chinaman cook 'no savvied,' his face was full of fear
> But Ned soon made him savvy with a straight left to the ear."(137)

A stanza from a traditional version of A.B. Paterson's Bushman's Song shows the sentiment in its most excusable, or at least most rational, form - as a function of trade union militancy:(138)

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(135) W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening etc., p.72.

(136) ibid., p.55; and cf. J. Le Gay Brereton, Knocking Around, Syd: 1930, pp.80-85.

(137) From the version in Bill Bowyang's Bush Recitations, No.4, Brisbane: N.D., [circa 1940].

(138) cf. W.G. Spence, op. cit., pp.48-50.

"I asked a bloke for shearing down on the Marthaguy.
'We shear non-union here,' he said. 'I call it scab,'
said I.
I looked along the shearing-board before I chanced to go,
Saw eight or ten dashed Chinamen all shearing in a row.

Chorus

It was shift boys, shift, there was not the slightest
doubt
It was time to make a shift with leprosy about.
So I saddled up my horses and whistled to my dog,
And I left that scabby station at the old jig-job."(139

Next to the Chinese, the foreign diggers who made most impression on bush life were the Americans. Although less numerous than the Germans, many of them came from California, and their 'frontier' culture was so like that of the colonists as to be much more readily assimilable. "At first, it must be confessed," wrote a clerical observer, the American diggers

> "made themselves very obnoxious to the peacably disposed portion of the people, in spouting republicanism, and exciting to rebellion against the British Government; ... The era of responsible government, and the advent of manhood suffrage, must have reconciled the Yankees to the country, however, as they were never afterwards heard of as meddling with politics."(140)

On the licence-hunted goldfields some "spouting of republicanism" must have commended the Americans to circles other than

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(139) These stanzas from the version sung to me in 1952 by Mr. Joseph Cashmere of Sylvania, N.S.W., cf. p.22 ff. supra.

(140) "A Clergyman," [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is: or etc., Lond: 1867, pp.166-167; but at a protest meeting in Bendigo in mid-1853, "the Americans behaved with the utmost modesty and propriety." (Wm. Howitt, Land, Labour and Gold: etc., Vol. I, p.409).

those approved by the Rev. Morison.[141] It would be interesti also to know if any part was played by Americans, some of the fresh from their own colour problem at home, in stirring up 'racist' sentiment in Australia. Pure chance seems unlikely to account for the fact that both the first and the worst large-scale anti-Chinese demonstrations in Victoria took place on the 4th July.[142] Americans derived a certain prestige too from being citizens of another 'new country' whose land legislation was in striking contrast with that of the most Australian states. Whenever the burning issue of "unlocking

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(141) For a detailed examination of American influence at Eureka Stockade, and on the goldfields generally, see L.G. Churchward, "Americans and Other Foreigners at Eureka", Historical Studies Eureka Supplement, Dec. 1954, pp.43-49.

(142) On the Bendigo field in 1854 and the Buckland in 1857. At Bendigo a monster 'roll up' which was to drive all the Chinese from the district, was called for the 4th July, but actual violence was averted by the timely and tactful interference of the authorities. (See Myra Willard, History of White Australia Policy, pp.20, 24-26, and cf. L.G. Churchward, loc. cit.)

Dr. Kenworthy and the American consulate successfully exerted themselves to have all the Americans who had taken up arms at Eureka released before the trial - all, that is, except the American Negro, John Joseph, who stood his trial with common diggers. J. Sadleir, Recollections of a Victorian Police Officer, Melb:1913, pp.77-78, mentions American participation in the Buckland riots; but Bruce Kent of Melbourne University, at present engaged in an intensive study of the Buckland field, says there is no evidence of disproportionate American influence among the race rioters.

the land"[143] was discussed, all save the squatters tended to point to the United States as a country which was successfully demonstrating how to create a large body of prosperous individual small-holders.[144]

Much more influential, however, were the colourful manners and 'go-ahead' ways of the Yankees. Old Australians, for long accustomed to despise the helplessness of new chums faced with practical problems, could not but be impressed when 'Brother Johnathan' proceeded to instruct them in the art of bush transport. From 1853 onwards lightly built, American-type buggies, carts, and even four-wheeled coaches and wagons began to rattle over up-country tracks which had previously been considered impassable to anything but the

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(143) The phrase, a very popular one at the time, was used by Thatcher in a song too redolent of the lamp ever to have been really popular. (See Victoria Songster et Melb: 1855, p.33). The refrain reads thus:

> "O, rulers wise! 'tis justice cries,
> That all may share the soil.
> Unlock the lands - there's willing hands
> That want but room to toil."

It is commonplace to read of diggers who had made a modest 'pile' emigrating to America, or to South Australia or New Zealand, where it was easier for a man of moderate means to acquire land of his own. (e.g. T. McCombie, History of the Colony of Victoria etc., p.311; Wm. Howitt, Land, Labour, and Gold: etc., Vol. I, pp.137, 238 ff.; and Robt. Caldwell, Gold Era of Victoria etc., p.94.)

(144) e.g. Wm. Howitt, loc. cit.; F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey etc., Vol. II, p.292; and Robt Caldwell, op. cit., pp.84-87.

ponderous, two-wheeled, colonial bullock-dray.(145) For a time at least American modes of dress, speech and behaviour were imitated by some of the colonists. Rolf Boldrewood, in his Robbery Under Arms, reported the situation accurately in the following passage. Two native-born bush youths, the hero' brother Jim Marston, and his mate, Joe Morton, are preparing to escape police attention by disguising themselves as Americans:

> "Lucky for old Jim we'd all taken a fancy at the Turon, for once in a way, to talk like Arizona Bill and his mates, just for the fun of the thing. There were so many Americans there at first, and they were such swells, with their silk sashes, bowie knives, and broad-leafed 'full-share' hats, that lots of young native fellows took a pride in copying them, and could walk and talk and guess and calculate wonderful well considering. Besides, most of the natives have a sort of slow, sleepy way of talking, so it partly came natural to this chap Joe Morton and Jim..."(146)

However, colourful manners and speech may be seen equally as vulgarity and boastfulness, and smartness in business may

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(145) See p.274 supra. For a good short account of the genesis of Cobb & Co.'s coaching network see E. Shann, Economic History of Australia, pp.284-286. Wm. Kelly, Life in Victoria or etc., Vol. I, pp.277-281, claims that an Englishman was technically first to establish the "fast" coaching service between Geelong and Ballara which was bought by Cobb & Co., at the outset of this firm's career in 1853; but he admits that the Englishman succeeded by using "Yankee coaches," and that he conducted the business for only a few months. Sixty years later men remembered that Americans had solved the problem of bush communications. (See J.C. Hamilton, Pioneering Days in Western Victoria, Melb: N.D. [1913], p.87.

(146) Robbery Under Arms (ed. Chas. Barrett), Lond: 1947, p.332.

pass over into sharp practice and swindling.(147) Finding themselves out-Heroded in these matters by the Yankees, even the old Australians seem to have re-acted somewhat against their influence.(148) The following popular song of the period reflects nicely the mingled admiration and irritation which the Yankees inspired in Colonial breasts:

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(147) In view of the overwhelming evidence of sharp practice by the old colonial hands, it is rather amusing to find them adopting a 'holier-than-thou' attitude toward Americans who, for their part, considered the "Sydney Ducks" and "Sydney Coves" pre-eminent in villainy among all the scoundrels who flocked to the "Barbary Coast" during the Californian Gold Rush. Perhaps the truth is that the emigrants from each country included a very high proportion of its more unconventionally enterprising spirits. (See G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes or etc., p. 208, for a contemporary view of the exodus of rogues from Sydney in 1848 and 1849; and for indications of the high incidence of American rogues in Australia see Knocking About, Being Some Adventures of Augustus Baker Pierce in Australia, (ed. Mrs. Albert T. Leatherbee), Yale and Lond: 1924, pp.22-27 et passim. Pierce, who reached Melbourne in 1860, lived for years in the bush by selling worthless patent medicines, and by kindred activities. He was constantly meeting, according to his own account, compatriots engaged in similar lines of business. He was "disgusted" however, by the hard-headedness of the natives.

F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey etc., Vol. III, pp.129-132, writes interestingly on this subject. He lived in America for many years, and also knew Australia well. He claims that many "Sydney Ducks" were justly hanged by the Californian Vigilante committees, but that the worst characters among the native Americans used 'Sydney Ducks' and Mexicans as scapegoats for their own crimes.

(148) cf. L.G. Churchward, "Australian-American Relations during the Gold Rush," Historical Studies, Vol. 2, No.5, April 1942, p.19.

"I'll sing you quite a novel song, made by a colonial bric
Of a thorough white-washed Yankee who was 'tarnation slick' -
Who thought in every movement his imitation fine,
And aped the manners of the States so truly genuine,
Like a regular white-washed Yankee, one of the present time.

His hat was placed quite jauntily on one side of his head
And he fumbled his big watch-seals at every word he said;
He wore knee boots with gilt-red tops to make his legs look flash,
And at his sides the ends fell down of a long silk Yankee sash,
Like a regular etc.

He had no whiskers nor moustache, but sported a goatee,
He guessed and calculated, and used the word 'siree;'
And to every true American he'd cause a cruel pang,
His conversation was delivered with such a nasal twang,
Like a regular etc.

He lounged at billiard tables, tenpin alleys, and hotels,
And smoked cigars six inches long with other white-washed swells,
Or chewed his cake tobacco, and by General Jackson swore,
Expectorating on the furniture, **but** seldom on the floor.
Like a regular etc.

But with all his imitations, this 'harmless' white-washed rogue,
Was nothing but an Irishman, and had an awful brogue:
Should you ask if he's a Yankee, as his manners indicate,
He'll say, though born in Ireland, he was raised in New York State,
Like a regular etc.

But men from every country the Yankee customs seek,
If in California or the States they've only been a week,
By every man of common sense such conduct must be blamed,
And all these imitators of their country are ashamed.
Like a regular etc." (149)

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(149) The song, a parody of "A Fine Old English Gentleman" (see my article, "Australian Folk-Ballads and Singers," pp.363-364, Meanjin, No.3, 1954) is one of many of the same genre. This version from Thatcher's Colonial Minstrel etc., Melb: 1864, p.168 ff., but it is headed "Written by Mr. Mulholland."

After the Gold Rush there was a sharp falling off in the number of immigrants and visitors from America. The perio from about 1860 till 1900 was one in which Australia, like the United States, was busily occupying the Interior, and was relatively little affected by the outside world. As the gold fever died down there seems to have been a reaction against the passion for copying American ways. Certain it is that the bushman's clothing and accoutrements became more drab and utilitarian (150) while those of his American congener, the cowboy, were soaring to ever higher peaks of complicated flamboyance. A few lines from Lawson's A Word to Texas Jack will give the flavour of Australian popular feeling towards Americans by the end of the century:

"Texas Jack, you are amusin'. Great Lord Harry how I laughed
When I seen your rig and saddle with its bulwarks fore and aft;
.....
How I'd like to see a bushman use your fixins, Texas Jack
On the remnant of a saddle he could ride to hell and back
Why, I've heard a mother cheerin' when her kid went tossin' by,
Ridin' bareback on a bucker that had murder in his eye.

What? You've come to learn the natives how to sit a horse's back!
Learn the bloomin' cornstalk ridin'? W'at yer giv'n us, Texas Jack?
.....

(150) cf. C.E.W. Bean, The Dreadnought of the Darling, Lond: 1911, p.304.

As poet and as Yankee I will greet you, Texas Jack,
For it isn't no ill-feelin' that is gettin' up my back;
But I won't see this land crowded by each Yank and British
cuss
Who takes it in his head to come a-civilizin' us.
.....
So when it comes to ridin' mokes, or hoistin' out the Chow
Or stickin' up for labour's rights, we don't want showin'
how.
They came to learn us cricket in the days of long ago,
An' Hanlan came from Canada to learn us how to row,
An' 'doctors' come from Frisco just to learn us how to ski
An' pugs from all the lands on earth to learn us how to
fight;
An' when they go, as like as not, we find we're taken in,
They've left behind no learnin' - but they've carried off
our tin."(151)

American gold-diggers then had only a transitory influence on the ideology of the bushmen. Implicit in the above lines is that laconic sang-froid, which led an Australian in the early 1830's to observe that his countrymen "could do everything but speak,"(152) and a Frenchman in 1883 to record the following "typical conversation" between two bushmen:

" - Dites donc, un tel, la malleposte a encore chaviré la nuit dernière.
- Aoh! Quelqu'un de mort?
- Non. Jock, le conducteur s'est cassé la jambe. Il y avait quatre personnes dans l'intérieur: l'une a L'oeil gauche crevé; la seconde, quatre côtes enfoncées; l'autre, le poignet démis et une entorse; les deux roues de droite sont passées sur les jambes de la quatrième; il faudra probablement l'amputer.
-Aoh! All right! il n'y a trop de mal tout de même; cela aurait pu être pis.
Hommes de fer, peu sensibles à la douleur et doués d'une énergie indomptables, les gens qui habitent l'intérieur de l'Australie ont autre chose à faire que de s'apitoyer sur le malheur des autres. Malgré leur froideur apparente, ils ont cependant le coeur bien placé, et nul peuple n'est plus prompt à vider sa bourse pour soulager la misère du voisin."(153)

(151) Poetical Works of Henry Lawson, Syd: 1947, pp.376-380.
(152) See p.188 supra.
(153) E. Marin la Meslée, L'Australie Nouvelle, p.53.

One other important effect of the Gold Rush remains to be noted. There can be little doubt that the average standard of educational attainment was much higher among the newcomers than it had been among the pastoral workers prior to the discoveries. Before the advent of free, public education there was necessarily a high positive correlation between literacy and wealth. Before 1851 most immigrants had been convicts or assisted migrants - paupers, in the brutal phrase of the times. The great majority of the gold-seekers had at least enough money to pay the high fares demanded for a ticket to El Dorado.(154)

Contemporary documents abound with references to the large numbers of educated and professional men among the motley crowds that swarmed to the diggings,(155) and it was

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(154) See f.n.114 supra.

(155) e.g., Robert Caldwell, Gold Era of Victoria, etc., pp.80-81: "The observant stranger cannot fail to be struck with this peculiarity of the diggings ... gentle men in manners and education ... often clad in a Guernsey shirt and a cabbage-tree hat..."

only after the Gold Rush that observers began to remark on the high standard of outback literacy.(156) As the earliest surviving version of a cattleman's ballad has it:

(156) e.g., "A University Man" [George Carrington], Colonial Adventures and Experiences, p.34: "But besides this there is a leaven of education and information pervading the whole [working] class which is very remarkable. Books and newspapers are eagerly sought after and read by most of them, whatever their employment. This is more remarkable when you get further into the Bush than it is in the towns." B.A. Heywood, A Vacation Tour to the Antipodes etc., pp.109-110: "Like other shepherds I met with, he was fond of 'The Leisure Hour', 'Chamber's Journal', etc. I trust the volume of the former for 1860, which I was to order for him in Brisbane, reached its destination safely." And Reginald Crawford, Windabyne, A Record of By-Gone Times in Australia etc., (ed. George Ranken), Lond: 189 p.264. (The passage refers to the period prior to 1880) "Many a youth of good family and nurture drops thus into the rough by-ways of life in Australia. Some turn up again, better than ever, having recovered their original status by their own exertions. Others remain among the toiling many on the goldfields, in drovers' camps on the inland plains, or at times, they are found doing lumpers' work on the wharves of Port Jackson.... May not they bear a refining and humaning [sic] influence into those strata. ... Indeed, in the bush, and on the gold fields, this element is now so prominent, as to lead one to think that it must lead towards the 'levelling up' so often advocated by the thinkers of the day." And cf. Charles Streeton, Memoirs of a Chequered Life etc., Vol. III, pp.104, 112.

"When the cattle were all mustered, and the outfit ready to start,
I saw the boys all mounted, with their swags left in the cart;
All sorts of men I had, from France, Germany and Flanders,
Lawyers, doctors, good and bad, in my mob of overlanders.(157)

The result was that, to an imcomparably greater extent than in the early period, the nomad tribe became conscious of itself and of its distinctive ethos. The vast majority of its folk ballads (158) were made and sung between about 1855 and 1900. There is some evidence to show that, particularly in the earlier part of this period, the poetasters who gave the pastoral workers a clearer voice were often educated, middle-class immigrants who had, through force of circumstances, thrown in their lot with the nomad tribe and become, as it were, thoroughly naturalised. How thoroughly is shown by the following ballad which satirises from the 'practical' Australian standpoint, (159) the very values which

(157) The Queenslander's New Colonial Camp Fire Song Book, etc., Sydney: 1865.

(158) i.e., of those of which any fragments survive. Fowler's (see p.279 supra) and Cunningham's (see Cap.VII, infra) references prove that many folk songs, which were subsequently forgotten, must have been made and sung in the pre-Gold Rush period.

(159) cf. Charles H. Eden, My Wife and I in Queensland: etc., Lond: 1872, p.3: "A fact which should be borne in mind by all people reading Australian books, or who bend their thoughts in that direction, is, that in that country no one loses caste by performing bodily labour, indeed it is just the reverse, and the more a man can do for himself the better he will get on."

its nobly-born composer had been brought up to take for granted. A long article in the Sydney Bulletin of 10/3/88 reads in part:

> "During the writer's early experience of these regions ['the back-blocks'] - over twenty years back - when the colonies were inundated by young men of liberal education and of what is called good families, probably a higher average of intelligence obtained than is to be found among the bush population nowadays. ... Many of these, subsidised to remain abroad, were brainless young villains. ... A few knuckled down to the realities of altered existence and gradually sunk [sic] their early associations amid the 'rank and file' in which they had become absorbed. A young fellow of this latter class ... having brought discredit upon the judicial wig of his father (a Scotch lawlord) ... was the soul of the camp, and a champion drinking-man. ... I have purposely witheld his name, as possibly his tough frame still survives the assaults of a thousand sprees, and I am not THE BULLETIN'S fighting-editor. Here is the tale of his own earlier Colonial experiences, as the memory of many 'harmonious' nights spent in his company supplies it:-
>
> THE 'JACKAROO'
>
> When I arrived in Brisbane I thought to cut a dash
> But I was soon pulled up by the shortness of my cash;
> I met a Northern squatter who said that he'd take me
> For forty pounds per annum a Jackaroo to be -
> I'm a Jackaroo, just come from the old countree,
> The squatters here they need not fear that they
> can humbug me.
>
> When I got to the station I saw the super there,
> 'Hallo,' he says, 'my Johnny Raw, what the d---l
> brings you here?'
> And then I draws myself right up, as straight as I
> could be,
> 'I'm here,' I says, 'to do twelvemonths, a Jackaroo
> to be.'
> For I'm a Jackaroo just out from the old countree,
> The squatters here they need not fear that they
> can humbug me.

O, first he sent me driving a nasty, jibbing mare,
He told me that she'd pull the dray without any trouble
or care,
But she stuck me up on the road, and I began to holler
When up the super comes - and calls me a blank blank
crawler,
And a jumped-up Jackaroo just out from the old coun
The squatters here, I'm free to swear, have got the
loan of me.

O, next he sent me shepherding a fighting flock of rams
And next I went a lambing-down to fetch home the green
lambs;
But I couldn't find 'em green - for lambs are mostly
white,
And sure enough I lost myself away in the bush all
night.
Such a stupid Jackaroo just come from the old countr
The squatters here, I greatly fear, have got the
loan of me.

O, next I went off-siding with a beastly bullock-dray,
And next he sent me riding with rations all the day,
And then he sent me cleaning out a dirty lambing-yard,
A rouseabout from this to that my case was very hard.
A luckless Jackaroo, just come from the old countree
The squatters here, I greatly fear, will be the
death of me.

Now, all day while I'm shepherding, and taking of the
sun,
I sigh and wish within myself that this ere lambing
was done;
For the flour it is bad and the tea is bad as well,
And I wish the Northern squatters and their stations
were all in h--l,
That's the hope of a Jackaroo just come from the
old countree.
The squatters here, 'tis very clear, have had the
loan of me.

There is no mistaking the truth of this rude picture, which doubtless was the secret of its popularity in the sphere to which its author had been relegated by the iron hand of circumstances. Some years later, during a trip 'down South,' I heard the familiar chorus,

'I'm a Jackaroo,' awake the island echoes from the fore-cabin as the old Boomerang made her way through the Whitsunday Passage by calm moonlight."(160)

Apart then from this heightened self-awareness, and the new element of racial exclusiveness, the bush workers lived and thought in much the same way after the gold discoveries as they had done before them. And this was due not only to the strength of the old hand-outback tradition, but at least equally to the fact that the conditions of bush life, which had done so much to mould that tradition in the earlier period, were still substantially unchanged after the Gold Rush. In the more settled districts shepherds gave way to boundary riders as a result of fencing,(161) but in Western Queensland and other frontier areas shepherding went on well into the 1880's.(162) This change, by substituting mounted men for the old 'crawlers,' intensified the bushmen's esprit-de-corps;(163) and many redundant shepherds found more satisfying work as fencers or tank-sinkers. The

(160) The article, which is of very great interest, is headed Bush Songs and signed "CAMBASINO".
For further evidence of educated, middle-class immigrant who had become complete bushmen, composing folk songs, see Appendix XV.

(161) C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, pp.95, 180-184

(162) In the Northern Territory many cattle stations were still unfenced in the 1930's. For a fuller account of fencing see Cap. VIII infra.

(163) cf., pp.223-225 supra.

minority of immigrants which remained in the outback after most of the alluvial gold had petered out, was moulded in its turn by the environment.

In 1869 a very acute observer of pastoral life in the Riverina wrote:

> "Our labour in the bush has been supplied from four sources; the first is most familiarly known as 'old hands'; the next is the young native-born population; the third, the digging population of the neighbouring gold fields; the last, the newly arrived immigrants."(164)

He went on to deplore the fact that labourers from the last two classes either departed from the Interior as soon as opportunity offered, or settled down only too quickly into the traditional pattern of behaviour long since established by the old hands and their native-born associates. The reason for this, he argued cogently, was that the conditions of outback life were substantially unchanged. In particular, even the most enterprising newcomers, like their predecessors,

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(164) D.G. Jones (?) Bushmen, Publicans and Politics, Deniliquin: 1869 (P.L.V., Political Economy Pamphlets, Vol. LVIII). The pamphlet, embodying material which "originally appeared in the form of letters addressed to the Pastoral Times nearly two years ago," was "printed by D.G. Jones, Edwardes Street, Deniliquin." Dr. David Griffith Jones, a British immigrant, founded the Deniliquin Pastoral Times in 1859, and was its proprietor until his death in Sydney on Dec. 16, 1876. (See Weekly Times, Melb., 15/2/1928.) A file of the newspaper is available only in Deniliquin, and my letters seeking the identity of the writer of the original letters have produced no response. Whoever he was, his pamphlet provides an exceedingly clear-sighted and thoughtful contemporary account of outback pastoral workers, and the conditions of their life.

could "see no prospect" of becoming their own masters and so of marrying and making homes for themselves. (165)

The substance of this chapter is summed up, not inaptly, in one of the comparatively few gold fields ballads which passed into oral tradition. Census figures show that most of the new-chum diggers must have returned to the capital cities and larger country towns. The following song bodies forth the history of those who did not:

"When first I left Old England's shore
Such yarns as we were told,
As how folks in Australia
Could pick up lumps of gold.
So, when we got to Melbourne town,
We were ready soon to slip
And get even with the captain -
All hands scuttled from the ship.(166)

(165) cf. pp.269-272 supra.

(166) These lines point to the very great number of sailors to be found on the diggings. "Sailor's Gully" and other such place-names were frequent, and there is hardly a contemporary writer who does not make at least incidental reference to the phenomenon. T. McCombie, History of the Colony of Victoria, etc., p.220, writes: "It was next to impossible for masters of ships to prevent their men from escaping, and betaking themselves to the diggings, where they formed one of the most numerous, important, and influential classes, and, being hardworking men were, for the most part, remarkably successful. [But] with the proverbial imprudence of seamen, they generally squandered their tresure in riot and extravagance..." Many, having done so, must, like the narrator in this ballad, have joined the ranks of the nomad tribe; for life in which their adaptability, their handyman skills, and their wandering mode of life, no less than their "proverbial imprudence," made them as a class, peculiarly suited. As "GAMBASINO" wrote in the article already referred to (see pp.345-347 supra): "Runaway sailors formed a strong item of the bush population in those days, and, as a consequence, nautical songs (the original article), redolent of the forecastle the very antithesis of Dibdin's [sic] stagey productions - were frequently heard. The 'old shell' soon assimilated the ways of bush life." And see Appendix XVI.

Chorus:

With my swag all on my shoulder,
Black billy in my hand,
I travelled the bush of Australia
Like a true-born native man.

We steered our course for Geelong Town,
Then north-west to Ballarat,
Where some of us got mighty thin,
And some got sleek and fat.
Some tried their luck at Bendigo,
And some at Fiery Creek;
I made a fortune in a day
And spent it in a week.

For many years I wandered round,
As each new rush broke out,
And always had of gold a pound,
Till alluvial petered out.
'Twas then we took the bush to cruise,
Glad to get a bite to eat;
The squatters treated us so well
We made a regular beat.

So round the 'lighthouse' now I tramp,(167)
Nor leave it out of sight;
I take it on my left shoulder,
And then upon my right,
And then I take it on my back,
And oft upon it lie.
It is the best of tucker tracks,
So I'll stay here till I die."(168)

The Gold Rush diversified the economy, and greatly strengthened the middle class in Australia. It strongly accentuated, if it did not cause, the growth of colour prejudice among pastoral workers; and, by initiating the fencing

(167) the swag.

(168) This version from A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, Syd: 1930 edn., pp.63-64. And cf. Appendix XVI.

of runs, it helped to do away with the system of shepherding and so to enhance the self-respect of bushmen: but it did not change, in any basic way, the nature of their outlook.

Chapter VII

THE BUSHRANGERS

"'Tis of those gallant heroes, God Bless them one and all,
And we'll sit and sing 'God save the Queen,' Dunn,
Gilbert and Ben Hall."

Highway robbery is not an uniquely Australian phenomenon. There have been 'knights of the road' in England and bandits in America and elsewhere: but in nineteenth century Australia bushranging was so widespread, and so strongly supported by public sympathy, that it amounted to a leading national institution.[1] It is this fact which is singular and which demands some explanation. In England the fame of Robin Hood or Dick Turpin pales before that of Drake or Nelson; and in America Sam Bass[2] and Billy the Kid[3] are almost

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(1) Bushranging was, of course, very much more prevalent in New South Wales, and in early Tasmania, than in the other colonies. cf. John Martineau, Letters from Australia, Lond: 1869, pp.115-120: "They [the convicts] have left a legacy behind them which is emphatically the 'peculiar institution' of New South Wales, as distinguished from the other Australian colonies - Bushranging."

(2) See B.A. Botkin, Pocket Treasury of American Folklore, New York, 1950 (1st edn. 1944), pp.84-88.

(3) ibid., pp.78-81; and Chas. A. Siringo, History of "Billy the Kid," New York: 1920. Both men were cattle thieves and outlaws in the ranching country of Texas, New Mexico and the Western States to the northward. Their careers were roughly contemporaneous with that of the Kelly gang in Australia.

entirely eclipsed by Washington and Lincoln. In Australia, however, while every child knows something of Ned Kelly, Macquarie, even to a great many adults, is just the name of a Sydney street favoured by medical specialists, and Deakin, if known at all, is the name of a transcontinental railway siding or Canberra suburb. In this respect popular taste has not changed much since the 1840's, when Mundy wrote;

> "Every country has its great man - hero, poet or philosopher. Van Diemen's Land has, appropriately enough, its great bushranger and desperado to boast of. Michael Howe, without dispute, and without disparagement to other public characters who, on more reputable grounds may deserve a memoir, is the historical great man of this island."(4)

No doubt bushrangers came to occupy such a prominent place in Australian legend partly because, in the last century, Australia took part in no great wars; and thus there were no colourful military figures to serve, as they tend to do in other countries, as symbols of nationalist sentiment. But the matter was not as simple as this.

It is not difficult to understand the reasons for the great prestige of bushrangers in the convict period. The first settlers brought with them from Britain a traditional

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(4) G.C. Mundy, Our Antipodes: or Residence and Rambles in the Australasian Colonies with a Glimpse of the Goldfields, Lond: 1855 (3rd edn.), p.489.

regard for highway robbery. The romantic aura which surrounded it was never stronger than at the end of the eighteenth century when the crime itself was becoming a thing of the past,[5] and men in all walks of life were not unaffected by the fashion. D'Arcy Wentworth seems to have emigrated to New South Wales lest the Law should have viewed too seriously a youthful prank on the roads,[6] and when the first highway robbery in Australia was committed David Collins, the Judge-Advocate, is said to have considered it "one step towards refinement" and "at least a manly method of taking property."[7]

Much more important, however, than the gentry's views on these matters, were those of the lower orders. We have seen above, that the distinctively Australian ethos which developed before 1851, sprang primarily from convict, working-class, Irish and native-born sources, and that it was associated particularly with up-country life. In all these

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(5) Claude Duval, for instance, was executed in 1670, and Dirk Turpin in 1739.

(6) A connection of Earl Fitzwilliam, D'Arcy Wentworth was four times tried and acquitted of robbery on Hounslow Heath. At the last trial in December, 1789, it was announced in court that he had obtained an appointment as assistant surgeon in the convict fleet about to sail for N.S.W. (See Australian Encyclopaedia, Syd: 1926, Vol. II, p.649.)

(7) ibid., Vol. I, p.219. (Collins' book fails to substantiate the reference given in the Encyclopaedia article.)

respects the first bushrangers were more 'Australian' than anybody else. Nearly all of them were convict 'bolters' of whom many were Irish, including Jack Donahoe,[8] the most famous of them all in the early period. A few were native-born youths[9] and the very existence of all depended upon their being more completely 'independent' of the authorities, more adaptable, resourceful, and loyal to each other, than even the most thoroughly acclimatised bush workman. Indeed, if bushmen were the 'true Australians,' runaway convicts were the first of the genus. The very word 'bushranger' had become a part of the language by 1806.[10] At first it referred to the 'bolters'' capacity for living in the bush, as much as to their predatory habits; and so in the absence of any other word it was sometimes applied to the few law-abiding citizens who were also at home in the bush.[11] By

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(8) See pp. 398ff infra.

(9) e.g., "a bushranger named Bevan (free, and a native of Sydney)" (T.B. Wilson, Narrative of a Voyage Round the World; etc., Lond: 1835, p.294; and Underwood, one of Jack Donahoe's gang (Chas. White, Story of Australian Bushranging, No.2, Bathurst: 1891, p.9.) And cf. Edward Curr, Account of the Colony of Van Diemen's Land: etc., Lond: 1824, p.184.

(10) E.E. Morris, Austral English etc., Lond: 1898, p.71. Morris records the Sydney Gazette's use of 'bushranger' (4/5/1806) as a word obviously requiring no explanation.

(11) Australian Encyclopaedia, Vol. I, p.219, quotes the Australian of "as late as 1825" referring to the English explorer, W.H. Hovell as lacking "all the qualities befitting a bushranger."

the 1820's the phrase "to take to the bush" had become a cliché,[12] but the word 'bushman' did not become common until twenty years later.[13] In this chapter we shall find much evidence that the 'old Australian' elements of the population, and in particular the pastoral proletariat of the interior, tended to look upon the bushrangers as heroic symbols of resistance to constituted authority - to look upon them, in short, as themselves writ large.

The convict system manufactured bushrangers. In spite of all that has been said above about the ameliorating effect on the convicts of the Australian environment, it remains true that the system was a lottery in which many government men drew unlucky tickets.[14] A good master like Patrick Leslie might inspire his men to follow him "to hell" itself,[15] but if contemporary chroniclers are to be believed such

(12) James F. O'Connell (ed. from his verbal narration by 'H.H.W.'), A Residence of Eleven Years in New Holland and the Caroline Islands, Boston: 1836, pp.60-61: "... in the country phrase, to 'take to the bush'." [O'Connell left Australia in the mid 1820's.]

(13) E.E. Morris, Austral English etc., p.70, gives 1852 as the first recorded use of the word, but it was common enough in the previous decade. (e.g. [John Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., Lond: 1847, "By 'A Bushman'"); and cf. S.J. Baker, Australia Speaks, Syd: 1952, p.43.

(14) See p.108 supra.

(15) H.S. Russell, Genesis of Queensland etc., Syd: 1888, p.171.

employers were rather exceptional. Harris estimated that "two-thirds of the crimes of the lower classes of the colony are the fruits of seed sown by the masters' own hands,"(16) and Sidney roundly declared that "bushranging by prisoners, has in almost every instance been occasioned by cruel, unjust masters."(17) After his retirement Macquarie wrote to Bathurst on 10th October 1823:

> "I have no doubt that many convicts who might have been rendered useful and good men, had they been treated with humane and reasonable control, have sunk into despondency by the unfeeling treatment of such masters; and that many of those wretched men, driven to acts of violence by harsh usage, and who, by a contrary treatment, might have been reformed, have taken themselves to the woods, where they can only subsist by plunder, and have terminated their lives at the gallows."(18)

The more conscientiously and capably an assigned servant performed his work, the greater temptation he provided to an unscrupulous master to prolong his servitude. And this was particularly true of the 1840's when the demand for labour in the interior was keen and transportation to the mainland

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(16) 'A. Harris,' Settlers and Convicts (C.M.H. Clark ed.), Melb: 1953, p.188.

(17) [John Sidney], Voice from the Far Interior etc., p.20; and cf. R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in N.S.W. and Vic., etc., Lond: 1863, pp.47-48; J. Pitts Johnson, Plain Truths Told by a Traveller etc., Lond: 1840, pp.43-44; John Graham (ed.) Lawrence Struilby; or etc., Lond: 1863, p.53.

(18) Quoted A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W. etc., Lond: 1847, pp.170-171.

had ceased. "Masters, particularly of late years," wrote J.C. Byrne in 1848,

> "have been unrelenting in their treatment of convicts; getting them punished for fancied offences, in order to prolong the term of their sentence, and prevent them obtaining a ticket-of-leave. ... When an assigned servant obtains a ticket-of-leave it is a dead loss to the master, to the amount that has to be paid a free man to replace him, no other convict being re-assigned, at present, in his stead."(19)

Most contemporaries agreed that flogging was a particularl efficacious means of producing bushrangers.(20) In November 1836, an officer who had been stationed at the Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, for only about fifteen months, told the Quaker missionary, Backhouse:

> "that upwards of one thousand men had been flogged in the course of that period! He stated his opinion to be, that how much soever men may dread flagellation, when they have not been subjected to it, they are generally degraded in their own estimation, and become reckless, after its infliction. This, we have found to be a very prevailing opinion, in the Colony."(21)

More impressive, perhaps, is the first-hand evidence of Judge Therry who wrote:

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(19) Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847 etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1848, Vol. 1, p.262.

(20) For an interesting specific case of flagellation driving a convict directly into bushranging, see John McGuire, "Early Colonial Days: the Biography of a Reliable Old Native, written by W.H. Pinkstone after many interviews and fireside chats." (Cootamundra Herald, 16/2/1907. The newspaper published these reminiscences serially from Jan. 5th, 1907 till June 22nd of the same year.)

(21) J. Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies, Lond: 1843, p.455.

> "Bushrangers, it is known, have been the terror of New South Wales. Of some hundreds of them who passed through our criminal courts, I do not remember to have met with one who had not been over and over again flogged before he took to the bush... the lash was used for the purpose of extorting a confession of guilt from vaguely suspected persons."(22)

A few actual cases will show the mingling of complete despair and indomitable defiance, with which some convicts reacted to this treatment. In 1831 a bushranger named William Webber, who had outlived his chief, Jack Donahoe, was caught, tried and sentenced to death. The day before his execution he proved to Therry, that he and others had actually committed a crime for which two innocent men were suffering at Norfolk Island. Moved by this evidence of good feeling and by his youth - Webber was only twenty-five and "in the full vigour of a robust manhood" - Therry offered to try to save him from the gallows if he would reveal particulars of other crimes. The bushranger's reply was:

> "No, sir, I thank you; but I will disclose nothing. All I could gain by it would be to be sent to Norfolk Island, and I would rather be hanged than go there. Don't trouble yourself about me; leave me to my fate."

The italics are Therry's, not Webber's. He was hanged at the appointed time next day.(23)

Another early bushranger named Hall, when sentenced to death in Sydney on 15th May, 1839, said from the dock:

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(22) R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' etc., p.43; and cf. John Graham (ed.), Lawrence Struilby; or etc., p.53.

(23) R. Therry, op. cit., p.22 ff.; and cf. G.C. Ingleton, True Patriots All etc., Syd: 1952, p.269. It seems that Ingleton is mistaken in saying that Webber was shot

> "I've been all over the country in my time without taking the life of anyone. I've been baited like a bulldog and I'm only sorry now I didn't shoot every ------ tyrant in New South Wales."

To the crowd outside the gaol he said:

> "I've never had anything to say against the prisoners, but I've a grudge against every ------ swell in the country. I'll go to the gallows and die as comfortable as a biddy, and be glad of the chance."(24)

It is very interesting to find that this recalcitrant spirit seems to have been responsible for a reform of the kind which is customarily put down to the influence of humanitarian ideas. In November 1834 a celebrated bushranger named Jenkins was publicly hanged for the murder of Dr.Wardell According to the Sydney Herald of 13/11/1834, "the neighbourhood of the gaol was crowded to a degree never before observed on any similar occasion," because Jenkins' truculent behaviour in court had aroused the expectation that he would make a particularly spirited exit from this world. His traditional speech from the drop began with the words:

> "Well, good bye my lads, I have not time to say much to you; I acknowledge I shot the Doctor, but it was not for gain, it was for the sake of my fellow prisoners because he was a tyrant, and I have one thing to recommend you as a friend, if any of you take the bush, shoot every tyrant you came across, and there are several now in the yard who ought to be served so."(25)

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(24) G.E. Boxall, Story of the Australian Bushrangers, Lond: 1899, p.59.

(25) Sydney Herald, loc. cit.

Apparently the incident was still being talked about ten years and more later when Marjoribanks recorded a summarised version of the speech, remarking that it created such "a wonderful impression" on the minds of the audience, that Governor Bourke gave orders that executions were to be performed privately in future.(26) The New South Wales Government Gazette, for some years following Jenkins' execution, contains no record of any official directive concerning the practice to be followed at executions, but it seems likely that in fact some such unofficial instructions were given. For example, the collective hanging of the seven murderers of Aborigines in the notorious Myall Creek massacre, which took place four years later on 18th December, 1838, created a tremendous stir in the colony. Contemporary accounts make it clear that this ceremony was performed privately.(27) On the other hand, criminals in the Port Phillip District continued to be hanged publicly in the time-honoured fashion until 1847. In that year, partly owing to Latrobe's apprehensions of violence from the multitude, the scaffold was moved

(26) A. Marjoribanks, Travels in New South Wales etc., pp.221-222; and cf. Historical Records of Australia, Series I, Vol. XVII, p.647 (Bourke to Spring-Rice, 2/2/1835) and notes 157, 158. Marjoribanks gives Jenkins' speech as: "My friends, I am about to suffer for your sake, and for ridding the world of a bloody tyrant; and I hope that all of you will follow my example, and serve every other bloody tyrant in the same manner."

(27) See Sydney Herald and Colonist newspapers for 19/12/1838; and cf. the accounts of the Gazette and the Monitor quoted by G.C. Ingleton, True Patriots All, Syd: 1952, pp.200-201.

inside the gaol-yard so that the condemned man's body would be invisible from outside, once the trap had been sprung. At the next Melbourne hanging the whole performance was invisible from without.(28) This administrative practice was legalised by two acts "to regulate the execution of criminals' which were passed by the New South Wales and Victorian Legislative Councils, and which received the Royal approval, respectively in 1854 and 1855.(29)

Yet in England a similar statute to end public hangings was not passed until 1868, and until that year crowds flocked to the spectacles.(30) At Courvoisier's execution in London in 1840, "as much as £2 was paid for a window," and one titled person hired for a day and a night, for himself and his friend an hotel room with a good view of the drop.(31) Much later "the rich and the idle" were still paying high prices for places "commanding a good view."(32)

(28) "Garryowen," [Edmund Finn], Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835 to 1852, Historical, Anecdotal and Personal, 2 vols. Melb: 1888, Vol. I, pp.394-412.

(29) Statutes of N.S.W., 17° Vic., No.40, and Acts and Ordinances of Victoria 18° Vic., 1854-55. Both acts provided that condemned prisoners should be executed "within the walls or enclosed yard" of a gaol, and that only such clergy, gaolers, police officers, military guards and adult spectators as the Sheriff chose to admit should be present.

(30) Viscount Hailsham (ed.), Halsbury's Laws of England, bein etc., (2nd edn.), Lond: 1938, Vol. XXX, p.137; and cf. L.O. Pike, History of Crime in England Illustrating the Changes of the Laws in the Progress of Civilisation etc. 2 vols., Lond: 1876, Vol. II, pp.451-452.

(31) Leon Radzinowicz, History of English Criminal Law and Its Administration from 1750, Lond: 1948, Vol. I, p.204.

(32) L.O. Pike, loc. cit.

Having regard to the intense bitterness of feeling which helped to produce this legal reform, and to its causes, it is not surprising that bushranging should have been endemic in Australia, but rather that it should have been conducted with so little actual bloodshed. Some brutal and cold-blooded crimes including rape and murder were committed,(33) but generally speaking, bushrangers took pains to avoid 'unnecessa violence. The picture given by Marjoribanks is a balanced one:

> "They cannot be called a bloodthirsty set of men; indeed, I should say, that, upon the whole, they were rather the reverse. They are, of course, for the most part, reckless and determined characters; but latterly, at all events, they have seldom been in the habit of committing murder or violence upon the person, unless when resisted, as they find this their best policy. ... I met with at least twenty individuals in that country who had been attacked by the bushrangers, and not one of them had been maltreated, as they had offered no resistance. Indeed, I was sometimes surprised how they were allowed to walk the course, even under circumstances where defence would almost, to a certainty, have been attended with success."(34)

(33) See Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, 2 vols. Syd: 1900, Vol. I, pp.4-5, 96, 187. "The Monster Jefferies," for instance, dashed out the brains of a five-months old baby, because its mother, whom he had abducted to be raped, would not walk fast enough. He was also a cannibal. (cf. the account in the Hobart Town Gazette, 28/1/1826, quoted by G.C. Ingleton, True Patriots All etc., Syd: 1952, pp.107, 109, 267.)

(34) A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W. etc., pp.158-159. And cf. P. Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1827, Vol. II, p.197 ff.; H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life etc., Lond: 1848, pp.37-39.

It paid bushrangers to avoid bloodshed because such a policy greatly increased the esteem in which they were held by wide sections of the community. It is clear that, both before and after the Gold Rush decade, the desperadoes could not have existed for long if it had not been for the almost universal sympathy and support of the bush proletariat. Darling declared that the bushrangers' accomplices and receivers of their stolen goods formed a "very numerous Class," which was the "root and foundation" of the evil;(35) but he does not seem to have realised that this "class," at least if sympathisers be included in it, constituted a majority of the inhabitants of the colony. Perhaps he did realise the true position, but thought it impolitic to state it in official documents. James Macarthur, a native-born grandee, had no such illusions, or reservations. More than ten years after Darling's predecessor had determined on measures for "eradicating" bushranging completely,(36) Macarthur wrote that

> "The sympathies of the numerical majority of the inhabitants are in favour of the criminals, whom they would rather screen from punishment, than deliver over to justice."(37)

(35) H.R.A., Series I, Vol. XII, p.208 (Darling to Bathurst, 6/3/1826), and 210 (Govt. Order).

(36) ibid., Vol. XI, p.553 (Brisbane to Under Secretary, Horton, 24/3/1825).

(37) [James Macarthur] (see footnote (77), p.182 supra), New South Wales: Its Present State and Future Prospects: etc., Lond: 1837, p.63. The statement refers to the public attitude to criminals in general. Bushrangers, because of their up-country habitat and romantic associations, were obviously regarded even more favourably. Ten years later Marjoribanks (Travels in N.S.W. etc., pp.116-117) repeated Macarthur's statement almost verbatim, adding to it the word "still."

Later still, in 1848, Haygarth wrote that the mounted police had the very greatest difficulty in:

> "gaining correct information of [the bushrangers'] movements. The shepherds and stock-keepers, occupying the lonely out-stations, are the best authority upon these matters, if they choose to be so; but it unfortunately heppens that many of these men, who have themselves been 'in trouble,' have a secret leaning towards the runaways, or at least they remain neutral, and only see what they think proper, and this renders it very difficult for the police to worm out of them any information on which they can depend. The bushrangers, on the other hand, before they have been 'out' very long, are sure to have correct informants in many quarters ..."(38)

And later again, when after a quarter century of responsible government Ned Kelly was hanged in November, 1880, men could still talk seriously of a revolt of sympathisers.(39)

In drawing attention to the differences between the early bushrangers and those who took to the bush after the Gold

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(38) Recollections of Bush Life etc., p.40; and cf. John Hood, Australia and the East etc., Lond: 1843, p.178; and Chas. MacAlister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South, Goulburn, 1907, pp.271, 323.

(39) John Sadlier, Recollections of a Victorian Police Officer, Melb: 1913, p.239; and Max Brown, Australian Son: The Story of Ned Kelly, Melb: 1948, pp.235, 239 et passim.

Rush, some writers (40) have minimised or overlooked entirely the more important similarities between the two generations. It is true that most of the former were ex-convicts, driven to bushranging by harsh taskmasters, and most of the latter native-born youths who chose to take to the roads partly out of a misguidedly romantic sense of adventure. It is true too that the earliest bushrangers, in both New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, moved about relatively limited areas of country on foot, but by the last pre-Gold Rush decade most of them were mounted, as were those of the post-Gold Rush period. The continuity of the tradition is exemplified in the life of John Mc.Guire. According to his own account, Mc.Guire was born in Kent St., Sydney, on 28th April, 1826. His mother was a Hawkesbury native, daughter of John Masterton

(40) e.g. Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, Vol. I, p.203; A.W. Jose, History of Australia etc., Syd: 1924 (10th edn.), pp.165-166; and E.G. Shann, who implies that the Free Selection Acts were mainly responsible for post-Gold Rush bushranging (Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. VII, Part I, Camb: 1933, pp.301-302; and Economic History of Australi (Melb: 1948 edn.), pp.208-209, 216-219).
"A Clergyman," [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is etc., Lond: 1867, p.227 ff., provides some contemporary support for Shann's view: "It [bushranging] broke out when the people's passions were excited in the universal cry of 'Free selection before survey' - the right to go and settle anywhere they liked." Undoubtedly free selection legislation did exacerbate the problem. (See pp. 391-395 infra.)

convict, transported for "making pikes" in the Irish rebellio of 1798. His father was "a native of Dublin" who "came out to the colonies in 1818" - whether as a convict or a free immigrant, we are not told. At the age of nine years he ran away from home with another boy and made his way across the mountains, mainly, it seems, because of the romantic aura which was already associated with the Interior. It was his delight to work for bullock-drivers "to learn the ways of the bush and listen to their tales." While still a lad he spent some years wandering with a tribe of Aborigines. At fifteen he had accumulated a herd of twenty "weaners" as wages from friendly stockmen. He married a daughter of John Walsh, "a Tipperary man", who owned Wheogo Station in the Weddin Mountains, and thus became a brother-in-law of Ben Hall, the celebrated bushranger.(41) It is hard to believe that in the minds of such men there was any very significant distinction between the earlier and later outlaws.

Cold-blooded murders were committed by the Clarke brothers in 1866(42) and by the Kellys in 1878,(43) as well as by Lynch in 1841;(44) but usually, in both the earlier and

(41) See Mc.Guire's narrative, "Early Colonial Days etc.", Cootamundra Herald, 5/1/1907 - 22/6/1907.

(42) G.E. Boxall, Story of the Australian Bushrangers, pp.269-276. (The victims in this case, however, were police informers who had volunteered for the duty.)

(43) ibid., p.356 ff.

(44) ibid., p.60 ff.

later periods, bushrangers took care to give some versimilitude to the Robin Hood role which their admirers thrust upon them.(45) They boasted, with some truth, that they robbed only from the rich (who of course were most worth the trouble);(46) and if they did not give much actual cash to the poor, other than their accomplices and "bush telegraphs,"(47) they dispensed to them gratis, on every possible occasion, endless quantities of other people's rum. They also singled out for attention those squatters who had the reputation of being hard or unjust taskmasters.(48) Indeed, it is misleading to speak of two 'waves' of bushranging, separated by the Gold Rush decade. In fact many men found it easier to rob the diggers than to dig for themselves, even at the

(45) See, e.g. G.E. Boxall, Story of the Australian Bushrangers, pp.44 ff., 71 ff., et passim; and Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, Vol. I, pp.48 ff., p.95, 187 ff., et passim.

(46) e.g., Frank Power, mentor of the youthful Ned Kelly, When charged with bushranging in the Beechworth Police Court, he defended himself by maintaining that he always refrained from robbing poor men who "worked hard for their money," and the witnesses who had been present at his 'hold-ups' (including some of the victims) corroborated him. (See Ovens and Murray River Advertiser Tuesday, 14 June, 1870: and cf. Chas. Macalister, Old Pioneering Days etc., p.256, and A. Joyce (ed. G.F.James A Homestead History, Melb: 1942, p.162.

(47) "They were invariably young men, some of them mere boys, intimately acquainted with the bush, who could ride miles of the roughest country more speedily than the badly mounted troopers could ride along good roads..." (Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging etc., Vol. II, p.2). The term was used, of course, only after the Gold Rush.

(48) ibid., Vol. I, pp.184-185.

height of the Rush in the early fifties when gold was obtaine most easily.[49] And many at least of these Gold Rush bush-rangers, like Melville, also conformed to the traditional pattern of 'chivalrous' behaviour established in convict days

After the Gold Rush the tone of bourgeois respectability, imparted to society by the rapid growth of the urban middle classes, seems to have ensured that nearly all newspapers and most writers[51] felt constrained to deny to the outlaws possession of any 'Robin Hood' qualities. For example, even the radical, and relatively cant-free, Bulletin took a wholly proper attitude in 1880 to "the annihilation of the Kellys,"

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(49) See e.g., Wm. Howitt, Iand, Labour, and Gold; or etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1855, Vol. I, pp.63, 126-127, 362-367; Vol. II, pp.32-33; and O. De Satge, Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter, Lond: 1901, pp.10-11.

(50) See e.g., W. Craig, My Adventures on the Australian Goldfields, Lond: 1903, pp.89-106; "A Resident," Social Life and Manners in Australia: Being the Notes of Eight Years' Experience, Lond: 1861, pp.112-113; and G.H. Wathen, The Golden Colony, Lond: 1855, pp.147-152.

(51) Not including, of course, semi-literate 'folk-writers' and composers of ballads. See, e.g., Jack Bradshaw, "Who Was Personally Acquainted with Them All," True History of the Australian Bushrangers, n.d. (c.1930), Syd: and "Moonlight Without Prejudice," History of Jinglemoney 1835-1935 (MS "History" placed in History Dept., A.N.U. files, 1953). It begins, "In attempting, to write the History of Jinglemoney as I know it, for 50 years, & from what I have been told b reliable Authorities for 50 years I appeal to my Readers generosity to judge me Lightly, as I have no claim of being an Educated man, 'I am not.'"). But even such writers are so affected by the temper of their times as to make ludicrously transparent attempts to appear 'respectable. Thus Bradshaw, p.70: "In the short account of Morgan I wish to state that I am not defending him in his ill-doings, for he was a terror to the police, and shot them down like dingoes wherever he had an encounter with them Poor Morgan. ... His respect for old women and love for little children gained him the admiration of everyone with whom he came in contact."

denying that they, or the spirit they symbolised, possessed any redeeming qualities whatever.(52) A stanza from an unsigned Bulletin 'poem' on Ned Kelly's imminent apotheosis reflects faithfully the general tone of outraged propriety, protesting itself slightly too much:

> "Oh, out on such 'sympathy'! Can we discover
> One reason this brigand's existence to save?
> No, indeed! for, in sooth, we should rather mourn over
> Each poor murdered man who lies stark in his grave!
> As he's lived, let him die! a base wretch without feeling
> A bushel of quicklime is all that he's worth!
> Let the grave of a felon his corpse be concealing, -
> And blot his name off from the face of the earth!"(53)

Similarly, though his own book provides it in abundance, Boxall wrote that he could "find no evidence ... that the highwaymen robbed the rich to give to the poor;" and he went on to bolster his claim by such extraordinary statements as that a wealthy class "did not exist in convict times, and is only just beginning to appear now."(54) In fact the later bushrangers, like their predecessors, were on the whole surprisingly gentlemanly ruffians. Fifty years before Boxall wrote, Marjoribanks considered the institution of bushranging with a Radical Whiggish eye, comparatively unclouded by either romantic sentimentality or considerations of bourgeois

(52) Bulletin, 3/7/1880, p.9; and 10/7/1880, p.8.
(53) ibid., 6/11/1880, p.8
(54) Story of the Australian Bushrangers, p.189.

propriety. His characterisation was as true of the later bushrangers as it was of those he was describing:

> "... On the two occasions above alluded to, they returned to the different parties no less than L.5, 14s. for their expenses on the road; and did you ever hear of people who had been robbed in this country getting back anything at all? ... When they rob drays, they uniformly invite the drivers, who are, for the most part, convicts also, and have a fellow-feeling towards them, to take a social glass with them, of the drink which they are almost sure to find; ... the prospect of which at once disarms all opposition; and when they rob dwelling-houses, they generally behave in the same gentlemanly manner, provided no resistance be offered. .. ... They seldom attack the dwellings of the working classes, except when hard pushed, and then they are not very severe, as if they get their pipes lighted, and something to eat, they are generally satisfied, though they almost invariably seize fire-arms, when they come in their way. ...
> The more polite, and the more reasonable they are in their demands, the longer do they escape, as, when those attacked are well used, they will not put themselves to much trouble to get them apprehended. ... When vidence is used they seldom escape long, as the whole country, as it were, rise up against them."(55)

Even Morgan, notoriously the most murderous of all post-Gold Rush banditti, whose mind was so disordered that he habitually robbed alone and had no mates, knew in his muddled way what tradition expected of a bushranger. When he visited Stitt Brothers' Wolla Wolla Station he:

> "compelled the proprietor to bring rum to the wool shed and treat all the shearers. He made particular

(55) Travels in New South Wales, pp.162, 165, 167, et passim; and cf. James F. O'Connell, A Residence of Eleven Years etc., p.65: "Neither bushrangers or barrack prisoners, however, often betray runaways, and when they do, those betrayed are usually persons whose crimes on the road have become too revolting even to convicts."

> enquiries as to the treatment the servants received, and instructed the servants to acquaint him if they were ill-used, as he was always to be found thereabouts."(56)

In the eyes of the bush workers, and of a great many other colonists, bushrangers derived added prestige merely from being, so to speak, the professional opponents of the police. It may be doubted whether the police force of any English-speaking country, except Ireland, has ever been more thoroughly unpopular than were those of the Australian colonie in the last century.(57) Even special corps like the Queensland Native Mounted Police, in sad contrast with such bodies as the Royal Canadian Mounted, established a reputation for

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(56) Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, Vol. II, p.152.

(57) cf. pp.76-79, 317 ff. supra.
This is not the place for a detailed history of the colonial police forces. In what follows, as in the thesis at large, we are concerned with prevailing social attitudes to events and with the reasons for them, rather than with the events themselves.

ferocity rather than gallantry.(58) The popular attitude towards policemen in general was one of hatred and contempt, reflected accurately though perhaps not felicitously, in a ballad on the death of Ben Hall. The relevant verses read thus:

"Come all Australia's sons to me -
A hero has been slain
And cowardly butchered in his sleep
Upon the Lachlan Plain.

He never robbed a needy man -
His records sure will show
How staunch and loyal to his mates,
How manly to the foe.

At last he left his trusty mates -
The cause I ne'er could hear -
The bloodhounds of the law were told,
And after him did steer.

(58) E.B. Kennedy, The Black Police of Queensland: Reminiscences of Official Work and Personal Adventures in the Early Days of the Colony, Lond: 1902. Kennedy, an officer of the Corps, naturally gives a highly favourable account of its activities. His story is remarkable, however, for its tremendous reticence, vagueness and brevity when describing the "dispersement" of Aboriginal parties believed to include criminals (pp.118-120, 150). The indiscriminate slaughter of men, women and children, frequently carried out on such occasions, is described only slightly less reticently by O. De Satgé, Pages from the Journal etc., pp.173-174. Chas. H. Eden, My Wife and I in Queensland: etc., Lond: 1872, gives a less reticent, but also less convincing, defence of the "Black Police" (pp.109-118).

A.J. Vogan, The Black Police: A Story of Modern Australia, Lond: 1890, avowedly sets out to make a case against the Corps (see esp. pp.165-183).

The most judicious (and damning) account is probably that of James Inglis, Our Australian Cousins, Lond:1880, pp.56-57; and cf. Mrs. Campbell Praed, My Australian Girlhood, Lond: 1902, pp.14, 18-27, 90-100 et passim; and Carl Lumholtz, Among Cannibals, an Account of Four Years' Travels in Australia etc., Lond: 1890, pp.53-54.

They found his place of ambush then,
And cautiously they crept,
And savagely they murdered him
While still their victim slept.

Yes, savagely they murdered him,
Those coward Blue-coat imps
Who only found his hiding-place
From sneaking peelers' pimps."(59)

The following stanzas from an English popular ballad of the nineteenth century reflect a rather different attitude. Underlying the satire is a note of raillery which recognises that, in Britain, even a policeman was 'a man for a' that':

"To the kitchen maids like wax I'll stick,
And though I'm not a glutton,
(The thought on't makes me my chops lick)
Oh, I likes a bit of mutton.
When in my toggery I'm arrayed,
From me there's no release, man,
The boldest of men would be afraid,
If I was a new Policeman.

Chorus:

Taking up and knocking down,
Your noise and bother cease, man,
O, won't I come it jolly brown,
When I'm a new Policeman.

A drunken man's a chance I'd hail,
It would my ear delight, sir,
To search him well I would not fail,
For right is naught to might, Sir.
I'd turn his pockets inside out,
And quickly would him flay, man,
And who would dare to harbour doubt,
Against a new Policeman."(60)

(59) From the version in A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs. See Appendix XVII.

(60) From the version in John Ashton, London Street Ballads, Lond: 1888, p.64. See Appendix XVIII for full text and that of another ballad of the same genre.

When founded in August 1789, the New South Wales police force consisted entirely of convicts, for between them and the military who "had their line of duty marked out for them. there was no description of people from whom overseers or watchmen could be provided."(61) And until the Gold Rush and later, partly because Currency Lads were so "utterly averse"(62) to the idea of police service, convicts or ex-convicts made up a large, though steadily decreasing, part of the force.(63) From the point of view of the convicts, and of a great many other Australians who were strongly influenced by their outlook,(64) those who became policemen and overseers were not the best prisoners but the worst. By consenting to act as constables they broke, in the most flagrant possible way, the first principle of 'government men' and bush workers - that of loyalty to one's mates. Whatever else might be added to them in the way of spiritual

(61) David Collins, Account of the English Colony in N.S.W. etc., Lond: 1798, p.77-79.

(62) See p.190 supra.

(63) As late as 1858 it was apparently still possible for an ex-convict to be an inspector in the New South Wales police force, and for him at the same time to act, in disguise, as a common informer. (See Adrian Wentworth Bucknell, Introduction of the Continental Spy System into New South Wales, and Employment of Convict expirees as Agents of the System, Adelaide: 1858 (P.L.V., N.S.W. Pamphlets, Vol. XI). If Bucknell, a New England grazier, is to be believed, the inspector and a fellow ex-convict policeman trumped up a charge of cattle-stealing against him for the sake of the reward.

(64) Cap. III supra.

grace or worldly perquisites, they forfeited utterly the respect of their fellows. 'Harris' records very justly the loathing in which they were held, when he writes that they were men "who have crept up from their own [the convicts'] ranks by cunning and sycophancy, and because they would do any dirty work rather than submit to bodily toil."(65) And Collins says that from the very beginning their fellow prisoners regarded them with "scorn ... fear and detestation."(

(65) Settlers and Convicts, p.185; and cf. idem., The Emigrant Family etc., Lond: 1849, Vol. I, p.209: "Grims after getting over the principal part of his servitude as a farm constable - and some said a portion of it as a scourger at a distant police station - had, ever sinc he became free, held the situation of a constable at on or other of the townships. This office, in Australia, is at once the most despised and the most lucrative; the salary is ample, because the odium is great ..." [But some contemporaries mentioned inadequate salaries a a part of the reason for police force corruption.] And cf. Mrs. Vidal, Bengala: or, Some Time Ago, Lond: 1860, pp.80-81: "They both turned to listen and to look, while peals of laughter were succeeded by loud hissing, and a sharp clapping of hands which echoed again and again. .. 'A curious noise for Sunday evening,' said Isabel; 'and look - look at the men, running and throwing, yes, throwing stones at some one.' ...
... The man servant stood on the verandah, grinning wide 'What is it, Patrick?' inquired Isabel. 'Only the men hissing Dan, miss;' and he grinned again as he pointed. ... 'And for what does he dare to show his brutal face here among the lads. Who is he, miss? why Dan .., You se that's the flogger, miss. He is under a mistake to come here entirely, there's many would kill him dead just could they get their fingers on him. They'd settle him - that's Dan Cats Tail, as they call him, and sure he's ar ugly cratur, enough to frighten the very birds of the ai
And cf. Chas. Macalister, Old Pioneering Days etc., p.16; and Description of Sydney, Parramatta, etc., in a Letter from John Slater to his Wife in Nottingham, Lond: 1819, pp.8-9.

(66) David Collins, Account of the English Colony etc., pp.79, 85.

It is not surprising that policemen should have been hated or despised by criminals, old hands and their friends; but there is abundant evidence that this attitude was by no means confined to the less wealthy classes. Of course there were many honourable exceptions and the quality of police personnel did improve as the years passed,(67) but throughout the nineteenth century there are constant complaints that Australian policemen were corrupt, besotted, cowardly, brutal and inefficient. Of the early days in Tasmania one observer wrote,

> "There was a force called the Field Police, who were volunteer convicts that had served a certain time, and by additional service got a ticket-of-leave or emancipation. They were hated by all classes, for they had power without principle. Very few of them, I believe, but would have sworn a man's life away for a crown. ..."(

In Macquarie's day Wentworth thought the Sydney police badly organised and too few in number, while to those in the countr districts he considered "it would be a farce to apply the name of police at all."(69)

(67) e.g. Capt. F.H. Lambert, from the middle 1860's, Inspecto of Police in the Peak Downs District, Central Queensland According to Oscar de Satgé, one of the leading squatter of the area, Lambert, died "respected by the whole district." His predecessor, J.T. Griffin, however, was hanged for murdering two of his own men. (Pages from the Journal etc., pp.179-186.) And Martin Brennan strikes one as having been an honest, if uninspired police offic (See his Reminiscences of the Gold Fields and Elsewhere in New South Wales, covering a period of forty-eight years' service as an Officer of Police, Syd: 1907.)

(68) John Graham (ed.), Lawrence Struilby: or etc., pp.57-58.

(69) W.C. Wentworth, Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales: etc., Lond: 1820, p.358. And cf. Commissioner Bigge's low opinion of the police (Report on the State of the Colony etc., Lond: 1822, pp.106-107.)

In 1826 Atkinson, formerly principal clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office, thought "the police of the colony --- still very defective" though it had recently "received improvements."(70)

Four years later the police 'received further improvement in the shape of increased powers conferred upon them by "An Act to suppress Robbery and Housebreaking and the harbouring of Robbers and Housebreakers" (21st April, 1830). This law, which came to be known as the Bushranging Act, was passed for a period of only two years, because it was felt to be a temporary measure made necessary by the alarming activities of the bushrangers. It conferred upon "any person whatsoever" the right to arrest, without a warrant, and hale before the nearest J.P., anyone suspected of being "a transported felon unlawfully at large."(71) As a rule the only persons to exercise this right were police constables, and their feckless and arbitrary use of it caused untold annoyance to all colonists except those who were themselves J.P.'s or people almost equally well-known and presumptively respectable. J.C. Byrne, for instance, was arrested at the Ovens River in the Port Phillip district, to be taken back to Sydney for identificati

(70) James Atkinson, Account of Agriculture and Grazing in N.S.W., etc., Lond: 1826, p.140.

(71) Statutes of N.S.W., 11, Geo. IV, No. 10.

for no better reason than that a venal mounted police corporal wanted an excuse for visiting the publican's daughte at Yass on the way back to the capital.(72) 'Harris' records half a dozen or more similar cases which he observed personally, being "very careful on so serious a point to state only what [he was] positive of." One man who came free to the colony told 'Harris' that he was "generally arrested twice every year, under the Bushranging Act," and a native-born lad claimed to have "passed seven weeks out of three months marching in handcuffs" by the side of constables who had formed completely groundless suspicions. The Currency people tended to suffer most because, "having been born in the colony [they] had no protective document whatever."(73) Yet the act was renewed, with slight modifications but with

(72) Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847 etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1848, Vol. I, p.166 ff and cf. Letter to Editor, Sydney Herald 19/12/1838, on "Mounted Police". Byrne alleges also that "Ex-Chief-Justice Sir James Forbes was once stopped by an officiou policeman ----, actually handcuffed, and marched down to Sydney, a distance of near forty miles, for 'identification.'" (Though Byrne is an unusually well-informed and reliable witness, this story seems quite incredible. Perhaps his own experience made him willing to believe anything on this subject.)

(73) Settlers and Convicts, (ed. C.M.H. Clark) pp.75-84. And cf. The Currency Lad, Sat., Dec. 29th, 1832, Letter to Editor: "On Tuesday last, I happened to be on the Parramatta Road, when [a mounted policeman] apprehended a person, who stated himself to be free, when within a short distance of home --- at which place he stated he would produce his certificate of freedom; instead,--- he took him handcuffed --- to Sydney. The Mounted Policeman was in such a state of intoxication at the time that he could hardly set [sic] on his horse. --- etc. [Signed] A Currency Lad."

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none of principle, every two years until the gold discoveries Mr. Justice Burton thought it repugnant to the laws of Englan and Bourke was troubled with similar qualms, but the "opinion of the best informed colonists" of the magistrates, and of the Legislative Council was decisive.(75) Even the colonial gentry and officials must often have felt that they were caught in a vicious circle. Policemen, because of their inefficiency, were given sweeping powers which in turn caused them to be more irresponsible and inefficient.

In the late 1830's, after some years of the Act's operation, a China Seas skipper - not, one would imagine, an unduly squeamish witness - was "frequently disgusted" by the brutal and barbarous manner in which the Sydney constabul carried out their duties.(76) In 1844 the Sydney Morning

(74) Statutes of N.S.W. The renewing act of 9th Aug., 1844 (8, Vic. No.V) forbade the taking of the suspect to Sydney, unless he was arrested in the police district o Sydney, or unless the J.P. had "an information on oath a credible witness" that there were strong grounds for suspecting the victim. The renewal act of 1848 (11, Vi No.45), added the further qualification, "provided also that no female shall be so removed to Sydney." The obnoxious act finally lapsed on 31st December, 1853.

(75) H.R.A., Series I, Vol. XVII, pp.520-536 (Bourke to Stanl 15/9/1834, with enclosures of the opinions on the Act o Mr. Justice Burton and of Chief Justice Forbes).

(76) G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel in the Far East; or etc., Lond: 1846, p.122. (The author spent the years 1836-183 in Australia.) And cf. 'James Macarthur' [Edward Edward New South Wales: Its Present State etc., p.5; and H. of C. Select Committee on Transportation, Minutes of Evide 1837, Evidence of E.A. Slade (Supt. of Prisoners' Barracks at Sydney 1832-33), pp.61-62, of Jas. Macarthu (Questions 2422-2424) and of Thos. Galloway.

Herald published a series of leading articles on the inefficiency of the force,[77] and Mrs. Charles Meredith, a gently-nurtured English visitor wrote bitterly of the notorio corruption of the constables.[78] A little later, according to Gerstaecker, drunken and brutal constables were stock characters on the Sydney stage, ensuring the success of any play.[79] Perhaps the most significant commentary of all is that provided by the official New South Wales Government Gazette. Throughout the 1830's it published regularly each

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(77) 28/3/1844, 30/3/1844, 2/4/1844, 16/4/1844.

(78) Notes and Sketches of New South Wales etc., 1839-1844, Lond: 1861 (new edn.), pp.131-132. And cf. J.C. Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings etc., Vol. 1, p.120: "Even in the main street in Sydney, George Street, there existed, in 1841, an illicit distillery on an immense scale. ...", and p.145 ff.

And A. Marjoribanks, Travels in N.S.W. etc., p.55 ff. Marjoribanks says police behaviour improved after the appointment of Myles as superintendent in 1841.

(79) Narrative of a Journey Round the World etc., 3 vols., Lond: 1853, Vol. II, p.281. The police force was for long very sensitive to stage criticism. cf. Sydney Morning Herald, 26/4/1953, p.14, Article on Censorship: "'Hypocrites' posed the first serious censorship problem when it reached Australia in 1915. No Commonwealth Board existed. State supervision came from the Chief Secretary's Department, and the police whose main concern was that movies did not show bushrangers shooting up the N.S.W. constabulary."

week laconic lists of constables who had resigned or been dismissed.(80)

The character of the Victorian police during the Gold Rush decade has already been sketched.(81) In New South Wales at that period complaints continued as before. In a trenchant sub-leader on "Police Abuses" the editor of the Empire wrote on June 29th 1853:

> "The sovereign majesty of the Sydney Police, owing to the former penal character of the colony, is under no constitutional restrictions. ... They have a roving commission to go into the highways and byways to suspend the liberty of the subject in the exercise of their discriminating infallible 'suspicion' ..."(82)

From the 1860's onwards there seems to have been a steady, if slight, improvement in police personnel; but by that time the tradition had been firmly established, the dogs had been given many opprobrious names, and they continued sometimes

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(80) Nowadays it is, comparatively, unusual for a member of the N.S.W. police force to be dismissed for misconduct. One of several such recent cases was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald of 24/9/1955: "A police constable who in June was found to have assaulted a railway fettler said in the District Court yesterday that he had not been penalised in any way since then by the Police Department. ... He said that his pay had been increased since the action. He believed that he was being transferred to another station, although he had received no official notice."

(81) See pp.317 ff. supra, and cf. Charles Stretton, Memoirs of a Chequered Life, 3 vols. Lond: 1862, Vol. III, p. 296 ff.

(82) cf. C.A. Corbyn, Sydney Revels of Bacchus, Cupid, and Momus, Syd: 1854, passim, esp. pp.10-11: "An Englishman's House His Castle - The Case Reversed in Sydney," and pp.126-127: "Charge of Assault and Robbery against a Horse-Policeman."

to merit them. Staid newspapers usually reported police doings with fitting gravity, but local and more popular sections of the press waxed ironical over the poltroonery and incompetence often displayed by the luckless mounted constables set to chasing the later bushrangers. Thus, reporting the death of O'Meally on November 19th, 1863, the Bathurst Times wrote:

> "The police would not have dared to touch his hair had he been alive. Probably Pottinger and the army of troopers that swarmed round Goimbla when the danger was passed [sic] each took a lock of his hair in memoriam when their enemy lay prostrate and dead."(83)

And in the succeeding month the much more respectable Melbourne Punch published the following facetious news item:

> "LATEST FROM THE SYDNEY SIDE - By Telegram. - Gilbert, Hall, Pottinger, and a few odd police inspectors, on furlough, dined together on Christmas Day. A letter of apology was read from Gardiner, who excused his non-attendance, on account of having taken a contract to stick up the Bathurst Mail regularly for the next three months."(84)

During the 1860's Victorians tended to pride themselves on their comparative freedom from bushranging and to attribute it to their relative lack of convict ancestry and to their

(83) Quoted G.E. Boxall, Story of the Australian Bushrangers, p.227. O'Meally was for a time a member of Gardiner's gang. After his death it was reported that locks of his hair were being shown and sold in Bathurst.

(84) December 31st, 1863, p.4.

innate virtue.(85) But even in Victoria the anti-authoritarian attitude was always ready to emerge whenever a bushranger embarrassed the forces of law and order. A long series of leading articles in the Ovens and Murray River Advertiser (Beechworth), published during 1869 and 1870, was symptomatic of public feeling. On January 2nd, 1869, the editor wrote complacently of the Ovens district:

> "On the borders of that vast nest of highwaymen, New South Wales, ... perhaps there is no district in the colony where the law has made itself so respected. Few crimes of very great magnitude have been committed, chiefly we may be sure, owing to the known activity, zeal, and intelligence of the constabulary stationed here..."

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(85) e.g., Theodore Wood [an unsuccessful gold-digger], Letter to his cousin, 22/5/1865. (P.L.V. H15855): " ... horrible wretch Morgan has been shot about twenty miles from here he had the impudence to come into Victoria but he only lived in it four days whilst in New South Wales he has been the terror of the country for the last four years. ... You must bear in mind that it is New South Wales not Victoria where they have been carrying on we Victorians consider ourselves a notch above the Sydney folk who are mostly 'old hands' viz convicts and sons. Victoria is the most pushing of all the colonies the people (ahem!!!) are more intelligent and energetic than the others..." However, of an 1864 Argus report commending the efficienc of the Victorian police force, one who later became its Inspecting Superintendent objected that the newspaper was "too general in its praise ... the uniform police in Melbourne were in a very parlous state in 1864." (John Sadlier, Recollections of a Victorian Police Officer, Melb: 1913, pp.256-257.)

On February 27th the leader evinced some doubts about the police and called for "more frequent periodical visits from an inspector;" but on May 8th, when Henry Power's depredations in the district were creating excitement, the paper expressed complete confidence that no bushranger could for long breathe the righteous air of Victoria. Power would soon be brought to book by a host of willing informers, or shot down by an enraged populace, as Morgan had been when he crossed the border. On June 5th the editor was moved to chide readers for their luke-warmness in assisting to capture Power, but still felt that the police "knew their business." On June 19th and August 31st the leaders became increasingly critical of the police, and the later article drew attention, by contrast, to Power's bushmanship. Finally on September 2nd, the editor came to the end of his patience and heaped abuse and ridicule on the luckless constables.

By December 7th his confidence in the law-abiding principles of his fellow citizens had also been shaken: -

> "From the criminal members of the population, Power has doubtless received aid and assistance in return for the fruits of his crimes. But nothing could be further from the truth than ... that the residents of the Ovens are, as a class, aiders and abettors of criminals. That Power has not been hunted down by the populace, is simply attributable to the fact that as yet he has refrained from the shedding of blood..."

At last on 24th May, 1870, a fortnight before Power's capture, the jaded editor came near to admitting the truth - that a majority of the population sympathised, more or less, with the bushranger:

> "From a certain portion of the population he - or whoever else has been masquerading in his name - has received succour and information, while the police have been misled and deceived."(86)

Radical or nationalist journals often made constable-baiting a major theme, quite apart from bushranging and indeed long after the institution had practically expired with Ned Kelly. In 1875 the Stockwhip earnestly castigated the force for its corruption, nepotism, and so on.(87) In the following decade and for long afterwards the Bulletin employed a lighter but more stinging approach. Its method was to assume that policemen were, as a body, irredeemably venal, craven, lazy, incompetent and pettily tyrannical, and to take it for granted further that these were facts well known to all Australians, and that it was absurd to agitate for, or to expect, any improvement. Practically every week the paper loosed a shower of barbed darts - short paragraphs, sarcastic verses and cartoons - pungently illustrating this

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(86) See also the editorials of 7/6/1870 and 9/6/1870 describing Power's capture and arraignment, and a long letter to the editor on "How to Take Power" in the issue of 23/12/1869.

(87) 13/3/1875 and 23/10/1875.

theme. One example, more reasonable in tone than most, will give the essential flavour:

> "At the present moment there are 600 young Victorians applying for a possible 100 billets in the police force of the colony. Noble six hundred! Just bursting into vigorous manhood, they have no higher ambition than to loaf around in uniform and order little boys to move on out of that. Policemen are necessary evils in a civilised community, but it makes us shudder to think about the 500 unsuccessful candidates who have started life with a determination not to do any work. We suppose they will ultimately be arrested by the 100 lucky enough to get sworn in."(88)

Dislike and distrust of policemen, at least partly merited has sunk deeply into the national consciousness: how deeply is indicated by a series of leading articles, reports and correspondence on the subject published recently in the Sydney Morning Herald, the oldest surviving newspaper in Australia, and certainly one of the most responsible. One man's letter read in part:

> "I hate Sydney's policemen because they so clearly indicate by offensive language, aggressive manner, and threatening expression, their belief that they are not Public servants but masters of the Public. ... I hate them because their apparent carelessness allows so many arrested persons to receive injuries falling down while in custody. ... I've laughed as I've watched children outwit previously alerted policemen and thoughtlessly light a bonfire in the street - but I've ceased to laugh when the heels of issue boots were ground into my toes in an effort to extract my voluntary statement that I'd played a part in the firelighting. ...

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(88) Bulletin, 8/9/1888, p.12. For other examples see, e.g., 26/3/1881, p.8; 1/7/1881, p.10; 7/1/1882, p.8; 11/3/1882 p.9; 5/8/1882, p.10; and 8/9/1883, p.11.

> The only thing I like about Sydney's policemen is their ability to live and raise a family on 50/- per week."(89)

Another Herald report of 19th March, 1955, shows the continuing strength of the tradition which once helped to make heroes of the bushrangers because they fought the police. Five thousand public servants - school teachers, clerical officers and other middle class people - packed the Margaret Street Assembly Hall to protest against "inadequate" marginal increases fixed by the New South Wales Public Service Board. At the end of the meeting,

> "The crowd turned angrily on a shabbily dressed man in the hall who interjected: 'I think you are like the Police, not worth twopence.'
> The man shortly after picked up a cornsack swag and left."

The outback institution of stock-stealing also helps to explain why bushrangers were the culture-heroes of the folk. Writing of the 1820's and 1830's, 'Alexander Harris' explained how the practice arose:

> "At by far the greater proportion of sheep stations in the colony the practice of feloniously killing the owner's sheep goes on to a greater or less extent: and plenty of owners know it and wink at it; others do not, but would prosecute and transport the man if

(89) 5/9/1953. (The last sentence is an ironic reference to a claim made by a desperately embarrassed constable in evidence before a Royal Commission into the Liquor Trade.) Intensive discussion of police force shortcomings ended in the Herald's columns a few days after publication of this letter, but the subject continued to be canvassed sporadically during 1954 and 1955. Some letters, of course, defended the police.

> they could adduce proof of it. Those who connive at it reason thus: 'Well, the men must be fed and so must the dogs, or the work cannot be done; and it is a bad precedent to give them as much meat as they require, because that will lead to a universal and irresistible custom. I had better let them take it, and seem not to know anything about it."(90)

Waltzing Matilda commemorates the fact that the practice of sheep-stealing did grow into a "universal and irresistible" outback custom.(91) It also preserves a folk-memory of hatred for those squatters who had men re-transported for stealing food in a land of abundance, where this crime at least should have been unnecessary. It is highly improbable that a swagman arrested for sheep-stealing, at any time in the last hundred years, should have been moved to commit suicide; but there was a time when it could have happened. In 1838 an up-country settler wrote:

> "I have heard a man in court, when sentenced for life to Norfolk Island, beg to be hanged rather. He was a shepherd who had killed and eaten some of his master's sheep."(92)

When Trollope visited his son, a squatter in western New South Wales, in the 1870's, stock-stealing was still an accepted custom. The novelist compared it with,

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(90) Settlers and Convicts, p.185.

(91) See e.g., Edward Curr, Account of Van Diemen's Land etc., p.35: "Sheep-stealing in this island ... is organised into a most complete system. ... Many persons, in calculating profits on sheep, allow a deduction of twenty-five per cent for robberies: this may probably be an exaggeration, but..."; John Henderson, Excursions and Adventures in N.S.W. etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1851, Vol. I, p.289; and R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' etc p.213 et passim.

(92) [David L. Waugh] Three Years' Practical Experience of a Settler in New South Wales etc., Edinburgh: 1838 (4th ed p.37.

> "smuggling, or illicit distillation, or sedition, or the seduction of women. There is little or no shame attached to it among those with whom the cattle-stealers live. ... A man may be a cattle-stealer, and yet in his way a decent fellow."(93)

The fact is that every honest bushman, more or less, was a thief upon occasion, at least from the point of view of the law. According to his own code, however, the theft of certain kinds of property, especially livestock or food, from Government, squatters, or 'swells,' was at worst a trifling peccadillo and at best a moral and praiseworthy act. Carrington gives an accurate picture of public opinion on this point in Western Queensland during the 1860's:

> "the word theft would scarcely ever be applied, in the colonies, to the act of taking food to satisfy one's hunger. ... I [have been], myself, for weeks without any means of support whatever, except what I obtained at the hands of others. Again, I [have] fed many and many a hungry man in my time: such things pass almost without thanks in Capricornia. It is a matter of course that no man shall starve while food can be had. If he cannot get it by asking, let him, by all means, take it. Let him, however, ask first..."(94

Needless to say most thefts of stock were not dictated by hunger-pangs, but since the sufferers were usually those who had great possessions - the squatters - bushmen tolerated, where they did not applaud, the thieves. As the narrator says in Boldrewood's Robbery Under Arms:

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(93) Australia and New Zealand, Melb: 1876, p.68.
(94) "A University Man," [George Carrington], Colonial Adventures and Experiences, Lond: 1871, pp.185-186.

"Most of the Nomah people looked upon fellows stealing cattle or horses, in small lots or big, just like most people look at boys stealing fruit out of an orchard, or as they used to talk of smugglers on the English coast, as I've heard father tell of. Any man might take a turn at that sort of thing, now and then, and not be such a bad chap after all. It was the duty of the police to catch him. If they caught him, well and good, it was so much the worse for him; if they didn't, that was their look-out. It wasn't anybody else's business anyhow. And a man that wasn't caught, or that got turned up at his trial, was about as good as the general run of people; and there was no reason for anyone to look shy at him."(95)

It is not suggested that a few bush workers turned bush-ranger, and that many glorified them, because they thought much or consciously about these things. Most up-country workers were interested consciously in politics only to the extent of wanting "a place of [their] own by some clear waterside." Thus, the passage of John Robertson's first New South Wales Free Selection Act in 1861 was celebrated in the following ballad:

"Come all you Cornstalks the victory's won,
John Robertson's triumphed, the lean days are gone,
No more through the bush we'll go humping the drum,
For the Land Bill has passed and the good times have come

Chorus: Then give me a hut in my own native land,
Or a tent in the bush, near the mountains so grand.
For the scenes of my childhood a joy are to me,
And the dear native girl who will share it with me.

(95) Lond: 1937 edn., p.156, and cf. Andrew Crombie, After Sixty Years or Recollections of an Australian Bushman, Brisbane: 1927, p.83: "The running of wild horses was a life of adventure which appealed to reckless young men who were good horsemen. The line between legitimate work and horse-stealing was so finely drawn that sooner or later most of those engaged found themselves less nice than they should have been in defining the differen between a genuine brumby and a stray broken-in station horse."

No more through the bush with our swags need we roam,
For to ask of the squatters to give us a home,
Now the land is unfettered and we may reside,
In a place of our own by the clear waterside.

We will sow our own garden and till our own field,
And eat of the fruits that our labour doth yield,
And be independent, a right long denied,
By those who have ruled us and robbed us beside."(96)

This song certainly shows how deep was the longing for land; but the reader will have noticed that, to paraphrase William Blake, it was a song of Innocence and not of Experienc The vision splendid of "a place of our own by some clear water-side" rapidly faded in the harsh sunlight of the western plains beyond the Great Divide. Act after Selection Act was rendered in the main nugatory by the manoeuvres, usually within the letter but not the spirit of the law, of the squatters.(97) Even if there had been no squatters to contend with, it is doubtful whether most free selectors could have succeeded. Lack of capital, primitive agricultural techniques high transport costs and distance from markets combined with natural factors to frustrate and impoverish the petty agriculturalist.(98) It was not, especially in New South Wales

(96) This version from Vance Palmer and Margaret Sutherland, Old Australian Bush Ballads, Melb: 1951.

(97) S.H. Roberts, History of Australian Land Settlement 1788-1920, Melb: 1924, p.226, passim.
E. Shann, An Economic History of Australia, pp.207-211, and p.233: "And it came to pass that demagogues disperse the public estate and pastoralists gathered up the freehold thereof."
And cf. Margaret Kiddle, Work in Progress on Western District of Victoria.

(98) D.W.A. Baker, M.A. Thesis, submitted Univ. of Melb., 1955 Section I.

and Queensland, until the late 1880's and 1890's that his occupation became a reasonably stable and prosperous one.(99)

Those selectors who, in the teeth of droughts, fires, floods, pests and creditors, succeeded in sticking to their patches of land, seem to have left only one widely popular song "The Eumerella Shore," to celebrate their feat. This ballad not only illustrates what has been said above, but shows how strong were the traditional habits of the bushmen. It also exhibits that peculiar shade of sardonic humour which some have considered typically Australian. No doubt the Eumerella free-selector set out with golden hopes of becoming a prosperous farmer, but though his dreams were blighted, he managed to live happily enough by falling back on one of his old trades. Having free-selected his piece of the squatters' land, he proceeded to live on it by free-selecting some of his cattle. The song tells a story typical(100) of a great

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(99) See Cap. IX, infra.

(100) Cf. pp.388-391 supra, and e.g., Ovens and Murray River Advertiser, 19/6/1869. In Benalla Police Court "a young lad named Edward Kelly ... residing at Eleven Mile Creek" was called as the sole defence witness in a case of sheep-stealing. A free-selector named Gunn was charged with stealing sheep from the squatter on whose run Gunn's selection was situated. Young Ned swore that he had kept a small number of sheep as pets, for which reason they were unbranded; and that he had sold some to Gunn on the date requisite to account for the finding of meat and skins in his possession. The magistrate was unconvinced by the story. (It may be not inappropriate to record here that Dan Kelly, when aged nine, was "charged with having assaulted Anne, the wife of John Sherrit," by hitting her on the back of the head with a stick. Presumably Mrs. Sherrit was a relative of Aaron, the informer, whom the Kellys murdered. Mr. M. Butler, P.M., dismissed the charge. ibid., 16/2/1869).

many selectors:

"There's a happy little valley on the Eumerella shore,
Where I've lingered many happy hours away,
On my little free selection I have acres by the score,
Where I unyoke the bullocks from the dray.

Chorus:
To my bullocks then I say
No matter where you stray,
You will never be impounded any more;
For you're running, running, running on the duffer's piece of land,
Free selected on the Eumerella shore.

When the moon has climbed the mountains and the stars are shining brig
Then we saddle up our horses and away,
And we yard the squatters' cattle in the darkness of the night,
And we have the calves all branded by the day.

Chorus: Oh, my pretty little calf,
At the squatter you may laugh,
For he'll never be your owner any more;
For you're running, running, running on the duffer's piece of land,
Free selected on the Eumerella shore.

If we find a mob of horses when the paddock rails are dow
Although before they're never known to stray,
Oh, quickly will we drive them to some distant inland tow
And sell them into slav'ry far away.

Chorus: To Jack Robertson we'll say,
You've been leading us astray,
And we'll never go a-farming any more;
For it's easier duffing cattle on the little piece of land,
Free selected on the Eumerella shore."(101)

(101) This version from A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs (1930 edn.), pp.85-86.

Bushrangers, after all, were only men who did openly, professionally, and on a grand scale, what every bushman did furtively and sporadically, or only dreamed of doing.

Fundamentally, they became folk-heroes because they were symbols of the emergent Australian national feeling. Neither they nor their admirers cherished any political programme nor any very conscious nationalist 'philosophy;' but the very conditions of bushranging life ensured that its protagonists should be the first and most thoroughly 'colonised' of all white dwellers in Australia. Distinctive national traits were, as we have seen, bred of adaptation to the new environment. Adaptation, of necessity, proceeded faster on the frontiers of settlement than in the relatively civilised coastal areas near Sydney. Bushrangers necessarily exemplifie in its most extreme form, the nomad tribe's manner of life. In their case even the tenuous link with traditional mores provided by the head station was absent. They were not semi-migratory but entirely so. They were more isolated from good women, clergymen and other mollifying influences. As nearly as it could be, their adaptation to the new environment, in its rawest and most difficult form, was complete. Their lives depended on its being so. Only the Aborigines were more at home in the bush and these, when they took service with the police, as black-trackers, the bushrangers feared and hated

accordingly.[102] Thus to the pastoral workers, to lower class people in general, and usually to themselves, they appeared as 'wild colonial boys' - Australians par excellence.

In chapters three and four we saw the strength of the early working class feeling that Australia was morally "the prisoners' country," and the resentment of the native-born that so much of it should be given by Government to rich newcomers with little knowledge of, or love for, the land. Of the post-Gold period Hancock writes that, "Australian nationalism took definite form in the class struggle between the landless majority and the land-monopolizing squatters."[103] In both periods Bushrangers expressed these deep-seated feelings, not so much in words, as by the more potent symbolism of their colourful deeds; and there is some evidence to suggest that

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(102) Ned Kelly's hatred of the black-trackers is well known. In the hotel at Glenrowan he is reported to have said to one of the captives: "I am not a bit afraid of the police, and know that if they alone hunted me I would never be taken; but what I am really afraid of is those d----- Queensland black-trackers; those boys I honestly fear, for I know what they can do; they can track me over bare stones, and a white man stands no chance with them at all; it was mainly to kill those ------- that I tore up those rails down there, and in fact what brought me here." (Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, Vol. II, p.357.)
And cf. C.H. Eden, My Wife and I in Queensland etc., p.1 "It is entirely attributable to the native police that bushranging in this colony has made but small head."

(103) Australia, Syd:(1945 edn.), p.52 ff.

they were often partly conscious of the role they were playing.(104)

In the 1820's most people believed that men became bushrangers out of sheer inborn depravity, or because they were driven to desperation by the inhuman brutality of some masters and overseers. Cunningham, the most acute observer of this early period, and the most sensitive to the emerging Currency ethos, had a different explanation. He wrote:

> "The vanity of being talked of, I verily believe, leads many foolish fellows to join in this kind of life - songs being often made about their exploits by their sympathising brethren; ... It is the boast of many of them, that their names will live in the remembrance of the colony long after their exit from among us to some penal settlement, either in this world or the next; Riley, the captain of the Hunter's River banditti, vaunting that he should be long spoken of (whatever his fate might be), in fear by his enemies, and in admiration by his friends!"(105)

The fame they coveted and achieved sprang not merely from their profession, but from their use of typically 'Australian' and up-country qualities in the pursuit of it. Michael Howe, at any rate, must have been quite conscious of his symbolic role when he addressed an insolent public letter from "the Governor of the Ranges to the Governor of the Town." In it he offered to surrender in return for a free pardon, and demanded that a responsible official should be sent to meet

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(104) See, for instance, Ned Kelly's "Jerilderie Letter", published as an appendix in Max Brown's Australian Son etc.,

(105) Two Years in New South Wales etc., Vol. II, pp.198-199.

him so that they might parley "as gentleman to gentleman."(106) The fact that his offer was accepted shows, among other things how popular was his playing to the gallery.

Unhappily, none of the bushranging ballads to which Cunningham refers in the above passage has survived. It was not until 1830 that the death of a bushranger gave rise to a ballad which has come down to us. Born and convicted in Dublin, Donahoe, at the age of nineteen, arrived in Sydney by the transport Ann and Amelia. Two years later he took to the bush and, with a companion, robbed two carts on the Windsor road. At the ensuing trial Mr. Justice Stephen, with perhaps superabundant justice, sentenced each man to death twice - once for each cart they had robbed. Donahoe, however, escaped from custody and became the acknowledged captain of a gang of bushrangers which, for over two years, terrorised the country districts between Sydney and the Blue Mountains. On the 1st September, 1830, the gang was cornered in the Bringell Scrub not far from Campbelltown, and in the ensuing engagement Donahoe was shot dead by one Trooper Mucklestone.(107) The

(106) G.E. Boxall, Story of Australian Bushrangers, p.20.

(107) See M.H. Ellis, Bulletin, 25/2/1953, p.25 - "The Wild Colonial Boy," in a series of "Australian Historical Sketches;" and Sydney Gazette, 4/9/1830 and 7/9/1830.

ballad composed soon afterwards (108) tells the story with reasonable fidelity to the facts. It is quoted here in full because it was certainly the most popular of all convict-bushranger ballads, (109) and because of the light it throws on the archetypal 'nationalism' we are discussing:

BOLD JACK DONAHOE

"In Dublin town I was brought up, in that city of great fame -
My decent friends and parents, they will tell to you the same.
It was for the sake of five hundred pounds I was sent across the main,
For seven long years in New South Wales to wear a convict chain.

Chorus:

Then come, my hearties, we'll roam the mountains high
Together we will plunder, together we will die!
We'll wander over mountains and we'll gallop over plains -
For we scorn to live in slavery, bound down in iron chains.

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(108) Probably by 'Frank the Poet' (Francis Macnamara). See p. 170 ff. supra, and Appendix IX. The ballad is attributed to 'Frank the Poet' by John Shaw, Captain Stormalong, the Bushranger, Lond: 1898, pp.41-43. (This novel is an imitation of Robbery Under Arms, not entirely without merit, though it is even more melodramatic than its prototype. It is clear enough, however, that the author knew his nineteenth century bushmen intimately.

(109) See John Shaw, loc. cit., and pp.129-131; and H.R.A., Series I, Vol. XV, Note 183, p.906: "Jack Donahoe was one of the most notorious bushrangers of the first epoch in bushranging or highway robbery in New South Wales. ... After he was shot, a pipemaker was permitted to take a cast of his head showing a wound in the forehead. One of these casts is still extant. The pipemaker made clay-pipes, the bowl bearing a reduced facsimile of the cast, and these pipes had a large sale A song was composed called 'Bold Jack Donahoe,' ..."

I'd scarce been there twelve months or more upon the
Australian shore,
When I took to the highway, as I'd oft-times done before.
There was me and Jacky Underwood, and Webber and Webster,
too.
These were the true associates of Bold Jack Donahoo.

Now Donahoo was taken, all for a notorious crime,
And sentenced to be hanged upon the gallows-tree so high.
But when they came to Sydney gaol he left them in a stew,
And when they came to call the roll they missed bold
Donahoo.

As Donahoo made his escape, to the bush he went straightwa
The people they were all afraid to travel night or day -
For every week in the newspapers there was published
something new
Concerning this dauntless hero, the bold Jack Donahoo!

As Donahoo was cruising, one summer's afternoon,
Little was his notion his death was near so soon,
When a sergeant of the horse police discharged his car-a-b
And called aloud on Donahoo to fight or to resign.

'Resign to you - you cowardly dogs! a thing I ne'er will d
For I'll fight this night with all my might,' cried bold
Jack Donahoo.
I'd rather roam these hills and dales, like wolf or
kangaroo,
Than work one hour for Government!' cried bold Jack Donaho

He fought six rounds with the horse police until the fatal
ball,
Which pierced his heart and made him start, caused Donahoo
to fall.
And as he closed his mournful eyes, he bade this world
Adieu,
Saying, 'Convicts all, both large and small, say prayers
for Donahoo!'"(110)

First of all no man, except a Currency Lad, could be more truly Australian - in the sense established so far in this

(110) This version from A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs.

thesis - than a working class Irish convict. Moreover in the list of Donahoe's "true associates," the native-born bushranger (111) is doubly distinguished by being placed first and called by his christian name. As befits a hero, Donahoe in the ballad, is no "tinpot man" or "cockatoo", (112) no petty thief, but a daring highwayman transported for the sake of a mere five hundred pounds. Such lines as,

"For every week in the newspapers there was published something new,
Concerning this dauntless hero, the bold Jack Donahoo,"

give more than a hint of the spirit which came to be known among the native-born as 'flashness,' and which was such an important motive for much later bushranging. (113) Donahoe expresses contempt for the police as, the ballad-singers felt, true Australians should, and he expresses the unconquerable aversion to working for Government, which was the origin of Currency reluctance to enlist in the army or the police force. (114) Most significant of all is the assumption that the bush is the true Australian's natural habitat. "As Donahoo made his

(111) See footnote 9, p.355, supra.
(112) See pp.295-296, supra.
(113) Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, Vol. I, pp.203-204.
(114) See pp.190-192, supra.

escape, to the bush he went straightway," for only there could he find freedom, to "wander over mountains and gallop over plains," together with his mates, in the manner beloved of the nomad tribe of pastoral workers.

The 'patriotism' figured forth in this ballad had little to do with that self-conscious and often highly respectable sentiment characterised by Dr. Johnson as "the last refuge of a scoundrel."(115) The people who sang the song did so because it symbolised the spirit of their country and their way of life. And they felt all the more deeply about these things because their love for them was entirely unofficial, and largely unformulated and unselfconscious. The chorus of the ballad is really irrelevant to the specific deeds of Donahoe and his associates. Nor does it state, in the manner of national anthems, that Australia is a grand country. It merely assumes, implicitly, that true Australians are those who ride "together" in spirit with bushrangers. And, in the final analysis, these men are symbols of Australianism because of their intimate knowledge of, and love for, the endless plains and mountains of the interior, no less than because of their collective defiance of soldiers, policemen and other agents of "Government." Few pastoral workers defied the law openly and habitually, but all shared the rough and

(115) Boswell's Life of Johnson (ed. G.B. Hill), 6 vols. Oxford: 1934, Vol. II, p.348.

errant liberty conferred on them by their mutual loyalty and their familiarity with the bush.

The exact flavour of this embryonic national feeling is given by Gerstaecker in a passage describing Riverina bushmen in 1850:

> "Frequently the traveller finds in these huts, old bushmen who have lived a lifetime in the wild scrub of the country; have hunted and fought with the blacks; have been robbed by, and have sometimes robbed with, the bushranger; have fought the police, then taken to the bush and led a life that Europeans read of with incredulity. If you get them to talk - which requires a longer time than a few hours acquaintance - you learn more in one hour of the wild life of the bush than by a year's residence with the swells."(116)

There is a strong tradition, accepted by M.H. Ellis,(117) that the expression of this sentiment, when it took the form of singing the Donahoe ballad, was not only unconventional but unlawful.(118) In a note to a despatch of Darling's concerning Donahoe, Watson writes,

> "A song was composed called 'Bold Jack Donahoe,' and, as this song had an evil influence, its singing was prohibited in any public house on pain of the loss of license [sic]."

If any such specific official action banning the ballad was

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(116) F. Gerstaecker, Narrative of a Journey etc., Vol. III, p.17.

(117) M.H. Ellis, Bulletin, 25/2/1953, p.25 - "The Wild Colonial Boy."

(118) H.R.A., Series I, Vol. XV, Darling to Murray, 5/10/1830, p.769. Watson's note (No. 183) is on p. 906. He gives no source for his statement.

taken, I have been unable to find convincing documentary evidence of it;[119] but it may well be that the authorities took unofficial action to discourage the singing of bushranger songs. A New South Wales Vagrancy Act of 1852 (15 Victoria, No.4, Section 5, Sub-Section 4) gave power to punish by a fine not exceeding five pounds, or imprisonment not exceeding three months, "any person singing any obscene song or ballad ... in any public street ... or place." In J.H. Plunkett's Australian Magistrate (Syd: 1860), an italicised note to this sub-section reads, "N.B. The offender may be apprehended by any constable or other person and conveyed before a Justice." There is no such italicised note to any other sub-section of this Vagrancy Act and, in view of the low standard of police integrity, it is not improbable that right-thinking constables were able to persuade themselves that bushranging ballads in which they were held up to contempt were, morally speaking, obscene. If the tales of old folk-singers may be credited, something of the sort still went on as late as the 1890's.

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(119) N.S.W. Statutes and Victorian Acts and Ordinances. A search shows that the subject of ballad singing was never specifically mentioned in the successive licensing acts. A N.S.W. amending act of 1855, (17 Vic. No.6) for the first time, forbade publicans to permit "music or dancing" on their premises "unless by the permission in writing of one or more Police Magistrates of the district."

In 1952 I met two old bushmen who had spent most of their lives in the western Riverina.(120) They sang ballads about shearing, droving, and other aspects of bush life, but when asked about bushranging songs they gave substantially the same answer.(121) "Yes," said one with a chuckle, "I used to sing them all right. We used to call them 'treason songs. You weren't allowed to sing them in a public place. A mate of mine was fined. Once in Hay the police told me to stop singing a Kelly song. I stopped ... I don't remember them much now."

If such efforts to discourage the singing of Bold Jack Donahoe were made, they seem only to have had the effect of making the song more popular. The earlier bushrangers, of whom Cunningham wrote, had boasted only that their names would live long "in the remembrance of the colony." Donahoe's name has certainly done that, but has also travelled overseas to North America where many versions of the ballad have been collected and published.(122) Not only that, but the Donahoe

(120) J.H. Lee (see p.7 ff, supra), and Joseph Cashmere (p.25, supra).

(121) J.H. Lee.

(122) e.g., John A. Lomax, Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads, Harvard; 1911; pp.64-65; John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads, Revised and Enlarged, New York: 1952, p.209 ff.; Evelyn Kendrick Wells, The Ballad Tree, Lond: 1950, p.304; and W. Roy Mackenzie, Ballads and Sea Songs of Nova Scotia, Harvard: 1928, p.306.

ballad almost certainly gave rise to the best known and best-loved of all Australian folk-songs, The Wild Colonial Boy. Here is the version published by Paterson in his Old Bush Songs:

"'Tis of a wild colonial boy, Jack Doolan was his name,
Of poor but honest parents he was born in Castlemaine.
He was his father's only hope, his mother's only joy,
And dearly did his parents love the wild Colonial boy.

Chorus:
Come, all my hearties, we'll roam the mountains high,
Together we will plunder, together we will die.
We'll wander over valleys, and gallop over plains,
And we'll scorn to live in slavery, bound down with iron chains.

He was scarcely sixteen years of age when he left his father's home,
And through Australia's sunny clime a bushranger did roam
He robbed those wealthy squatters, their stock he did destroy,
And a terror to Australia was the wild Colonial boy.

In sixty-one this daring youth commenced his wild career;
With a heart that knew no danger, no foeman did he fear.
He stuck up the Beechworth mail coach, and robbed Judge MacEvoy,
Who trembled, and gave up his gold to the wild Colonial b

He bade the Judge 'Good morning,' and told him to beware,
That he'd never rob a hearty chap that acted on the squar
And never to rob a mother of her son and only joy,
Or else you may turn outlaw, like the wild Colonial boy.

One day as he was riding the mountain side along,
A-listening to the little birds, their pleasant laughing song,
Three mounted troopers rode along - Kelly, Davis and FitzRoy.
They thought that they would capture him - the wild Colonial boy.

'Surrender now,' Jack Doolan, 'you see there's three to o
Surrender now, Jack Doolan, you daring highwayman.'
He drew a pistol from his belt, and shook the little toy.
'I'll fight, but not surrender,' said the wild Colonial b

He fired at Trooper Kelly, and brought him to the ground,
And in return from Davis received a mortal wound.
All shattered through the jaws he lay still firing at
FitzRoy
And that's the way they captured him - the wild Colonial b

Both in Castlemaine, Victoria, and Castlemaine, Eire, travellers report, one may see several cottages in each of which the Wild Colonial Boy is confidently said to have been born. There was a District Court Judge in Victoria named Macoboy,(123) and there was an ex-convict bushranger named Henry Power, who 'stuck up' the mail-coach near Beechworth on several occasions in 1869, but neither Judge Macoboy nor any other man of law was among the passengers. Nor did any of the policemen present bear such euphonious names as Kelly, Davis and FitzRoy.(124) Many researchers have sought in vain to

(123) The Law List, Victoria: 1863, p.36: "Macoboy, Michael Frederick, Esq., Judge of County Courts, Court of Mines Maryborough District, and Chairman of General Sessions Called to Bar 1844. Admitted to Victorian Bar 31 July 1856." (See also Victorian Government Gazette, 1858,p.9
In the early months of 1950 Clive Turnbull wrote an interesting series of articles on the Wild Colonial Boy in the Melbourne Argus. He quotes a letter from a gran daughter of M.F. Macoboy, Mrs. T.M. Bland, in which she writes that "it is a fact of which the Macoboy Clan have not the slightest doubt, that Judge Macoboy was held up by the Wild Colonial Boy and that it happened in Victoria." The family tradition is however quite vague as to the time and place of the robbery and the identity of the "Boy."
Turnbull is inclined to accept the theory that the Irish version is "the true original" - if Jack Donahoe be considered as essentially a different ballad.

(124) For detailed accounts of Power's robberies see the files of the Ovens and Murray River Advertiser for the dates quoted supra pp.384-386, et passim.

find an actual bushranger, whose deeds could have formed a basis for the incidents recounted in the later and best-known versions of the ballad.(125) Evidence so far available suggests that these 'Beechworth incidents' must be accounted for by a series of more or less fanciful alterations and additions, made to the original Donahoe ballad by a series of folk-singers. Between what is apparently the oldest Donahoe version and the most recent versions of The Wild Colonial Boy, there is a gradation of texts showing how the changes may have come about.(126) In all cases virtually the same chorus is used,(127) and under all his various alias'es The Wild Colonial Boy preserves Donahoe's initials, J.D. As the old folk-singer already quoted(128) said, when asked who the Wild Colonial Boy was: "Well, some calls him Jack Duggan, and some Jim Doolan, and some Jack Dubbin, and some Jim Dowling, and some says Donahoe ... It doesn't matter. He just was The Wild Colonial Boy!"

The hero's retreat into anonymity may well have been hastened by official attempts at repression; or it may have been rather that Donahoe became so important as a symbol of

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(125) Notably Clive Turnbull and M.H. Ellis, whose conclusions are summarised respectively in Life, June, 1954, pp.52-55, and the Bulletin, 25/2/1953, p.25.

(126) See Appendix XIX.

(127) That is, when the version preserves a refrain at all.

(128) See footnote 120, p.405, supra.

the bushman's ethos that his individual name and specific deeds were felt to be unimportant. In becoming anonymous he became larger than life and travelled still further afield Many versions of The Wild Colonial Boy have been collected in the United States and Canada, while to-day the song is probably more widely known and sung in Eire than it is here. (12
Yet its hero also became more thoroughly Australian. The Irish convict bolter becomes a native-born son, who takes to the bush as naturally and easefully as a Viking to the sea, or a politician to the Treasury benches. His defiance of authority in the shape of "Government," the "troopers" and "those wealthy squatters," does not imply an individualistic outlook, but rather the reverse. He is the folk's culture-hero par excellence precisely because he is the romanticised and idealised portrait of any and every wild colonial youth. (13
His strength, as the chorus reiterates, is based upon complete solidarity with his fellows. His very anonymity is symptomati of the collectivist ethos of the nomad tribe, whose members

(129) See for instance, John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, Our Singing Country etc., New York: 1949, p.320; eidem, Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads etc., p.167; W. Roy Mackenzie, Ballads and Sea Songs of Nova Scotia, p.317; E.E. Gardner and G.J. Chickering, Ballads and Songs of Southern Michigan, Univ. Michigan: 1939, pp.32 328; Sam Henry, Songs of the People (3 vols. of cutting of Irish songs, and cuttings thereon, in National Library, Dublin); Walton's 132 Best Irish Songs and Ballads, Dublin: circa 1950, etc.

(130) Just as 'Robin Hood' was not any particular person but a character such as all "men wanted to be". (cf. Reginald Nettel, Sing a Song of England: a Social History of Traditional Song, Lond: 1954, pp.42, 48-49.)

were ordinarily "known by queer nicknames or ... ... by no names at all."(131)

In the two or three decades following the Gold Rush this national, up-country ethos, typified by the bushrangers or at any rate by the songs about them, was less strongly and much less directly reflected in the Colonial parliaments. In the last chapter it was suggested that the influence of the Gold Rush immigrants was felt mainly in middle class circles and in the cities. It is generally agreed that many, if not most,(132) of the newcomers were imbued with Chartist or other radical ideas;(133) but up to and beyond the middle of the nineteenth century(134) British Radicalism at the legislative level, as exemplified in its attitude to the Corn Laws, was fundamentally laissez-faire and individualist rather than collectivist in outlook. Leading Chartists were often strongly influenced by individualist ideas deriving mainly from Bentham, but the rank and file of the movement

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(131) See p.82, supra.

(132) J.A. La Nauze, Political Economy in Australia: Historical Studies, Melb: 1949, p.119: "There is no reason to doubt that he [Syme] was a sincere 'radical,' along with the majority of his fellow immigrants of the gold-rush peri

(133) R.A. Gollan, Radical and Socialist Ideas in Eastern Australia: 1850-1910, Lond. Ph.D., thesis 1950, Part I, Chap.2; and cf. Michael Davitt M.P., Life and Progress in Australasia, Lond: 1898, pp.206-207.

(134) A.V. Dicey, Law and Public Opinion in England in the Nineteenth Century, Lond: 1948, pp.64-65, names 1870 as the year in which British legislative opinion had becom predominantly collectivist. D.H. MacGregor, Economic Thought and Policy, Oxford: 1949, p.70, shows that different people perceived the end of laissez-faire as occurring in Britain at dates as widely separated as 1870 and 1926. (Quoted R.A. Gollan, op. cit., p.91).

was much more often collectivist, being driven by hunger to fight for improved conditions through trade union activity.(135) These men reinforced the strongly collectivist sentiment which had long been developing in Australia, so that 'state interference'(136) and collectivist legislation became pronounced here earlier than in Britain.(13 Nevertheless, the strong middle-class radical element among the gold-seekers probably helped to make Australian parliamentary life more individualistic, in at least one respect, than that of Great Britain at the same period. Since the rise of the Labour Party in the 1890's, many observers have remarked on the extent to which Australian parliamentarians have become mere delegates, disciplined to vote with their party right or wrong and pledged to support policies approved by the party machines(138

(135) R.A. Gollan, Radical and Socialist Ideas in Eastern Australia: etc., p.12 ff., and G.D.H. Cole, Chartist Portraits, Lond: 1941, pp.1-30.

(136) e.g. protectionist legislation in Victoria. And cf. A.W. Martin, Political Groupings in N.S.W. 1872-1889: A Study in the Working of Responsible Government, Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1955, p.9 ff.

(137) Yet the free selection legislation, most contentious of the period, was conceived and justified in individualis and laissez-faire terms by Robertson and its other leading political protagonists. (D.W.A. Baker, Origins of the Robertson Land Acts, thesis submitted for M.A. degree, Univ. Melb., 1955.)
And as late as 1885 J.A. Froude could seriously suggest that one day the English gentry might migrate en masse to Australia where they could live "in their own way without fear of socialism or graduated income tax." (Oceana, Lond: 1886, p.111.)

(138) e.g. W.K. Hancock, Australia, Lond: 1945 edn., Caps. X and XI.

Before that time there was a virtual absence of parties in Australian politics, although the beginnings of fairly fixed party groupings can be discerned in the late 1880's in New South Wales (139) and somewhat earlier in Victoria. With bewildering rapidity members transferred their allegiance from one leader or faction to another, whenever moved to do so by conscience or private interest. (140) Humffray, the Welsh

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(139) R.E.N. Twopeny, Town Life in Australia, Lond: 1883, p.157: "Not only does party government not exist in New South Wales, but burning questions are few and far between;" and p.151: "A distinguishing feature of Victorian public life is the existence of an approach to definite political parties."

Sir Chas. Dilke, Problems of Greater Britain, 2 vols., Lond: 1890, Vol. II, p.255: "Colonial members of Parliament are not so much in the position of delegates as are members of Congress in the United States. ... There are, too, much more defined personal groups in colonial politics than in those of the United States - men are more, and the 'machine' less.

And cf. A.G.L.Shaw, The Story of Australia, Lond: 1955, p.170.

There were, of course, other and probably more important reasons for the absence of well-defined party groupings in the colonial legislatures at this time. (See A.W. Martin, The Emergence of Political Parties in New South Wales during the 1880's, A.N.U. Seminar paper August 1954.)

(140) cf. John Martineau, Letters from Australia, p.50: "Strange to say, it is a fact notorious in Victoria that a proportion of the Legislative Assembly, sufficie to sway its vote on almost any measure that may be introduced, is altogether corrupt and amenable to bribes! ..." et passim, cf. p.133: "In answer to a question as to the character and composition of the Lower House [in N.S.W.] ... I was told that it was now no worse than that of Victoria."

And cf. James Inglis, Our Australian Cousins, p.358 ff.

Chartist secretary of the Ballarat Reform League, was later elected as representative of Ballarat East by the diggers. When taken to task by his constituents in 1862, for having voted in favour of a ten years' extension of Squatters' leases he replied that he claimed:

> "the most unfettered freedom in the exercise of my judgment while recording my votes; as I would not, for one hour, occupy the humiliating position of a mere delegate, and vote according to order."(141)

The attitude was typical, but very far removed from the indigenous, strongly collectivist spirit of the bushmen.

One contemporary at least understood something of this disjunction between the emerging national ethos, and the expression of it in politics. The first "principal" of the Sydney University warned in 1861 that a great deal more than self-government would be required to make a handful of infant colonies into a nation. After painting a rather idealised picture of the cultural and national homogeneity of ancient Greece, he asked,

> "Can we hope that Australia in a hundred years will present a counterpart to this picture? Five years ago [i.e., immediately after the granting of responsible government] we should have answered with an indignant

(141) W.B. Withers, History of Ballarat etc., Ballarat: 1887, p.167. And cf., for a more developed statement of the same view, E.E. Morris, Memoir of George Higinbotham an Australian Politician and Chief Justice of Victoria, Lond: 1895, pp.63-66 et passim. A.W. Martin (Political Groupings in N.S.W. etc., p.56 ff.) deals at some length with this strongly individualist "independent" attitude of the politicians.

> and enthusiastic affirmative. But experience has taught us humility ; we have learned that no accidental impulse can precipitate an infant community into a nation. ... A corporate like a national body grows only from within."(142)

We can now see that a distinctively Australian national ethos had been growing from within, almost from the moment of the first inauspicious landing in Sydney Cove; but that, as the professor implied, its growth was complicated, and in some ways checked, at least to outward appearance, by the immediate results of the gold discoveries.

Yet even in the 1860's, the gulf between the outlook of the nomad tribe and that of the more individualistic townsmen was by no means unbridgeable. Bushrangers brought to Sydney for trial were usually given heroes' welcomes by large crowds of working people,(143) whose votes were among those to be wooed by politicians. In 1874 a New South Wales parliamentary crisis over bushranging showed that the ideology

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(142) John Woolley, D.C.L., Late Fellow of University College, Oxford: Principal and Professor of Logic and Classics, in the University of Sydney, Schools of Art and Colonial Nationality: A Lecture delivered at the Wollongong School of Arts, May 28th, 1861. (P.L.V., N.S.W. Pamphlets, Vol. XXXI). As may be guessed from the title Woolley suggested that Schools of Art would help "Colonial Nationality" to grow "from within." No doubt they did this by helping to diffuse education and a smattering of middle-class and old country values among the bush workers; but this belongs to the reverse part of the process with which we are concerned.

(143) Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, Vol. II, pp.270, 310 et passim.

of staid middle-class people, including many who had landed in the previous decade,(144) had already been strongly coloure by up-country, Australian values.

The two most famous, or infamous, bushrangers in New South Wales during the 1860's were Francis Christie(145) (alias Frank Gardiner or "The Darkie") and Ben Hall. Like Ned Kelly and most other bushrangers of the post-Gold Rush period, both were native-born and bush-bred boys with some convict blood. After a long series of daring and successful robberies, Gardiner organised and led, in June 1862, the attack on the mail-coach at Eugowra, which remains the most celebrated of all bushranging exploits except those of the Kelly Gang. After this he retired unobtrusively to Queensland with his paramour and at Apis Creek, seventy miles north west of Rockhampton, set up under his real name as a respectable bush publican. In 1864 he was arrested and, at the second trial, found guilty of two charges of robbery under arms and of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm. Chief Justice Stephen sentenced him to a total of thirty two years

(144) e.g. Oscar de Satge, Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter, Lond: 1901, pp.188-192.

(145) According to the Parliamentary Papers, Francis Christie was the outlaw's real name, Chas. MacAlister (Old Pioneering Days in The Sunny South, pp.262-263) knew "Gardiner" well, and says that he was an illegitimate child who had only a "natural-right to the name Christi There is also a legend that "Gardiner's" nickname 'The Darkie,' was bestowed in consequence of his having a quarter aboriginal blood.

imprisonment. After one vain attempt to escape he became a model prisoner, and his sisters and friends circulated a petition for his release on the grounds of his good behaviour both at Apis Creek and in gaol, of his health being undermined by prison conditions, and so on. The petition was endorsed by two leading politicians, William Forster and William Bede Dalley,(146) both of whom during their careers held the premiership. Dalley was also the attorney who had conducted Christie's defence at both his trials.(147)

When the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Hercules ~~Robertson~~ Robinson, decided to pardon Christie, after he had served ten years, by exercising the Royal prerogative, a storm broke in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Combes, member for Bathurst, in the vicinity of which most of "Gardiner's" robberies had been committed, asked questions about the proposed pardon and was supported by Mr. Buchanan, member for the neighbouring Western Goldfields constituency. Scenting the possibility of defeating the Parkes Government, the opposition moved to

(146) For details of the case, see Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of N.S.W., 1873-74, Vol. II, pp.189-245.

(147) It is interesting, and possibly significant, that Dalley was the native-born son of a convict.

the attack.[148] The Parkes Ministry defended itself by tabling a long list of other criminals who had been released with remissions of sentence during the previous five-year period ending December 31st, 1873,[149] by pointing out that twenty-three other bushrangers were to be released with "Gardiner,"[150] and by claiming that in any case remission of criminals' sentences was not and should not be in any sense a political matter, but one for the gubernatorial discretion. Public meetings for and against the bushrangers' release were held in Sydney and in the country.[151] In the

(148) For what follows see, in addition to V. & P. Leg. Ass., N.S.W., loc. cit.; Sydney Morning Herald and Empire files for the first fortnight of June, 1874.

(149) V. & P. Leg. Ass., N.S.W., loc. cit. There are 267 prisoners in this list, but the great majority had been sentenced for terms ranging from a few months to seven or ten years.

(150) All of these men had been sentenced for bushranging, one to a term of seven years, and the remainder to ten years or more. (loc. cit.)

(151) ibid., p.225, for a petition from a Bathurst public meeting opposing release; and Sydney Morning Herald, 10/6/1874 for report of a public meeting in favour. And cf. G.E. Boxall, Story of the Australian Bushrangers, pp.311-314: "Public meetings were held in all the centres of population, petitions were sent to the Governor and the Legislature, and the press was full of letters praying that mercy might be shown to the evil-doers. ---- The release --- was not carried without opposition however. A monster meeting of diggers was held at Grenfell to protest against any mercy being shown them. ---- But the spirit of the opposition was less active than that of the persons in favour of mercy. ..."

Assembly the argument culminated in a marathon debate extendi from 3rd to 11th June, 1874.

Although opposition members thundered that the Government were little better than aiders and abettors of bushranging, Parkes was fairly successful in confining the debate to the constitutional issue of whether or not it was proper for a government to advise the Governor on the matter of granting remission of criminal sentences. Few Government speakers were drawn into defending the bushrangers except in a partial and back-handed fashion, though the feeling that the 'wild colonial boys' symbolised the national spirit did gain expression.(152) Mr. Burns, for instance, a native-born opposition speaker, complained truthfully of:

> "a disposition, on the part of one or two hon. members, to endeavour to excite the sympathy of Australians with regard to the criminals who were spoken of as young Australians inveigled into crime by older and more designing men; and upon different occasions one or two hon. members had made special reference to Australians, as if they were a class on whose behalf some special consideration should be shown."(153)

In one sense the ostensible subject of the debate was unimportant. Both sides were vastly more interested in the occupancy of the Treasury benches than in the fate of the prisoners.(154) But the very fact that such a subject could

(152) e.g., Sydney Morning Herald, 4/6/1874, Parkes' speech; 5/6/1874, Fitzpatrick's speech.

(153) ibid., 5/6/1874.

(154) cf. Illustrated Sydney News and N.S.W. Agriculturist and Grazier, 27/6/1874, p.2; and A.W. Martin, Political Groupings in N.S.W. etc., Appendix V, pp.348-353.

become the occasion of a burning political tussle indicates how important it was to the country. And while both sides ostentatiously disclaimed any sympathy for the bushrangers, the truth seems to be that many members of both government and opposition benches felt it. Forster, Buchanan, and John (later Sir John) Robertson, all took a leading part in the attack; but, as Parkes was not slow to point out, Forster while serving earlier as Colonial Secretary had endorsed the petition for Gardiner's release, and Buchanan had nine years previously moved for the release of Fordyce and Bow, two of the twenty-four men whose emancipation he was now opposing with such a display of outraged propriety.(155) And Robertson had previously referred publicly to Ben Hall as "the king of the bushrangers."(156) On the last night of the debate the facade of correct feeling, which had been maintained by most members, wore very thin. Mr. Cooper, the last speaker, began by appealing to Magna Carta and the principles of the British Constitution in support of the well-worn Government argument that the Governor - not the Government - had acted rightly; but in his peroration he threw restraint to the winds:

> "What was the mover of the resolution seeking to do? He was striving to consign Gardiner to a living tomb, or to inflict on him a lingering life-in-death, to

(155) Sydney Morning Herald, 4/6/1874, Parkes' speech.

(156) [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is; or etc., p.228. See also the leading article in The Stockwhip, 30/10/1875, pp.599-600, which criticises Robertson, Forster and others for their equivocal attitude to bushranging.

> crush hope out of his soul, and people his dungeon with the phantoms of despair. Should we join in this deed? ... There were in this House, he hoped - there were in the country, he believed - few men so infamously bold." (157)

The House divided and the voting was twenty-six for and twenty-six against the motion. The Speaker gave his casting vote for his Chair and "Gardiner's" freedom, after which:

> "disorder continued for five minutes, during which time the Speaker was standing in his place, but his voice was drowned in the uproar, and his presence did not appear to be perceived by a majority of the members, so great was the clamour of many, and the excitement of all."(158)

"Gardiner," who was exiled as a condition of his pardon, took ship from Newcastle, and lived until his death in about 1895 as proprietor of the "Twilight" Saloon, corner of Kearney and Broadway Streets, San Francisco. According to legend he:

> "felt very strongly his enforced banishment from his native land, and it was his wont to go down to the wharf at the departure of each mail-boat bound for Australia, and he was often seen mournfully weeping as the vessel put off, probably bewailing the fate which had parted him from home and country and the well-known

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(157) Sydney Morning Herald, 12/6/1874.

(158) ibid.

> scenes of his dramatic career. And, no doubt, with all his lapses, Gardiner had all the Australian bushman's love of his country..."(159)

The picture of the saturnine bushranger-publican, swelling the volume of the Pacific with an exile's tears, is ludicrous; but that the story could be repeated seriously by his countrymen indicates how deep-seated was the folk feeling that bushrangers symbolised the national spirit.

There is some evidence that they were not unaware of this aspect of their role, and not above playing up to it. "Gardiner," whether with his tongue in his cheek or not, spoke to Australian visitors to California of his longing to return home.(160) One of his gang, Jack Piesley, in a letter dated "Fish River, September 4th, 1861" to the Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal, wrote quite irrelevantly, "I love my native hills, I love freedom and detest cruelty to man or beast."(161) Bushrangers often made a display of partiality for native-born Australians, as on the occasion when Gilbert, O'Meally,"and a young man wearing a mask" robbed the Bathurst-Carcoar Mail:

> "One of those stuck up was riding a racehorse back to its owner at the Lachlan; they took the horse, and returned the saddle and bridle, observing that as the man in charge was a native, they would not suffer him to go afoot; and they presented him therefore with one of their own horses in exchange."(162)

(159) Chas. MacAlister, Old Pioneering Days etc., pp.269-270.
(160) loc.cit.
(161) Quoted Chas. White, History of Australian Bushranging, Vol. I, p.207.
(162) Chas. White, op. cit., Vol. II, p.30.

And in November, 1864, after searching the letters and papers abstracted from the Binalong Mail, Ben Hall's gang burnt them, declaring that they did so in order to "put a stop to the ------- English correspondence."(163)

Whether the outlaws took much or little trouble to make nationalist gestures, folk tradition clothed their crimes in a nationalist garb. The pastoral proletariat felt especial exploited, as its progenitors had felt, basically because of the land grievance.(164) And yet, though they rarely owned a foot of it, the bush workers felt too that they loved and understood the land in a way, and with an intimacy, that the men of power and place in the cities did not.(165) A stanza from one of the many Ben Hall ballads contains more

(163) G.E. Boxall, Story of the Australian Bushrangers, p.243.

(164) See pp.269-272, supra; and D.G. Jones (?), Bushmen, Publicans, and Politics, Deniliquin: 1869.

(165) At this period the colonial parliaments were dominated by those whom Higinbotham characterised as "the wealthy lower orders" - "lawyers, journalists, official publicans and traders of the metropolis," most of whom were not native-born Australians. Farmers, and working men were very thinly represented in the legislatures (see I.D. McNaughton, In Australia: a Social and Political History, ed. Gordon Greenwood, Syd: 1955, pp.107-109). Squatters, however, were heavily represented, constituting, at least in New South Wales during the decades 1870-80 and 1880-90, the strongest single Parliamentary pressure group (see A.W. Martin, Political Groupings in N.S.W. etc., pp.31, 46, 121, 132-145).

than a memory of the days when men used to say, "He's one of the free objects ... What business have they here in the prisoners' country;"(166) and the days when Michael Howe addressed an open letter from "the Governor of the Ranges to the Governor of the Town:"(167)

> "We've just stuck up the escort, and we've seen the troopers fall,
> And we've got the gold and money,' says Dunne, Gilbert and Ben Hall;
> And next we'll go to Bathurst, and clean the banks out there,
> So if you see the 'peelers' just tell them to take care,
> And next to Sydney city we mean to make a call,
> For we're going to take the country,' says Dunne, Gilbert and Ben Hall."(168)

But stanzas like this also pointed forward to the future; when it came to pass that the outback ethos symbolised by "Dunne, Gilbert and Ben Hall," did capture the imagination of the whole country - to the point where the sheep-stealing swagman who "sprang into the billabong" became the culture-hero of Australian nationalism, acknowledged alike by bushman and city-dweller, radical and conservative, and recognised even by foreigners.(169)

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(166) See p.180 supra, et passim.

(167) See pp.397-398, supra.

(168) Chas. Macalister, Old Pioneering Days etc., p.284; and see Appendix XVII.

(169) See my article, Waltzing Matilda, in Australian Signpost (ed. Tom Hungerford), Melb: 1956; and correspondence, leading articles and news items in Sydney Morning Herald, 15/5/1955 ff. (see esp. issues of 18/5/55, 21/5/55, 23/5/55, and 25/5/55). The Prime Minister, R.G. Menzies, in defending "Waltzing Matilda" as the Australian national song, not the national anthem, said in Parliament, "But national songs are not produced by a Government. They rise up in the course of the experience of a nation and are adopted by public opinion."

In the 'sixties the most successful and 'noblest' bush-ranger of them all was Ben Hall, native-born son of emancipated Irish and English parents who had early gone 'up the country.' The man in charge of the small army of his police pursuers was a new-chum English baronet, Sir Frederick Pottinger, who finally shot himself; more, it seems, through clumsiness, than out of chagrin at his unpopularity and his failure to capture the outlaw.(170) Such facts were symptomati of real differences between respectable and lower class people at the period. Another Ben Hall ballad, with a deliciously double-edged irony, explicitly states the up-country

(170) Frederick Pottinger (1831-1865) was the second son of Sir Henry Pottinger, who was at various times Governor of Hong Kong, Cape Colony and Madras. Frederick came to Australia in 1856 succeeding, in the same year, to the title. Like so many others regarded by the colonists as 'new-chum swells' [cf. p.320 supra], he joined the police force and in 1862 became Inspector in charge of the Lachlan Goldfields district. The Australian Encyclopaedia [Syd: 1926, Vol. II, pp.323-32 rather under-states the low esteem in which he was popularly held:

"His repeated failures to arrest Gardiner, even when he had him at arm's length with eight police in the neighbourhood; and his avowed belief that Gardiner had nothing to do with the Eugowra escort robbery, ... raised much ill-feeling in Sydney and made him the subject of many jeers and suspicions." Chas. Macaliste [Old Pioneering Days etc., p.259] writes:

"Sir Frederick Pottinger's effigy, worked in straw, was burned in the street [of Forbes] one night amid the execrations of 5,000 citizens, to mark the low state into which Pottinger had fallen in the opinion of the community."

To many contemporaries his ineptitude seemed to amount almost to wilful blindness. Sidney J. Baker [Sydney Morning Herald, 19/7/1952, p.7] asks: "Again, who was the original Freddy and how did he come by the disability which we recall so pointedly in saying 'even blind Freddy couldn't miss it?'" It seems very possibl that Sir Frederick Pottinger's exploits gave rise to this still current slang expression.

feeling that the bushrangers were the true representatives of the 'legitimate' Australian spirit. It begins:

> "Come! all ye lads of loyalty, and listen to my tale;
> A story of bushranging days, I will to you unveil,
> 'Tis of those gallant heroes, God bless them one and all
> And we'll sit and sing 'God save the King, Dunn, Gilbert and Ben Hall."(171)

Bushranging began as the gesture of a few desperate men, goaded beyond despair to defiance. It continued for so long because of the very widespread popular sympathy enjoyed by the criminals: and this sympathy sprang partly from the disjunction between the outlook of 'Old Australians' and that of respectable, urban and middle-class people, whose numbers and influence were so greatly increased by the effects of the gold discoveries. When the above ballad was made men often felt they were striving against English "tyranny" when, in fact, they were striving, albeit unconsciously, to grow up nationally - to become a homogeneous Australian people. When the end was achieved, even if only formally, in 1901, the Anglophobe, republican, and separatist facets of the national spirit soon weakened almost to vanishing point.

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(171) This version from A.B. Paterson's Old Bush Songs [my italics].

Chapter VIII

THE BUSHMAN COMES OF AGE

"When the shearing's at an end we'll go fishing in a bend.
Then hurrah! for the Wallaby Brigade."

It has been argued that most of the bushman's essential characteristics took shape before the Gold Rush. Nevertheless, important changes did take place in bush life afterwards. Before the bushman could be enshrined as the national culture-hero, he had to reach full stature in his up-country habitat. It would be supererogatory to construct from documents a detailed picture of the bushman of the last decades of the nineteenth century for comparison with that of his prototype. The work has been done from the life, and for all time, by Furphy, Lawson and Paterson; and the striking ancestral likeness between their portrait and that sketched in the preceding pages will have been apparent to the reader. In this chapter we shall cite only a few passages from the more factual writers of the time to underline the accuracy of the 'fictional' characterisation. Our main business will be to notice those comparatively minor aspects of the bushman's nature which were changing during

the period, rather than his underlying attitudes which usually remained constant or became more marked.

The later bushman exhibited, perhaps even more clearly than his fore-runners, that manly independence (1) whose obverse side was a levelling, egalitarian collectivism, and whose sum was comprised in the concept of mateship. (2) How little bush mores had changed in these respects may be seen by comparing 'Harris's' description of bush hospitality in the 1830's (3) with the following picture of the same

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(1) And womanly independence. The growth of bush townships had mitigated the female famine of the earlier period. One visitor who stayed at a Castlemaine hotel in the late 1880's was old-worldly enough to leave his boots to be cleaned outside his bedroom door. In the morning he found that they had been merely kicked aside. When he went to the kitchen to ask for brushes and polish, the following dialogue took place: "'Was them your boots that I found at the door this morning?' asked the maid ... I admitted the offence meekly. 'Then don't you try that on again in this house,' answered the irate maiden darkly ... 'This here is a free house for women, not a place for slaves.'" (Hume Nisbet, A Colonial Tramp, 2 vols., Lond: 1891, Vol. I, pp.185-186.) And cf. Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' in Australia or etc., Lond: 1886, p.31.

(2) cf. Andrew Crombie, After Sixty Years or Recollections of an Australian Bushman, Brisbane: 1927, p.133; and G.F. Young, Under the Coolibah Tree, Lond: 1953, pp.50 ff., 55, 72, 128.

(3) See p.234, supra.

usages painted by an English visitor half a century later:

> "A bushman's hospitality is proverbial; in fact, if it be rejected, or even if when passing an acquaintance fail to drop in to the hut, and fail either to be helped or to help himself to the food he finds hanging up in the bags from the roof (a larder intended to circumvent the ants, though not always successful), he will not improbably give his would-be host much offence.
>
> The stockman is, notwithstanding his rough life, rather sensitive on the score of fancied slights, and this refusal, active or passive, to partake, is in his opinion but the expression on the part of the inchoate guest of superiority, a quality which the levelling colonial admits in very few mortals. If you find the stockman away from home the orthodox custom is to go in, hand out the meat and bread, put the 'billy' (a tin quart saucepan) on the fire smouldering in the big chimney, throw in a quant. suff. of tea and then take your fill, always remembering to rake the ashes back again over the blazing logs, and to place the viands back in their proper places."(4)

And yet there had been a change. A well known story relates how a socialist orator promised his audience that there would be strawberries and cream for all after the revolution. To a persistent interjector who reiterated that he didn't like strawberries and cream, the orator replied, "Comrade, after the revolution everyone will have to like strawberries and crem." In the early period 'Harris' had noted that every man drinking in a tavern "seemed to consider

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(4) Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' etc., p.221. And cf. Mrs. Campbell Praed, Australian Life: Black and White, Lond: 1885, p.98 ff. On far outback runs the usage had not changed perceptibly when C.E.W. Bean visited the West not long before World War I. (See his On the Wool Track, Syd: 1945 edn., pp.41-42 ff.); and cf. W.K.Harris, Outback in Australia or Three Australian Overlanders etc. Newcastle (N.S.W.): 1913, Cap. I; and Sir Baldwin Spencer Wanderings in Wild Australia, 2 vols. Lond: 1928, Vol. II p.550.

himself just on a level with all the rest, and so quite content either to be sociable or not, as the circumstance of the moment indicated as most proper."(5) By the 1880's mateship had become such a powerful institution that often one could refuse an invitation to drink only at one's peril. The same visitor quoted above thus describes outback manners in the bar of a Coonamble hotel:

> "Here's a 'jolly companion' coming up to ask you to 'have a booze' with him, so if you don't want to you had better make off, or he will get mightily offended. 'Eh, what you won't? Why you adjectival substantive, you adverbially adjectival substantive, you're too adverbially flash to drink with such as me, I suppose.' If you treat the thing as a joke you will have but little trouble, if you do not, woe betide you, you will raise the wrath of a Hercules who will thirst for your blood. See there a man who is working for yonder squatter has asked him the same question, and replied to his refusal in much the same terms. Such is the eternal fitness of things in this land of approximation to a state of nature, levelling, and unconventionality."(6

In the same way the later bushman possessed, as his frontier descendants still do to-day,(7) at least as much

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(5) See p.200, supra.

(6) Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' etc., p.154; and cf. Dugald Ferguson, Vicissitudes of Bush Life in Australia and New Zealand, Lond: 1891, p.29 ff; and D.M. Gane, New South Wales and Victoria in 1885, Lond: 1886, pp.161-163.

(7) Francis Ratcliffe, Flying Fox and Drifting Sand, etc., Syd: 1948, p.255 ff., et passim.

C.E.W. Bean (On the Wool Track, p.88 ff.) considers that this marked capacity for improvisation, with its concomitant - the tendency to be content with a task performed "near enough" - has become the prime characteristic of Australians. And cf. Thomas Wood, Cobbers, Oxford: 1938, pp.157-158.

'stringy-bark and green-hide' adaptability as had distinguished his predecessors.[8] He was as incorrigible a wanderer,[9] as profane a swearer,[10] as firmly attached to the use of pseudonyms[11] and almost as profoundly reserved in his attitude to policemen.[12] And although there were many more women in the outback townships and in the squatters' houses, there were still few to be found in the men's huts, in shearing sheds, at musterers' camps or on the roads where most of the real work of the pastoral world was carried on.[13]

(8) Dugald Ferguson, Vicissitudes of Bush Life etc., p.29 ff

(9) Anthony Trollope, Australia and New Zealand, Melb: 1876, pp.69 ff., 202, 503; Percy Clarke, The New Chum' or etc., pp.197, 215 ff.

(10) ibid., p.208.

(11) Randolph Bedford, Naught to Thirty-Three, Syd: N.D., pp.96-97. The author, taking work as book-keeper on a Darling River steamer in the 'eighties, found that the debtors were identified in the ledger only bush such names as "Joe, at the Four Mile Gums" or "Tom, the Fish, Tilpa Bend." And cf. Bulletin, 19/5/1888, p.8.

(12) C.E.W. Bean, The Dreadnought of the Darling, Lond: 1911, pp.93-94, 336-337.

(13) For instance at Avoca Station near Wentworth in the 1890's there were three or four female servants in the house besides the squatter's wife and children. But in the men huts were sixteen men and one married couple, and in the "Bachelors' Quarters" the overseer, his brother, the book-keeper and the rabbiter. (Information given to Margaret Kiddle by Mrs. R.F. Roberts, "Sarona," Coleraine Victoria, in November, 1948. Mrs. Roberts née Cudmore, was a daughter of Avoca's owner.)

The bad old tradition of "no encumbrances" still retained considerable force right into the present century.(14) A Bulletin contributor wrote in 1889 that in western river townships there were two races - "the magistracy, civil service, and Respectability (hem!) on the Hill," and the working people "on the flat." "How is it then," he asked:

> "that the fully-developed denizens of the flat are all female? I mean the portion visible by day. The fact is that those who have husbands have them not, and those who have not 'old men' are just as well off. The men are always away, working or travelling, or perhaps on another flat or hill. Children there are by the scores..."(15)

There were also many more churches and itinerating clergymen in the outback than there had been in the

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(14) See W.K. Harris, Outback in Australia or etc., p.59.

(15) 14/8/1889, p.8. The article was signed "Scotty the Wrinkler." This was the pen-name of Philip Mowbray, a well-educated Scotsman who dwelt for many years in a semi-permanent camp in a 'bend' of the Murrumbidgee. He died Nov. 12th, 1903.) It is interesting that the Bulletin, so radical in most respects during this period, was strongly opposed to female suffrage then being widely discussed. This policy was no doubt partly determined by the overwhelmingly masculine outlook of the pastoral workers about and for whom the paper wrote so much after 1881. (See e.g. issue of 17/3/1888, pp.4 and 5: "Too true it is that woman's enfranchisement is synonymous with man's enslavement.")

1840's;[16] but the old anti-clerical bias of the bush-workers, reflected very strongly in the Bulletin,[17] weakened only slowly. Some verse sent in to Paterson, and published by him in 1905 as an old bush song, expresses essentially the same attitude to organised religion as that which had

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(16) Between 1871 and 1880 the numbers of churches maintained by the five leading denominations in New South Wales increased as follows: Church of England 293, 449; Roman Catholic 210, 293; Presbyterian 114, 164; Wesleyan 213, 290; and Congregational 20, 50 (Thomas Richards, New South Wales in 1881, etc., Sydney: 1882, 2nd issue, p.8?
And see R.E.N. Twopeny, Town Life in Australia, Lond:1883 pp.119-120: "The Bishop of Melbourne some two years ago [initiated the formation of] the Pastoral Aid Society, the object of which is to provide religious services in outlying districts in the bush, where there are not sufficient settlers of either the Episcopalian or Presbyterian Churches to make it possible to supply a minister of either. The Society arranges that services should be held in these districts alternately, according to the rites of each Church, and that they should be visited alternately by ministers of each. This system has proved of enormous value in keeping religion alive in the bush ..." And cf. M.M. Banks, Memories of Pioneer Days in Queensland, Lond: 1931, pp.36-40; and W.K. Harri Outback in Australia etc., p.137: "The swagman on the road, the shearer in the hut, the station 'hand' on the 'run' - all will listen to what you say after they have found out what you are! Many of my Missionary friends have shorn sheep with them, mobbed and drafted cattle and sheep, put up fencing, and so on, all to win their confidence and respect. Once that has been done ... they will sing with you the favourite old Sankey hymns, or hear the Gospel story." et passim.

(17) e.g. issues of 22/4/1882, p.8 and 16/12/1882, pp.2, 9. It is highly probable that the Bulletin's anti-clericalis derived as much from the strong secular and rationalist trend in contemporary British and European thinking, as from any desire to please outback working-class readers. For a good statement of the secular, liberal, anti-clerical attitude in contemporary Australia see David Buchanan, An Australian Orator, Speeches Political, Soci Literary and Theological etc., Lond: 1886, passim, but esp. a speech on "Christianity", pp.175-225. And cf. "A University Man" [George Carrington] Colonial Adventures and Experiences, Lond: 1871, pp.52, 141-142; and Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' etc., p.208.

prevailed among bush workers sixty years earlier.[18] It also shows that bushmen continued to value 'practical' virtues[19] as highly as of yore:

MY RELIGION

"Let Romanists all at Confessional kneel,
Let the Jew with disgust turn from it,
Let the mighty Crown Prelate in Church pander zeal,
Let the Mussulman worship Mahomet.

From all these I differ - truly wise is my plan,
With my doctrine, perhaps, you'll agree,
To be upright and downright and act like a man,
That's the religion for me.

I will go to no Church and to no house of Prayer,
To see a white shirt on a preacher.
And in no Courthouse on a book will I swear
To injure a poor fellow-creature.

For parsons and preachers are all a mere joke,
Their hands must be greased by a fee;
But with the poor toiler to share your last 'toke,'
That's the religion for me.

Let psalm-singing Churchmen and Lutherans sing,
They can't deceive God with their blarney;
They might just as well dance the Highland Fling,
Or sing the fair fame of Kate Kearney.

But let man unto man like brethren act,
My doctrine that suits to a T,
The heart that can feel for the woes of another,
Oh, that's the religion for me."[20]

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(18) Cf. pp.244-253, supra.

(19) Cf., Ada Cambridge, Thirty Years in Australia, Lond:1903, p.97: "G. [the authoress's husband] had the good character in the Bush of being 'so unlike a parson,' which meant he could ride and drive (accomplishments acquired at home fortunately), and go anywhere without losing himself."

(20) 'Toke,' in stanza four, was bush slang for 'bread.'

This little song also suggests the extent to which, by the end of the last century, mateship had become for some bushmen a consciously-held substitute for religion.(21) Another piece of verse, actually written by an aged bushman in 1901, expresses the same sentiment with a depth of feeling which renders the halting lines not entirely ludicrous. Remembering the many occasions in his life when clergymen might have been present but were not, the old 'whaler,' envisioning his own death and burial, admonishes his son:

"I don't want the parson to pilot me thro',
Nor suavely stretch his gloved paw for my gold;
When my Jean named ye did they sprinkle their dew?
Eh? We won't have no parson over the wold.

.....

Wrap him a long sheet, a winding sheet round him;
Coffin him in - the Walerman hoary and old:
Rest at the last: ah! long rest where they'll ground him,
Down deep in the hole where he'll lie o'er the wold.
There the dingoes howl at the dawn of the day,
When the shivering days skulk the winter's cold;
There the crows seek shade as a rest by the way;
But there's rest for the Walerman on the wold."(22)

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(21) cf., C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, p.149.

(22) Bulletin, 29/6/1901, Red Page article, "Voices from the Basket," by A.G. Stephens. Stephens prints several specimens of extremely bad, but not mediocre, verse which had been consigned to the waste paper basket. Of the "Walerman's Tree," from which the above lines are quoted, Stephens writes: "Admire the truth of it, the strength of it, the stern, tramping rhythm of it - its rugged majesty, as of some scarred, weather-beaten visage of the people, the toilers, grown grand in conflict. That is the piece of verse to be treasured beyond many of the prettily-pranked artificialities of our literary popinjays.... But there is reason to question the originality; more probably it was re-written from an old model - some clanking chant of the iron 'early days. For here is another that looks like another variant of the original ..." (For a short discussion of the 'religious' implications of "The Dying Stockman," and "The Stockman's Last Bed," two extremely popular bush songs of the period, see Appendix XX.)

It is not suggested that 'mateship' was, or ever could have been, in any serious philosphical sense, comparable with Christianity or any other world religion possessing a long historical tradition. Bushmen were above all 'practical' men little given to abstract speculation. Such ideas as they held in common were practical rules of conduct, or habitual modes of thought and action, springing directly from the conditions of their life or from their traditions which, as we have seen, were themselves largely a response to the material environment And this environment was such that a bushman was, almost axiomatically, a man who could turn his hand to most tasks.

Nevertheless, there were differences among pastoral workers.[23] As in the earlier period, the most important broad division was between those who tended cattle and those who tended sheep. Stockmen still considered themselves the most distinguished of bushmen. Because cattle camped for the night must be sung to, or otherwise re-assured that there is no cause for stampeding, stockmen were probably also more given to ballad-singing than were other bush-workers.[24] A few stanzas from one of their songs will give the measure of their rather flashy self-confidence:

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(23) cf. p.210 ff., supra.

(24) Brian Elliott, (Singing to the Cattle and Other Australian Essays, Melb: 1947) goes much too far in "ascribing the whole vigour of the [Australian] ballad tradition to" the need for singing to the cattle".

"The stockmen of Australia, what rowdy boys are they,
They will curse and swear a hurricane if you come in their way.
They dash along the forest on black, bay, brown, or grey.
And the stockmen of Australia, hard-riding boys are they.

Chorus: And the stockmen etc.

Just mark him as he jogs along, his stockwhip on his knee
His white mole pants and polished boots and jaunty cabbage-tree.
His horsey-pattern Crimean shirt of colours bright and ga
And the stockmen of Australia, what dressy boys are they.

If you should chance to lose yourself and drop upon his camp,
He's there reclining on the ground, be it dry or be it damp.
He'll give you hearty welcome, and a stunning pot of tea,
For the stockmen of Australia, good-natured boys are they

If down to Sydney you should go, and there a stockman mee
Remark the sly looks cast on him as he roams through the street.
From the shade of lovely bonnets steal forth those glance gay, (2
For the stockmen of Australia, the ladies' pets are they.

But even among stockmen there was an élite - the over-landers who spent months in driving stock from one station or colony to another. A number of overlanding ballads (26) attest the truth of the remark that there was "no class of men in the colonies who fraternise more among themselves than the overlanders. There seems to be a sort of freemasonry among them." (27) And yet though cattlemen continued to enjoy more

(25) A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, Syd: 1930, pp.122-124.
(26) e.g. op. cit., "The Stockman", p.140, "The Maranoa Drovers", p.142, "The Stockman's Last Bed", p.153, "The Overlander", p.162, and "A Thousand Miles Away", p.165.
(27) C. Wade Browne, Overlanding in Australia, Melb: 1868, p. 38 ff.

prestige than sheepmen, the difference between the two groups was much less marked than it had been in the early days. Indeed, even the mounted overlander was more often employed, in the later years of the nineteenth century, in droving sheep than in droving cattle. The "crawling" shepherd was still despised, perhaps even more thoroughly than he had been in the past. One stanza of a cattle-mustering song goes:

> "A long-haired shepherd we chanced to meet
> With a water-bag, billy, and dog complete;
> He came too close to a knocked-up steer,
> Who up a sapling made him clear."(28)

But by the last decade of the century there were very few shepherds left in Australia.(29) Permanent fencing of runs, at first with post-and-rails and then with wire, was well under way by 1860,(30) but the bulk of the work was done in the two following decades. Though the movement seems to have begun in the wealthy Western District of Victoria,(31) it did not proceed quite evenly from the coast inland. In the early 1870's for instance, one could drive through north central Victoria on tracks,

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(28) A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, p.156.

(29) C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, p.35 ff., and cf. Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' etc., pp.159-160.

(30) C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History, 1851-1900, Syd: 1955, pp.180-184.

(31) Jesse Gregson, The Australian Agricultural Company 1824-1875, Syd: 1907, pp.248-249; and cf. Patricia McCaughey, Samuel McCaughey, Syd: 1955, pp.46-47. McCaughey, later Sir Samuel, subdivided Kewell Station, in the Wimmera, into 4,000 acre paddocks in 1859, while managing the property for his uncle, Charles Wilson.

> "sparely bisected by the primitive bush-fence - two or three a day, perhaps - brush, dog-leg, chock-and-log, the post-and-rail reserved for the stockyards and home enclosures."(32)

At the same period wire fencing was extending rapidly over the much more recently settled Peak Downs district of east-central Queensland.(33) "For perhaps twenty years the West seethed" with fencers and tank-sinkers,(34) and with them came the mounted boundary-rider whose work was at least comparable, in the skill and activity it demanded, with that required of a stockman.(35)

By increasing the carrying capacity of sheep runs and at the same time reducing the wages bill, fencing caused sheep-raising to forge ahead much faster than the cattle industry.(3 Between 1861 and 1894 the number of cattle in New South Wales remained approximately constant at about 2,300,000. During the same period the sheep population of the colony increased from about 6,000,000 to 57,000,000.(37) The discrepancy was not so great in Queensland however. These facts help to

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(32) Ada Cambridge, Thirty Years in Australia, Lond:1903,p.96.
(33) Oscar de Satgé, Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter, Lond: 1901, p.255 ff.
(34) C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, p.38.
(35) ibid., p.40ff.
(36) Oscar de Satgé, loc. cit.; Jesse Gregson, The Australian Agricultural Company, pp.256-260; and E.B. Kennedy, Four Years in Queensland, Lond: 1870, pp.146-148.
(37) Alexander Bruce, Chief Inspector of Stock, in New South Wales: "The Mother Colony of the Australia's", (ed. Frank Hutchinson), Syd: 1896, p.89 ff.

explain the rise in the sheepmen's prestige.

In the pre-Gold era stockmen had often "affected a rough, bullying way which generally [obtained] for them a sort of unwilling civility from the working hands."(38) By the 1880's though still convinced of their own superiority, cattlemen usually felt called upon to behave politely to fellow bushmen. The first stanza of "Wallabi Joe," a song from Paterson's collection, reads:

"The saddle was hung on the stockyard rail,
And the poor old horse stood whisking his tail,
For there never was seen such a regular screw
As Wallabi Joe, of Bungaroo;
Whilst the shearers all said, as they say, of course,
That Wallabi Joe's a fine lump of a horse;
But the stockmen said, as they laughed aside,
He'd barely do for a Sunday's ride.

Oh! poor Wallabi Joe,
O-oh! poor Wallabi Joe."

It is perhaps significant that shearers comprised the company from whom the stockmen took pains to hide their mirth. Certainly in the 1880's and 1890's shearers considered themselves, and were considered by many bushmen, nonpareils of the whole earth. An octogenarian station hand still living in Sydney(39) relates that on Campbell's Duntroon station, in the 'nineties, a "flash shearer" glared at him fiercely, for no reason whatever, and hissed, "I hate the smell of a rouse-

(38) 'A. Harris,' The Emigrant Family: or the Story of an Australian Settler, 3 vols., Lond: 1849, Vol.I, pp.91-92.

(39) Mr. A.J. Thornton of Pennant Hills, N.S.W.

about!" The old man is still deeply moved by the memory of the unfairness at the heart of things. He felt it was impossible to express his resentment openly. Another octogenarian bushman (40) tells the story of how in 1933 he got into conversation with a very old man in a Riverina train. The tale ends with the words, delivered with the air of one who once saw Shelley plain, "That man was Jimmy the Ringer, the man who once put up a tally of two hundred and sixty with the blades on the Darling."

Most of the many extant shearers' ballads (41) not only reflect the high kudos of the calling but suggest also an important reason for it. By the 1880's shearers, more even than most other bush-workers, (42) had acquired a high degree of pride in their professional skill. This pride was not quite comparable with that of the skilled craftsman whose aim is to produce a perfectly finished article. Bush tasks demanded rather the talents of the soldier on active service

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(40) Mr. Joseph Cashmere of Sylvania, N.S.W.

(41) e.g. "The Backblock Shearer" pp.8-9 supra; and A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, "Another Fall of Rain" p.22, "The Banks of Riverine" p.69, "The Plains of Riverine" p.89.

(42) But not more than overlanders and stockmen. In 1858 a drover who became 'bushed' by reason of mistaking the glow of the rising moon for that of a camp-fire, was so chaffed by his workmates that "he left in despair." (Oscar de Satge, Pages from the Journal etc., Lond: 1901, pp.81-82.)

whose main effort is directed to taking the objective, without too nice a concern for its condition when captured. Shearers have always been paid by piece-work, at so much per hundred sheep shorn, and so the champion shearer of the shed the ringer - was he who could shear more sheep in a day than anyone else. Most squatters attached more importance to speed than to painstakingly careful workmanship, but of course demanded both.(43) And shearers despised a clumsy practitioner who cut or "haggled" his beasts, almost as much as they idolised the "gun" or champion for his record-breaking tallies. The following ballad reflects the men's attitude accurately enough:

FLASH JACK FROM GUNDAGAI

"I've shore at Burrabogie and I've shore at Tonganmain,
I've shore at big Willandra and upon the old Coleraine,
But before the shearin' was over I've wished myself back again,
Shearin' for old Tom Patterson on the One Tree Plain.

Chorus:
All among the wool boys,
Keep your wide blades full boys,
I can do a respectable tally myself whenever I like to try,
But they know me round the back blocks as Flash Jack from Gundagai.

I've shore at big Willandra and I've shore at Tilberoo,
And once I drew my blades, my boys, upon the famed Barcoo
At Cowan Downs and Trida, as far as Moulamein,
But I always was glad to get back again to the One Tree Plain.

(43) C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, p.136 et passim.

I've pinked 'em with the Wolseleys and I've rushed with B-Bows, too,
And shaved 'em in the grease, my boys, with the grass seed showing through
But I never slummed my pen, my lads, whate'er it might contain,
While shearin' for old Tom Patterson, on the One Tree Pla

I've been whalin' up the Lachlan, and I've dossed on Cooper's Creek,
And once I rung Cudjingie shed, and blued it in a week.
But when Gabriel blows his trumpet, lads, I'll catch the morning train,
And I'll push for old Tom Patterson's, on the One Tree Plain."(44)

The last stanza points incidentally to the continuance of the bad old bush tradition of 'work and burst.' There is no doubt that most bushmen in this period continued as their predecessors had done, and as many still do,(45) to "earn their money like horses and spend it like asses."(46) Hardly a contemporary writer fails to comment on the fanatical improvidence of the pastoral workers and the callous villainy

(44) This version from A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs. Paterson's note explains that the 'Wolseleys' and 'B-bow were respectively machine and hand shears, to 'pink' a sheep was to shear it so closely, but without cutting it that the pink skin showed through the remaining wool. Most of the stations mentioned in the song were in the western Riverina and many of them still retain the same names to-day. Vance Palmer's version of the ballad (Old Australian Bush Ballads, Melb: 1951) also refers to "old Tom Patterson." However, Mr. Joseph Cashmere and the late Mr. Jack Lee, both natives of the district, who knew the song well, sang "Hungry Patterson," and claimed that this squatter was a notoriously mean employer. "He'd skin a flea for its fat," said Mr. Cashmere.

(45) See, e.g., Sydney Morning Herald, 19/10/1953; "Drovers' Spree after Record Stock Drive. Drovers each with cheques varying from £1500 to £2000 are spending them in various hotels in the Northern Territory..."

(46) 'A. Harris,' Settlers and Convicts, Melb: 1953 (C.M.H. Clark ed.), p.86.

of the shanty-keepers who so efficiently "lambed down" (47) their cheques. Many bush songs, of which the following is a good sample, commemorate the custom:

"The truth is in my song so clear,
Without a word of gammon:
The swagmen travel all the year
Waiting for the lambin'.

Chorus:

Home, sweet home!
Home, sweet home!
That is what they left it for -
Their home, sweet home!

Now when this dirty work is done
To the nearest shanty steering,
They meet a friend, their money spend,
Then jog along till shearing.

Now when the shearing season comes
They hear the price that's going:
New arrivals meet old chums,
Then they start their blowing.

They say that they can shear each day
Their hundred pretty handy,
But eighty sheep is no child's play
If the wool is dense and sandy.

Now when the sheds have all cut out
They get their bit of paper;
To the nearest pub they run
And cut a dash and caper.

They call for liquor plenty
And are happy while they're drinking,
But where to go when their money's done,
It's little they'd be thinking.

Sick and sore next morn they are
Of course, when they awaken.
To have another drink they must,
To keep their nerves from shakin'.

(47) See p.53, supra.

They call for one and then for two
  In a way that's rather funny.
The landlord says, 'Now this won't do;
  You men have got no money.'

They're very sad next morning
  And are lounging on the sofas:
For to finish off their spree
  They're ordered off as loafers.

They've got no friends, their money's gone,
  And at their disappearing,
They give three cheers for the river's bend
  And jog along till shearing."(48)

However, the use of the third person in this ballad, which probably dates from about 1890, gives it a certain self-consciousness. It is as though the singer is commemorating a ritual observance rather than describing life realistically. And there is a good deal of evidence that, as the nineteenth century drew to its close, shearers, like Australians generally, began to conduct their sprees in a less frenetic manner. Between 1871 and 1901, while the population of New South Wales for instance, more than doubled, the quantity of spirituous beverages, on which duties or excise was levied, increased by only about a quarter.(49)

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(48) Sung to me in 1952 by Mr. Joseph Cashmere, now of Sylvania, N.S.W.

(49) Statistical Register of New South Wales 1871 and 1901. The population in the two years was respectively 519,182 and 1,343,583; and the quantity of spirits (less methylated spirits, scents, etc.) 949,613 gallons and 1,229,504 gallons.
And cf. James Inglis, Our Australian Cousins, Lond: 1880, p.165 ff. Inglis says that wine and beer were beginning to replace spirits as the staple drink of city-dwellers.

For long after rum had ceased to be the common medium for 'incentive payments'[50] to workmen it continued to be the staple alcoholic drink of bushmen.[51] In the late 1860's George Carrington worked for a few months as barman to a shanty-keeper in the Carpentaria country. He records that this man would:

> "get up a gallon at a time of bad rum. This he used to put in a three-gallon keg with some tobacco, vitriol, and a modicum of laudanum. The whole was filled up with water, shaken together, and allowed to stand. This vile compound would actually leave a dark stain if used in a glass, and therefore it was found expedient to use tin pannikins. This was his whole stock-in-trade, and he charged eighteen-pence for a glass, or 'nobbler' of it, and men used to drink and relish it. The advantage of it was that it made them drunk very quickly, and thus no valuable time was wasted."(52)

Accounts left by those who knew the back country well show that this shanty-keeper was typical rather than exceptional.[53]

(50) Professor S.J. Butlin has shown that rum was never, properly speaking, 'the currency of New South Wales.' (See his Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, Melb: 1953, Cap. I.)

(51) H.W. Haygarth, Recollections of Bush Life in Australia during a Residence of Eight Years in the Interior, Lond: 1848, p.29: "At these inns in the interior little else is drunk but raw spirits, for a mixture with water is commonly considered equivalent to spoiling both." Rum was sometimes used as a generic term to mean any potable spirit, but most often it was used in the narrow sense. Squatters seem usually to have favoured the more 'gentlemanly' brandy. (cf. e.g. Mrs. Campbell Praed, Australian Life etc., p.98.)

(52) [George Carrington], Colonial Adventures and Experiences, pp.102-103, and cf. p.50 ff.

(53) e.g. D.C. Jones (?), Bushmen, Publicans, and Politics, Deniliquin: 1869, esp. Cap. III; the Bulletin, 25/10/189 p.10: "The Shearer's Keg"; and C.H. Eden, My Wife and I in Queensland, Lond: 1872, pp.138-143.

However, publicans in the eastern Riverina complained as earl as 1869 that shearers were already becoming more provident. The reason was that by then many who visited this district were no longer old hands but "young natives" or "small farme: from the more settled districts, who had homes to return to and so knew the value of money.(54)

Till the end of the century and later, visitors to the outback continued to be vastly impressed by the pattern of 'work and burst.'(55) Writing in 1883 a French observer thought that, in view of the appalling loneliness, monotony and hardship of the pastoral workers' life, their sporadic bouts of bestial drunkenness were not at all surprising. "Ce qui étonne bien plus encore," he wrote, "c'est que cette vie de solitude absolue ne les rende pas fous."(56) But those who knew the bush more intimately, or who had known it over a long period, thought that by the late 'eighties bushmen

(54) D.G. Jones (?), Bushmen, Publicans, and Politics, Cap.I

(55) e.g. A.W. Stirling, The Never Never Land: a Ride in North Queensland, Lond: 1884 (2nd edn.), pp.192-193; Carl Lumholtz, Among Cannibals, an Account of Four Years' Travels in Australia etc., Lond: 1890, p.60; D.M. Gane, N.S.W. and Victoria in 1885, p.163; Anthony Trollope, Australia and New Zealand, p.202; Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' etc., p.185 ff.; and E. Marin la Meslée, L'Australie Nouvelle, Paris: 1883, p.163 ff.

(56) E. Marin la Meslée, op. cit., p.70; and cf. Arthur Nicols, Wild Life and Adventure in the Australian Bush: Four Years' Personal Experience, Lond: 1887, pp.108-109; and A. Trollope, op. cit., p.114.

were becoming more temperate. Thus Thomas Major, who had been both an Inspector of Runs for the New South Wales Government and a squatter, contrasted the shearer of the 1860's with his successor of the 1890's. The former he described as "an unmitigated blackguard ... having no home, and fearing neither God nor devil." who roamed the country on foot with his swag and invariably took his cheque to the nearest grog-shanty where, "in a brutal state of intoxication, he might be seen for days or weeks, more like a dog than a human being."(57) Of the latter he wrote that he spent:

> "little of his money with the shanty-keeper, but his impudence and aggressiveness have in no way abated. ... His more sober habits enable him to go in for horse-racing; flash balls at the township are his delight; occasionally he is the owner of one or two good horses. ... With all his faults he not infrequently marries and settles down to farming and raising children perhaps a degree less flash than himself."(58)

Francis Adams, whose Radical outlook led him to view the pastoral workers more sympathetically, wrote:

> "The legend of the 'knocking down' of cheques is still current, but the actual thing is becoming rarer and rarer. ... The shearer of to-day is a man who arrives on a horse, leading another, and with his bank-book in his pocket. ... His visits to the township are with

(57) Thomas Major, Leaves from a Squatter's Note Book, Lond: 1900, p.131 ff. The description does not really contradict that quoted above of Riverina shearers at the same period, 1860-70. Major's words refer specifically to the then newly taken-up Gulf of Carpentaria country. The eastern Riverina was then of course no longer a 'frontier' district.

(58) Thomas Major, op. cit., p.145-146.

a view of entering his cheque to his account, or of forwarding it by post office order to his 'old woman' at the homestead hundreds of miles away. He is a member of a union with offices at the central bush townships, and his political views are of the most decisive and 'advanced' order."(59)

One recognises the same man, seen through different coloured spectacles. C.E.W. Bean gives a more balanced account of him than either one of the above.(60)

An old traditional bush song collected by Paterson in 1905 looks back nostalgically to the days when rum was king. Two stanzas go:

"My name is old Jack Palmer,
I'm a man of olden days,
And so I wish to sing a song
To you of olden praise.
To tell of merry friends of old
When we were gay and young;
How we sat and sang together
Round the Old Keg of Rum.

Chorus: Oh! the Old Keg of Rum! the old Keg of Rum!
How we sat and sang together
Round the old Keg of Rum.

It's jovially together, boys -
We'd laugh, we'd chat, we'd sing;
Sometimes we'd have a little row
Some argument would bring.
And oft-times in a scrimmage, boys,
I've corked it with my thumb,
To keep the life from leaking
From the Old Keg of Rum.

(59) The Australians, A Social Sketch, Lond: 1893, p. 167 ff., and cf. Michael Davitt, M.P., Life and Progress in Australasia, Lond: 1898, p.180 ff.

(60) On the Wool Track, Caps. XIV-XVIII; and cf. Andrew Crombie, After Sixty Years etc., pp.165-166; W.K. Harris, Outback in Australia or etc., pp.74-76; and A.J. McLachlan, McLachlan: An F.A.Q. Australian, Melb: 1948, p.15.

Chorus: Oh! the Old Keg of Rum! the Old Keg of Rum!
To keep the life from leaking
From the Old Keg of Rum."

But most ballads of the time indicate that beer was beginning to take the place of spirits.(61)

The improvement in drinking habits was an index of the bushman's increasing self-respect and of his increasing self-awareness, the beginnings of which were noted in Chapter VI.(62) It would be easy to exaggerate the change however. On the whole one is struck, as the bushmen themselves were, more by the continuity of up-country manners and traditions than by the changes in them. The historian of Australia's part in the first World War writes:

> "Before 1914 it was observed, even in the Far West, that the new generation of Australians managed to preserve its cheque in the country towns, and to reach Sydney or Melbourne - and lose it there. That was a step in advance, but the advance stopped there - since 1914 we have gone back if anything..."(63)

And though swagmen are not often seen on outback roads to-day that most characteristic of all outback institutions, "humping the drum," flourished well into the present century. In 1887 an English magazine claimed, improbably, that as many as three hundred sundowners were fed nightly at Sir Samuel Wilson's Riverina station.(64) More typical of the true state

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(61) e.g. The Ramble-eer (see pp.52-53, supra.)
(62) p.344 ff.
(63) On the Wool Track, pp.151-152.
(64) Bulletin, 14/9/1889, p.8.

of affairs were the ten or fifteen who received free rations and shelter each night in the season at Avoca homestead near Wentworth.(65)

Strictly speaking, a sundowner was said to be distinguishable from a swagman. Both tramped from station to station, expecially from the approach of the shearing season, but while the latter genuinely sought work from the squatters, the former did not. Instead he was careful to arrive at the station store at sundown, too late to be given work, but in time to receive free rations. If one accepts this distinction between sundowners and swagmen as valid there is reason to believe that there were comparatively few of the former - in spite of a great many statements to the contrary. Squatter complained bitterly of having to provide rations gratis to travellers, whether there was work for them or not. One gentleman told Trollope that the practice cost him £300 a year, and another is said to have spent £1000 a year in this way.(66) Yet the antiquity and universality of the custom, and the opportunities for a revengeful swagman to fire the

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(65) Mrs. R.F. Roberts. (See footnote 13, p.430, supra.)

(66) Anthony Trollope, Australia and New Zealand, Melb: 1874, p.70. For Trollope's rather sensible remarks at large on this subject, see p.69 ff. Time has borne out his argument that the antipathy of squatters to the settlement of free selectors on the fringes of the pastoral areas postponed the time when the system of 'sundowning,' which they so much disliked, would fall into desuetude.

offending squatter's fences with impunity, were such that few graziers dared refuse rations.(67) In fact, the employers' complaints were hardly justified. It is hard to see how the pastoral economy could have continued functioning successfully in the absence of this small army of itinerant labourers. A Bulletin correspondent in 1889 argued sensibly, though with some partisan spirit, that the system of giving free rations to travellers came into existence, and continued, because it paid the graziers; and further that the vast majority of the men were more anxious for work than for rations. He wrote:

> "We admit that just before shearing-time large numbers of men are fed on some of the stations; but does this result in loss to the squatter? Certainly not. ... If the shearers and rouseabouts do not come to the squatter he must go out and search for them, and it is needless to point out which is his more economical course. The conveyance of 200 men from Sydney or Melbourne to a backblock station would cost a large sum, and the chances are that on arrival a large proportion would be found incompetent. Therefore it is advantageous to the squatter to encourage the travelling of 'hands' from station to station in search of work. Let him abolish free rations to travellers, and his procuring of labour will be attended by the disadvantages already noted. ... The fact is that the 'sundowner' is, and always has been, a myth. The genuine loafer is not the man to carry his swag from station to station, travelling a score miles under a broiling sun, when water is often unobtainable. The ordinary swagman

(67) See p.63, supra; and cf. Ada Cambridge, Thirty Years in Australia, pp.156-158; and 'Tom Collins' [Joseph Furphy], Rigby's Romance, Syd: 1946 edn., p.98: "... the present social system of pastoral Australia - a patriarchal despotism, tempered by Bryant and May - "

> prefers working to travelling. ... It pays a genuine loafer better to hang around the big cities, and that few bushmen flock in from the country to join the ranks of the 'unemployed' proves the force of this contention."(68)

Of course there is no doubt that the army of swagmen, in whose ranks all bushmen were likely to be enrolled at some periods of their careers, included a few sundowners proper, or professional mendicants. A few weeks after the above article appeared, another Bulletin correspondent sent in a contribution showing this other side of the picture.(69) He argued cogently enough that, "given the opportunity to loaf [one] can trust poor, frail, human nature to supply the loafer;" but his article fails to convince that loafers predominated among the swagmen. Indeed, without intending to do so, it rather underlines the conclusion of the first correspondent - that the sundowner was a largely mythical figure and one that Australians were determined to believe in.(70) The only concrete case cited of men refusing work, is one in which twelve "sundowners" declined to accept jobs at rates of payment lower than those laid down by the newly formed Shearers' Union.(71) And most swagmen's songs, while they

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(68) Bulletin, 14/9/1889, p.8.

(69) ibid., 5/10/1889, p.8.

(70) For a judicious endorsement of this view see E.C. Buley, Australian Life in Town and Country, Lond: 1905, Chap.VI; "On the Wallaby Track," esp. pp.51-53.

(71) cf. James Inglis, Our Australian Cousins, p.181. Inglis quotes from the Queenslander, a wrathful squatter's article denouncing many swagmen who, "will not take work, when offered, except at the extravagant rate of wages to which they have been accustomed, and which employers are no longer able to pay."

certainly stress the independence and unconventional morality of the vagabond life, also take it for granted that men go shearing in the season when work is available.(72) Thus Three Little Johnny Cakes, after describing the sweets of a whaler's life, ends with the stanza:

"When the shearing time commences
I'm in me glory then,
Pick a shed and see the Boss
And then secure a pen.
And when the roll is called,
And the time is drawing nigh,
Roll me drum, rake me cheque,
And quickly bid good-bye."

Another important development in up-country life during the later part of the last century was a very great strengthening of nationalist feeling. In part this was simply a natural concomitant of the fact that native-born people, for the first time, made up a rapidly increasing majority of the population. The sentiment was sharpened and made much more self-conscious by the crude 'racism' which became more and more marked from the time of the anti-Chinese agitations on the diggings.(74) But, as in the formative period, nationalism was largely nourished also by a sufficiently chauvinist contemp for the new chum who was so obviously not at home in the bush.(75

(72) e.g. The Wallaby Brigade, pp.70-71, supra.
(73) This stanza from the 'Jack Eather' version (see pp.26-27 supra.)
(74) cf., pp.325-335, supra; and D.M. Cane, New South Wales and Victoria in 1885, pp.57-76; and Ada Cambridge, Thirty Years in Australia, pp.75-77.
(75) cf. pp.192-196, supra.

Of these newcomers many more seem to have been men of middle-class background than had been the case earlier. From about 1860 until 1900, the 'colonial experiencer' or 'remittance man' was just as familiar a figure in the back blocks as the swagman or sundowner. Some of them succeeded, but to judge from contemporary accounts most of them did not - perhaps partly because there was no longer much good unoccupied pastoral land to be had for the taking.(76)

Fools and failures received abundant recognition of their Englishry, but immigrants who were practical and successful seem, ipso facto, to have been accepted - if not as honorary Australians, then merely as people whose English origin was lost sight of or forgotten. Thus the well-born and well-bred Biddulph Henning rapidly became a very fair bushman and successful squatter of whom his sister could write, "Biddulph is a capital master. He never lets any of the men gain the least advantage over him and yet they all like him."(77) And even Furphy, arch-nationalist and democrat, falls naturally into the same way of feeling. Some of his squatters are good and some bad, but since all are more or less successful, and therefore 'practical' men,

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(76) Biddulph Henning, a successful pioneer squatter who left England in 1853, thought that by 1864 there was "very little prospect for anyone, "who had not at least £2000 or £10,000 capital to begin with." (Letters of Rachel Henning, Syd: 1952, pp.76-77.)

(77) ibid., p.78.

whether they are British or native born is hardly felt to be relevant to discussion of their characters.(78) On the other hand he pours scorn, slightly qualified with pity, on that "descendant of Hengist," Sollicker, the plodding and oafish English boundary-rider;(79) and the 'colonial experiencer,' Willoughby, the broken-down swell, is presented pitilessly as a cultivated ninny whose asinity is almost purely a function of his English birth and nurture.(80) Here as elsewhere Furphy reflects very faithfully the bush-workers' attitude. One of the many ballads on English jackaroos goes like this:

"If you want a situation, I'll just tell you the plan
To get on to a station, I am just your very man.
Pack up the old portmanteau, and label it Paroo,
With a name aristocratic - Jimmy Sago, Jackaroo.

When you get on to the station, of small things you'll make a fuss,
And in speaking of the station, mind, it's we, and ours, and us.
Boast of your grand connections and your rich relations, too,
And your own great expectations, Jimmy Sago, Jackaroo.

They will send you out on horseback, the boundaries to ride;
But run down a marsupial and rob him of his hide,
His scalp will fetch a shilling and his hide another two,
Which will help to fill your pockets, Jimmy Sago, Jackaroo
Yes, to fill your empty pockets, Jimmy Sago, Jackaroo.

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(78) Such Is Life, Syd: 1948 edn., p.204 ff.
(79) ibid., p.171 ff.
(80) ibid., pp.4-48.

When the boss wants information, on the men you'll do a sneak,
And don a paper collar on your fifteen bob a week.
Then at the lamb-marking a boss they'll make of you.
Now that's the way to get on, Jimmy Sago, Jackaroo.

A squatter in the future I've no doubt you may be,
But if the banks once get you, they'll put you up a tree.
To see you humping bluey, I know, would never do,
'Twould mean good-bye to our new chum, Jimmy Sago, Jackaro
. Yes, good-bye to our new chum, Jimmy Sago, Jackaroo."(8

There is nothing really new in this. We have seen that, even in convict times, pastoral workers despised middle-class, English immigrants who were ill at ease in the bush. The new development is that in the later period many squatters particularly if they were Australian-born, shared to a quite marked extent in their employees' feelings. As early as 1863 an English visitor wrote that "the resident settlers throughout Australia feel deeply the absurd manner in which young men are sent out."(82) He went on to quote from the Canterbury Press (New Zealand) of March 8th, 1862, observing that the newspaper's comments were equally applicable to Australia:

"The colonies now are not regarded generally as gaols or houses of correction, but as reformatories or penitentiaries. ... It is the fact that no ship arrives that does not bring some one or more young men, brought

(81) This version from A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, pp.87-88.

(82) cf., C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900, Syd: 1955, p.787. "There were men of talent and character who were not prepared to accept a galling feature of colonial status - the convention that the leading positions in education, church, civil service, and the professions were reserved for Englishmen."

> up in the social rank of gentlemen, but without money, intellect, cultivation, learning, capacity for labour, good behaviour, or any features of mind or body which can enable them to retain in England the position in life their fathers filled. These men are not only useless in a colony. They become the pests of its society. ... If the man have something in him after all, and rises in the new world, they [his English relatives] take credit for their sagacity in finding the right career for him; if he becomes a brutal, drunken, blaspheming, godless, bullock-driver, and at last dies in a ditch, then it is 'Poor John, we did all we could for him'. ... The father has got a friend in the colony, or a friend of his has got a friend, who has got a friend who has a friend in the colony. A letter is written. ... We have seen hundreds of such letters; and the coolness with which scapegraces are consigned to colonial families, in the assumption that they will be welcome guests, is amazingly complimentary to our Christian hospitality...."(8

Of course not all gentlemen jackaroos from Britain were weaklings and wastrels. Thomas Major records the case of an Oxford man who worked on his 'frontier' run in the Gulf country in the 1860's. This Mr. Todd "had not been the recipient of high academic honours" but "had mastered the manly art of self-defence."(84) When thirty shearers refused to commence work unless served with a free glass of grog a man, the Oxford jackaroo, "with a few scientific taps, delivered in the most gentlemanly manner," knocked out the ringleader, after which shearing proceeded smoothly.(85) Nevertheless Major also records that two men, who had been out

(83) B.A. Heywood, A Vacation Tour to the Antipodes etc., Lond: 1863, p.239 ff.; and cf. "Types of Colonial Life - The Colonial Experiencer," Illustrated Sydney News, Aug., 1873 (quoted Helen G. Palmer and Jessie MacLeod, The First Hundred Years, Melb: 1954, pp.130-131).

(84) Leaves from a Squatter's Note Book, p.106.

(85) ibid., p.167 ff.

searching for a new run, called at his homestead one morning. They had quarrelled and were barely on speaking terms:

> "One, it did not take me long to discover, was little better than a consummate fool. Unfortunately he was the capitalist. The other, a smart but rough young Australian bushman, was without capital, but had plenty of brains and experience. On the morning after their arrival, the latter accompanied me to the stockyard, and, seating himself on a rail, gave me an account of their trip.
> 'That d--- galloot,' said he, meaning his partner, 'is the biggest chuckle-headed ass God ever created. He is going back to England - a good job too; we don't want fools in this country. I can't say what England is like; if it is the same as Australia, except he has a brand put on him, and fastens a bell round his neck, he'll lose himself as sure as God made little apples ..."(86)

The class line between masters and men continued to be almost as sharply drawn as in convict days,(87) except sometimes when the squatter was travelling, or for some other reason far removed from the homestead(88) and his women-folk. But even so there were many situations in which he felt nearer, as a fellow Australian, to his employees than to the green but well-connected Englishman whose manners and values were, after all, not quite his. Even the most reasonable of men must have been moved, if only sporadically, to a quite chauvinistic degree of Australian patriotic feeling by such

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(86) Leaves from a Squatter's Note Book, pp.173-174.

(87) [Joseph Furphy], Such is Life, p.255; and cf. C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, Cap. III, "The Boss."

(88) cf. W.A. Brodribb, Recollections of an Australian Squatter or Leaves from My Journal since 1835, Syd: 1883, p.7.

importunate English guests as the Mr. Mowbray described by a Victorian girl:

> "Father came in with his hands full of letters. One was not a pleasant epistle; it was from a Mr. Mowbray: an indignant protest that my father, in answer to an appeal for help, should have forwarded him 'tickets for the Immigrants' Home.'
> 'I am fairly bothered about him, Alice. I have lent him considerable sums of money. As for employment, there is nothing he is fit for. I must invite him here.'
> 'After his letter,' I exclaimed.
> 'I can't leave him to starve, and what is to become of him?'
> Oh, it is such a puzzling question to answer, we are so beset with this class of adventurers. Younger sons, who have fared delicately at home, and with expensive tastes and habits, are thrown remorselessly upon the resources of the colony ..."(89)

Some months later the writer married, but she was not to escape this particular 'remittance man' so easily:

> "Mr. Mowbray had been sent off with the rest of the rubbish. We had fitted him out to visit amongst our friends. We had given him four months to go the round, but at the thought of the end of that time we turned away in blank despair, far more so than the victim, who said quite cheerfully 'something would turn up.'
> I knew, in his weak vision, he counted on a pleasant period at my new home ..."(90)

In 1883, a French diplomat who travelled widely in the outback remarked that Englishmen were unpopular throughout the Australian colonies. He thought the fault lay with the "jeunes dandys anglais" who did not trouble to conceal their

(89) "A Resident," Girl Life in Australia: A Description of Colonial Life, Liverpool: 1876, pp.2-3.

(90) ibid., pp.40, 41.

feelings of superiority from the plain-spoken and presumptively base-born "colonials."(91)

A recently deceased Australian has described how puzzled he was, as a boy, by English gentlemen-jackaroos on a cattle station near Texas, New South Wales. Dressed in "spotless white duck suits" they would read and lounge about the verandah until about four p.m., and then ride into the township whence they would return, well after midnight, singing and laughing. The Australian boy couldn't:

> "make it out. Everyone had to work. ... Mother would say, 'I'd sooner you'd never been born than be like that,' and I would hear the manager sometimes tell her: 'They can do what they like. If they want to learn the cattle business, they can. If they want to loaf, they can. Their father pays me two hundred a year to give them colonial experience' - and he would shrug his shoulders."(92)

The 'remittance man' or 'colonial experiencer' was a vanishing species at about the turn of the century,(93) but the attitude he did so much to strengthen lingered after him. In 1909 Bean noticed that "for some reason they seemed just to tolerate Englishmen in the bush. They used the word almost as a mark for incapacity." Even of a working-class

(91) E. Marin la Meslée, L'Australie Nouvelle, pp.194-195.

(92) G.F. Young, Under the Coolibah Tree, p.17 ff., (the author was born in 1872).

(93) loc. cit., and W.J. Galloway, Advanced Australia: A Short Account of Australia on the Eve of Federation, Lond:1899, p.vii: "Few of our middle-class families are guilty, nowadays, of the cruel folly of sending their youngsters off to Australia as 'jackeroos' or 'remittance men,' to find their level in an environment which gives them no fair chance."

immigrant who had been in the bush for many years, and who worked like a Trojan, men would say, "He can't ride. He can graft a bit; but he's not much intelligence, oh no. He's an Englishman."(94)

Antipathy to small farmers and selectors was another sentiment shared in the later period by both pastoral workers and their employers. The squatters' reasons for hating farmers are well known, and need not be enlarged upon here.(95) Of itself, this mutual hostility tended to make common ground between selectors and pastoral workers. Moreover a great many selectors were, at the same time, itinerant bushmen who went shearing, horsebreaking, and so on for months at a time to help make ends meet on the farm; and when the farm failed many of these remained permanently as casual hands in the pastoral industry.(96) And yet the bushman proper had reasons of his own for despising, rather than hating, those whom he designated 'cockies.'(97)

A major reason why the distinctive up-country ethos centred in New South Wales was that agricultural development

(94) C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, p.92. "Graft" is bush slang for hard work.

(95) cf. e.g., W.A. Brodribb, Recollections of an Australian Squatter etc., pp.200-204.

(96) Francis Adams, The Australians etc., p.160 et passim.

(97) For the probable derivation of the term see G.F. Davidson, Trade and Travel in the Far East and etc., Lond: 1846, p.143.

there and in Queensland[98] lagged so far behind that of the other colonies. Hence we find that Queensland, perhaps even more often than the mother-colony, is the locale of so many ballads of this period. And Bulletin writers and others constantly remarked that Queensland was the most "Australian" and the most nationalistic of all the colonies.[99] South Australia, on the other hand, was dismissed as the least "Australian" as 'the farinaceous colony,' 'the Holy Land,' where loyalty to [Britain] was "a religion."[100] English visitors naturally noticed the reverse side of the picture - that South Australia's agricultural economy gave working men a much better chance of becoming their own masters by exercise of the thoroughly 'un-Australian' qualities of sobriety and thrift.[101] New South Wales did not grow enough

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(98) Except, of course, for the special case of the plantation type sugar industry, Queensland's economy was more purely pastoral than that of New South Wales. Agricultural development in Western Australia was still tardier.

(99) e.g. Bulletin, 17/9/88, p.13: "Dear Bulletin, - Beyond question lusty young Queensland holds the field in the matter of Australian Nationality ...;" and 13/7/1889, p.5, Editorial Article, The Australian Spirit.
And cf. Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' etc., p.262: "The Englishman in Queensland is, like the sheep, developing into a different species ..."

(100) Bulletin, 13/7/1889, loc. cit.

(101) W.R.G. Jessop, Flindersland and Sturtland; or, the Inside and Outside of Australia, 2 vols., Lond: 1862, Vol. II, p.305 ff.

wheat to feed its own citizens until the eve of Federation.(102) Thus, except in certain favoured areas fairly near Sydney or the coast,(103) there were relatively few real farmers (in the sense in which the word was used in South Australia) in the parent colony. Even for many years after the first Free Selection Act of 1861, smallholders on the tablelands and the western slopes - the bushranging country - tended

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(102) New South Wales: 'The Mother Colony of the Australias,' (ed. Frank Hutchinson), Syd: 1896, p.108: "Our production does not fulfill requirements. There are signs, however, that a great increase in wheat production will shortly take place." And cf., T.A. Coghlan Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand 1903-1904, Syd: 1904, p.352: "With the exception of Queensland and Western Australia, all the states during 1901 produced sufficient wheat for their own requirement Until the middle 1890's New South Wales, with three or four times the population of South Australia (ibid., p.149), produced only about half as much wheat. Respectively for each state, in representative years, production in bushels was:

1871	2,229,642	3,967,079	1881	3,405,966	8,087,032
1891	3,963,668	6,436,488	1901	14,808,705	8,012,762
1903	27,334,141	13,209,465	(ibid., p.353). N.S.W. actually had its first export surplus in 1897.		

(103) cf. Nehemiah Bartley, Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences etc., (ed. J.J. Knight) Brisbane: 1896, p.44: "Before the passing of Sir John Robertson's 'Land Act of 1861', the settlement of the Clarence and adjacent river basins was sparse; but the district was one of those in which free selection did most good and least harm. ... The good lands were so heavily timbered as to be useless for grazing purposes. But the rich deep soil, when the timber is once cleared off, is just what the agricultural settler wants ..." (Of course such moist coast lands were not suitable for wheat.)

to pursue their calling at least partly after the manner of the free selector of the Eumerella shore.(104)

For these reasons there is not much evidence of bad feeling between the itinerant bushmen and the small-holders in New South Wales and Queensland before about 1870. Indeed, as Shann has pointed out,(105) and as the folk-songs confirm, there was rather a close community of outlook between both groups and the bushrangers. But as genuine farmers increased in numbers, so did the cohesiveness and self-awareness of the bushmen proper. Until after Federation an honest selector was usually extremely poor and wretchedly over-worked.(106) With the best will in the world he could not afford to issue, as the squatter did, free rations to every passing swagman.

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(104) See pp.392-396, supra, and cf. John Martineau, Letters from Australia, Lond: 1869, p.123: "It was notorious that the latter [free selectors], having in general little skill in agriculture, and being far from any market, could exist only by eating or selling the Squatters' cattle ..." In 1874 W.H. Cooper, a young member of the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, utterly wrecked a promising political career by making in the House a choleric and injudiciously truthful speech, in which he remarked that: "He had seen a good deal of the free selection in this country, and his opinion was that for every one of the yeomen class to be found among the selectors, they would find ten whose only stock in trade was a bullet mould and a harness cash." (Quoted A.W. Martin, Political Groupings in N.S.W. 1872-1889: A Study in the Working of Responsible Government, Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U. 1955, p.204.)

(105) See p.366, footnote (40), supra.

(106) E.C. Buley, Australian Life in Town and Country, Lond: 1905, Chap.IV.

Nor could he afford to pay such comparatively high wages. Yet the work he demanded of casual labourers was harder, though not necessarily more skilled, than that to which the men from 'farther out' were accustomed - except perhaps for shearing, and the small farmer, if he had any sheep, shore them himself. Long before the Gold Rush the old hands had found that "the pastoral life, following flocks of sheep, and riding after cattle, was a much more agreeable and preferable occupation to them than clearing land and working at farms under a scorching sun."(107)

Thus, by about 1890 the 'cocky' had become, at least in the mythology of the migratory bushmen, a byword for meanness and stupidity. He was mocked for his very virtues - providence and a tremendous capacity for back-breaking toil. The following passage gives accurately the contemporary bush-worker's attitude to the small farmer and his way of life:

> "Bill Jackson ... had been a cocky's boy as a kid, and had known what it was to be kicked out of bed at four in the morning to milk cows, and to be kicked right through the day till nine and ten o'clock at night doing this, that and everything for Mr. and Mrs. Cocky and all their numerous family and friends, not to mention the poddies and the pet lambs and the dogs. It wasn't much of a school for manliness, and to Bill's credit be it said, that one day he turned round and kicked back

(107) "A Clergyman," [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is: or etc., Lond: 1867, p.221.

> again, and having kicked, faced the bush with no more personal or other property than he stood up in."(108)

Another writer stresses the dullness supposed by bushmen to be characteristic of the petty agriculturists. Describing a Western Queensland township he writes:

> "But to that township in the early days of its existence Taylor rarely went, for even amidst a floating population there are floating jests, and the man at whose expense they are made does not learn to appreciate them any more by reason of new arrivals learning them and keeping them alive. To the men of the township his selection, which he had proudly named Taylor's Flat, was known as Taylor's Folly; and the owner of it, dull-witted and slow of speech, was loth to face the raillery his presence always called forth."(109)

At bottom it was the small farmer's grinding poverty which gave rise to the pastoral worker's contempt for him.(110) Though the itinerant bushman often owned nothing but what he carried

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(108) E.S. Emerson ("Milky White"), A Shanty Entertainment, Melb: n.d. [1904], p.29 ff., and cf. ibid., p.81.
Also Sir George Pearce, Carpenter to Cabinet: Thirty-Seven Years of Parliament, Lond: 1951, pp.14-15; and Sydney Sun-Herald, 18/9/1955, p.40. [A ninety-one year old Australian, Mr. Ben Murray, recalling his youth, said]: "I started on a dairy-farm outside Wollongong when I was nine and worked six years [i.e. from c. 1874 till 1880] just for my keep. It was little less than child slavery. I had to get up before daylight, milk eight cows and walk eight miles to school. People were so poor and conditions so hard that I only had eighteen months' schooling in my life."

(109) G. Firth Scott, Colonial Born, Lond: 1900, p.3-4.

(110) cf. A.J. Boyd, "The Cockatoo Farmer", article in Queensland Agricultural Journal 1/5/1898. (Quoted Helen G. Palmer and Jessie MacLeod, The First Hundred Years, p.94.)

on his back, he was accustomed to eat, three times a day, good meat of his own or of the neighbouring squatter's. Honest selectors, on the other hand, were traditionally supposed to live almost entirely on nothing but bread (or damper) and treacle, known contemptuously to the bushmen as "cocky's joy." To the pastoralist the bushman accorded a measure of respect, grudging or otherwise, according to the character of the man concerned. After all, the squatter's very wealth was an index of his success - of his being a 'practical' man able also to dominate the difficult environment. But to the struggling selector, the bushman's attitude was closely akin to that spirit which, at the end of World War II, moved a minister of the Crown to declare that it was not part of Labour Government policy to encourage Australian workers to become "little capitalists."(111) The following ballad is one of a number which go to the heart of the matter:

THE STRINGY-BARK COCKATOO

"I'm a broken-hearted miner, who loves his cup to drain,
Which often-times has caused me to lie in frost and rain.
Roaming about the country, looking for some work to do,
I got a job of reaping off a stringy-bark cockatoo.

(111) On 2nd October 1945 in the House of Representatives, the Hon. J.J. Dedman, Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, wound up the debate on the second reading of the Commonwealth and States Housing Agreement with the words: "The Commonwealth Government is concerned to provide adequate and good housing for workers; it is not concerned with making the workers into little capitalists." (Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 185, p.6265.)

Chorus:

Oh, the stringy-bark cockatoo,
Oh, the stringy-bark cockatoo,
I got a job of reaping off a stringy-bark cockatoo.

Ten bob an acre was his price - with promise of fairish board.
He said his crops were very light, 'twas all he could afford.
He drove me out in a bullock dray, and his piggery met my view.
Oh, the pigs and geese were in the wheat of the stringy-bark cockatoo.

The hut was made of the surface mud, the roof of a reedy thatch.
The doors and windows open flew without a bolt or latch.
The pigs and geese were in the hut, the hen on the table flew,
And she laid an egg in the old tin plate for the stringy-bark cockatoo.

For breakfast we had pollard, boys, it tasted like cobbler's paste,
To help it down we had to eat brown bread with vinegar taste.
The tea was made of the native hops, which out on the ranges grew;
'Twas sweetened with honey bees and wax for the stringy-bark cockatoo.

For dinner we had goanna hash, we thought it mighty hard;
They wouldn't give us butter, so we forced down bread and lard.
Quondong duff, paddymelon pie, and wallaby Irish stew,
We used to eat while reaping for the stringy-bark cockatoo.

When we started to cut the rust and smut was just beginning to shed,
And all we had to sleep on was a dog and sheep-skin bed.
The bugs and fleas tormented me, they made me scratch and screw;
I lost my rest while reaping for the stringy-bark cockatoo.

At night when work was over I'd nurse the youngest child,
And when I'd say a joking word the mother would laugh and smile.
The old cocky, he grew jealous, and he thumped me black and blue,
And he drove me off without a rap - the stringy-bark cockatoo."(112)

(112) A.B. Paterson, Old Bush Songs, pp.82-84.

Finally, in proportion as the later bushmen felt themselves to be the 'true Australians,' there are hints that they felt too some indebtedness to the Aborigines. This is not to say that the remaining black men in the 1880's and '90's were admitted to the ranks of the nomad tribe, but simply that many bushmen felt themselves to be, in some sense, the heirs to important parts of Aboriginal culture. After all, no white man has ever been the equal of the Aborigine in essential bush skills - in tracking, finding water, living on bush food, and so on. And it is doubtful whether white men have ever equalled Aborigines in some purely European-derived arts, such as horse-breaking or cattle-mustering.(113) In the early days many a lost white man - and child - owed his life to the charity of the dark people,(114) and even now they are still called upon whenever a white man is lost in the bush. If, as has been argued, the bushman's esprit

(113) Andrew Crombie, After Sixty Years etc., pp.46-47; E.C. Buley, Australian Life in Town and Country, p.158; A.W. Stirling, The Never Never Land etc., p.139; and [Rev. John Morison], Australia As It Is or etc., p.52: "In breaking in refractory young horses, which are usually the most valuable animals, a black's services are always in request; whilst in rough, scrubby and mountainous country, none can compete with them as horsemen in the mustering of cattle and in 'heading' mobs of wild horses." And cf., ibid., pp.121, 122.

(114) See, e.g., George Fletcher Moore, Diary of Ten Years' Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia, Lond: 1884, pp.281-282: "The Governor mentioned to me that he has had from King George's Sound and account of two boys who had accompanied a set of sealers along the southern coast, and, being disgusted with the depravity and barbarity of the men of the party, had, after many efforts, at last made their escape from them, about 400 miles to the east of King George's Sound, which place with great difficulty they reached, principally by the friendly assistance of the natives, who brought them to the settlement."

de corps sprang largely from his adaptation to, and mastery of, the outback environment, then the Aborigine was his master and mentor.

There is, of course, overwhelming evidence that the usual overt attitude to the Aborigines continued to be almost as brutal and contemptuous at the end of the nineteenth century as it had been earlier, but underlying this attitude and qualifying it, there grew up, often in the same person, an awareness of indebtedness to the first nomads who had come to terms with the difficult land. There are some hints, in the ballads and elsewhere, that after the Aborigines had ceased to be dangerous to even the loneliest swagman, folk-memory tended to acknowledge, perhaps to sentimentalize, this indebtedness.(115) Hemmed in by the vertical sandstone cliffs of the Blue Mountains on the floor of the valley of Mangrove Creek, there live to-day descendants of earlier Australians, both black and white. The two races have inter-married and along "the Crick" men distinguish one family from another by speaking of the white or black Smiths,

(115) This, like so many other components of the up-country ethos, has since become a commonplace attitude in Australian literary work (e.g. Mrs. Aeneas Gunn, We of the Never-Never (1908); Katherine Susannah Pritchard, Coonardoo, Lond: 1929; F.B. Vickers, The Mirage, Melb: 1955; Donald R. Stuart, Heritage, "Meanjin" 2/1955). W.E. Harney (Taboo, Syd: 1943; and North of 23°: Ramblings in Northern Australia; Syd: [1949]) gives, in non-fictional form, the precise flavour of the attitude to aborigines of the best later bushmen.

Jones, or Hogans; but all alike talk respectfully at times of "the Old People" whose paintings may still be seen on the walls of lonely caves which, tradition says, were later used by bushrangers and cattleduffers.

The same feeling is reflected in Be Ye Stockman or No, one of the most continuously popular bush ballads of the last century; and one of the few possessing traces of genuine poetic power:

THE STOCKMAN'S LAST BED

"Be ye stockman or no, to my story give ear,
Alas for poor Jack, no more shall we hear
The crack of his stockwhip, his nag's lively trot,
His clear 'Go ahead, boys,' his jingling quart pot.

Refrain:
For we laid him where wattles their sweet
fragrance shed,
And tall gum-trees shadow the stockman's last bed.

Whilst drafting one day he was horned by a cow,
Alas, cried poor Jack, 'it's all up with me now:
For I never no more shall my saddle regain
Nor bound like a wallaby over the plain.'

His whip it is silent, his dogs they do mourn
His nag looks in vain for his master's return,
No friend to bemoan him unheeded he dies,
Save Australia's dark children none knows where he lies.

Now, stockman, if ever on some future day,
On the heels of wild cattle you happen to stray,
Ride softly the creek bed where trees make a shade,
For perhaps it's the spot where poor Jack's bones are
laid."(116)

(116) This version from Vance Palmer and Margaret Sutherland, Old Australian Bush Ballads, Melb: 1950 (?). And see Appendix XX.

The theme is treated more realistically in another bush song, parodied ultimately on the richly sentimental Victorian ballad, Ben Bolt. The Australian ballad, Sam Holt, was written by G.H.Gibson ('Ironbark'), and first published in the Bulletin of March 26th, 1881. Its sentiments were such that it immediately became very popular, and is still remembered by old bush singers:(117)

"Oh! don't you remember Black Alice, Sam Holt -
Black Alice so dusky and dark -
That Warrego gin with a straw through her nose,
And teeth like a Moreton Bay shark;
The villainous sheep-wash tobacco she smoked
In the gunyah down there by the lake;
The grubs that she gathered, the lizards she stewed,
And the damper you taught her to bake?

They say you've ten thousand per annum, Sam Holt,
In England a park and a drag,
And praps you forget you were six months ago
In Queensland a-humping your swag.
Who'd think now, to see you dinin' in state
With lords and the devil knows who,
You were flashin' your dover(118) six short months ago
In a lambin' camp on the Paroo?

Oh! don't you remember the moon's silver sheen
And the Warrego sand-ridges white?
And don't you remember the big bull-dog ants
We found in our blankets at night?
The wild trailing creepers, the bush buds, Sam Holt,
That scattered their fragrance around,
And don't you remember the broken-down colt
You sold me and swore he was sound?

Say, don't you remember that fiver, Sam Holt,
You borrowed so frank and so free,
When the publican landed your £50 cheque,
In Tambo, your very last spree?
Luck changes some natures, and yours, Sammy Holt,
Ain't a grand one as ever I see;
And I guess I may whistle a good many times,
'Fore you think of that fiver or me.

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(117) See Appendix XXI.

(118) Gibson's note reads "Taking pot-luck with a sheath knife.

Oh, don't you remember the cattle you 'duffed,'
And yer luck at the Sandy Creek 'rush,'
The poker you played, and the bluffs that you bluffed,
And yer habit of holding a 'flush?'
Perhaps you've forgotten that pastin' you got
From the 'Barks'(119) down at Callaghan's store,
When Mick Houlaghan found a fifth ace in his hand,
And you'd raised him his pile upon four!

You weren't quite the cleanly potato, Sam Holt,
And you hadn't the cleanest of fins;
But you lifted your pile at 'The Towers,'(120) Sam Holt,
And that covers most of your sins.
When's my turn a-comin'? Well, never, perhaps,
And it's likely enough yer old mate
'll be 'humping his drum' on the Warrego banks
To the end of the chapter of fate."

This song has been quoted at length because it not only shows the later bushman's attitude towards the Aborigines, but also underlines the basic elements and the continuity of his tradition. Plainly the narrator of the ballad, and his assumed audience, set a very high valuation on certain forms of behaviour and a very low one on others. The greatest good is to stand by one's mates in all circumstances,(121) and the greatest evil is to desert them. Sam Holt's sin is not, primarily, that he was a thief and a cheat.(122) We have seen that all honest bushmen, more or less, were cattle-duffers and sheep-stealers on occasion.(123) Cheating at cards, among mates - seems often to have been taken for

(119) Gibson's note: "Back-block vernacular for 'Irish'."
(120) Charters Towers goldfield, North Queensland.
(121) R.M. Crawford, Australia, Lond: 1952, pp.152-153.
(122) cf. ibid., p.115.
(123) cf., pp.388-391, supra.

granted as that part of the game demanding the greatest skill,[124] while the mere matter of obtaining repayment of a 'fiver' borrowed during a spree would, normally, hardly have been worth a second thought.[125] But Sam Holt's individualistic proclivities were so strongly developed as to result in the commission of the unpardonable sin - that of his desertion from, and elevation above, that collectivist commonwealth of vagabonds composed of his quondam mates.[126] And if Black Alice is not exactly a full citizen of the commonwealth, she is at any rate much closer to a state of grace than the apostate, Sam Holt, or the alien "Lords and the devil knows who" in a far country.

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(124) Francis Adams, The Australians: etc., p.180 ff.: "But the bushman has also his vices. ... Gambling at the sheds is simply the tournament of sharpers. You see your opponent cheat; he sees you; and not a word is said. ... But rarely do you see a quarrel, unless it is a deliberately 'put up job.'"

(125) cf., e.g., James Demarr, Adventures in Australia Fifty Years Ago etc., Lond: 1893, p.58, and [George Carrington] Colonial Adventures and Experiences, pp.239, 250 ff.

(126) Russel Ward, "Collectivist Notions of a Nomad Tribe", Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol. 6, No.24, May, 1955.

Chapter IX

APOTHEOSIS OF THE TRIBE

"Swagman and bushranger die hard, die game,
Die fighting, like that wild colonial boy -
Jack Dowling, says the ballad, was his name."

For the Australian colonies and their staple wool trade, the period from about 1860 to 1890 was one of fairly steady economic prosperity.(1) Until 1905(2) no major wars,

(1) Brian Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia etc., (2nd edn.) Melb: 1949, p.193: "... the steady prosperity of the colonies in 1860-1890, a generation during which children grew to middle age without personal experience of economic depression ..."

There were, of course, brief and relatively minor 'slumps' during the period as in Queensland in 1866, when for a time the Government could not pay the wages of some of its employees. (See A.G.L. Shaw, The Story of Australia, Lond: 1955, pp.138-139.) Generally, the decade 1860-1870 was one of comparative instability and adjustment, following the boom conditions of the Gold Rush.

The years 1870-74 were very prosperous, but the next five years from 1875 to 1879 showed a slight falling off in growth of the economy. Rapid expansion was resumed in 1880 and continued for five years. From 1886 to 1890 the high tide of prosperity slackened at a different rate in different colonies, giving some warning of the great depression of the '90's. (See T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia etc., 4 vols., Lond: 1918, Vol. II, pp.869-871; and N.G. Butlin, Seminar Paper (SS.51) Australian National University, 1952.)

In the winter of 1886 there were actually more than 5000 unemployed on Government relief work in Sydney, but few of them chose to use the free railway passes, with which they were supplied, to go to the country where work was available. (See John Norton ed., The History of Capital and Labour in All Lands and Ages: etc., Syd: 1888,pp.84-88

(2) On May 27-28th the Japanese destroyed the Russian fleet at the Battle of Tsushima. The Melbourne Age for instance (1/6/1905), editorialised: "We can see in the wretched collapse of Russia what neglect of these primary duties [of national defence] entails."

or other overseas events, gave any very obvious indication that Australia might not always be secure to develop her own way of life, without much reference to other peoples, in a world ordered by the overwhelming power and prestige of her indulgent but irritating mother-country. The great depression of the early 'nineties made men examine their past and their way of life more closely. By drawing attention to Australia's economic dependence on Britain it helped to sharpen nationalist sentiment, but the feeling of fundamental security from external dangers was not seriously weakened until 1914. The stream of British immigrants was easily and profitably assimilated, being too modest in volume to cause such marked economic and social changes as had taken place during the Gold Rush.(3) For the first time a rapidly increasing majority of the population consisted of people knowing no other climate, country or customs than those to which they had been born.(4) Thus internal and external

(3) The economic and political life of Western Australia was revolutionised by the rush thither in the 1890's of gold-seekers, but the great majority of these came, not from overseas, but from Victoria and the other Australian states. Thus, socially, Western Australia was made at once more 'Australian' by her Gold Rush, not temporarily less so as Victoria had been during the 1850's.

(4) The percentage of the total Australian population born in the United Kingdom declined during the period as follows: 1861, 53.18; 1871, 40.44; 1881, 30.66; 1891, 25.86; 1901, 18.00. (C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900, Syd: 1955, p.667.) Not all the remainde were native-born but, at least after the decade 1850-1860, persons born in foreign countries probably never much exceeded 5% of the total population (cf. W.K. Hancock, Australia, Lond: 1945 edn., p.46).

conditions enabled Australians to pause, to look inward on themselves, to take stock as it were, and to indulge in what their predecessors in the land would have called a "dreaming."(5) Men sought, partly by looking for those things which distinguished them from their British fathers and congeners, to know themselves and their country better; and at the same time they saw utopian visions of a national future in which Australia, unsullied by the wars and wrongs of the old world, would be a light to less happier lands. Thus, in words which are to-day more likely to cause a wry smile than a quickening of the pulse, a contemporary poet apostrophised The Australian:

> "Once more this Autumn-earth is ripe,
> Parturient of another type;
>
> While with the Past old nations merge
> His foot is on the Future's verge
>
> They watch him as they huddle, pent,
> Striding a spacious continent
>
> Above the level desert's marge
> Looming in his aloofness large
>
> ... He sees beyond your hazy fears;
> He roads the desert of the years.
>
> ... So, towards undreamt-of-destinies
> He slouches down the centuries."(6)

(5) See W.E.H. Stanner, Aboriginal Philosophy (Article to be published in Australian Signpost, ed. Tom Hungerford, Melb: 1956.)

(6) Arthur Henry Adams, "The Australian", Collected Verses of A.H. Adams, Melb: 1913, pp.63-65. For a stimulating consideration of this utopian strain in Australian life and letters at the turn of the last century see Vance Palmer, The Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, Chapter 4.

When the dreaming was over the values and attitudes of the nomad tribe had been largely adopted by the whole nation. This is not to say that thenceforward all Australians behaved and thought like the pastoral workers, but rather that thenceforward most people liked to believe that they tended 'naturally' to do so.

The process by which the distinctive up-country ethos, in a rather romanticised form, passed into the keeping of the whole people was not simple, nor was it confined in time to the period discussed here. Indeed, this thesis has attempted to underline the continuity of the influence exercised by bushmen, throughout the nineteenth century, on city folk and new chums. Yet, as has been often recognised, (7) this process culminated in the period 1890-1900 and in the years immediately before and after that decade. Only then did the powerful current come to the surface of events, to dominate formal literature and to provide a native tradition for the new industrial trade union movement.

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(7) e.g., C. Hartley Grattan, Introducing Australia, Syd: 1949 (2nd edn.), pp.47-48: "Although customarily referred to as 'The Nineties,' Australia's most seminal period, to which many people now look back nostalgically, really extended from the early nineties to 1914." A.W. Jose, The Romantic Nineties, Syd: 1933, passim. Vance Palmer, The Legend of the Nineties, passim; and R. A. Gollan, "Nationalism, the Labour Movement and the Commonwealth 1880-1900", in Australia: A Social and Political History (ed. Gordon Greenwood), Syd: 1955, p.145: "During the twenty years 1880-1900, the Australian people became fully conscious of their nationhood. ..."

The reasons are not far to seek. Underlying them all was the newly predominant influence of the native-born, reflected in the great popularity of such organisations as the Australian Natives' Association, founded in Victoria in 1871.[8] Not less important was the fact that the physical and psychological isolation of bush life was ending. A myth, after all, relates to past events, real or imaginary.

In Chapter II it was shown that the Australian 'ballad community', like others, was only semi-literate and isolated by distance and poor communications from the cities, and from the authority of the central governments situated there. Thus traditional customs and usages often came to have as much or more force than the law of the land. In the days of sail it had taken a traveller four or five months to reach Sydney from Britain, and sometimes almost as long again to move by bullock waggon, or on foot, from the colonial capital to a far distant station.[9] By 1900 the voyage had been shortened to one of four or five weeks, and few parts of the colony could not be reached from Sydney within four or five days by train and coach. In 1875 there were only 437 miles of railway in New South Wales and 265 in Queensland. Ten years later these figures had jumped to

(8) For some account of the work and influence of the A.N.A., see H.L. Hall, Victoria's Part in the Australian Federation Movement 1849-1900, Lond: 1931, pp.79-87 ff.

(9) cf. pp.273-275, supra. Relatively few pastoral workers habitually travelled on horseback before the 1880's.

1732 and 1433 respectively. The four main colonial railway systems were linked at Albury in 1883, Serviceton in 1887 and Wallangarra in 1888.(10) And as early as 1890 we find Lawson with sentimental nostalgia, but some truth, writing of up-country ways as something which had already passed with the coming of the iron horse:

"Them early days was ended when the railroad crossed the plain,
But in dreams I often tramp beside the bullick-team again;
Still we pauses at the shanty just to have a drop er cheer
Still I feels a kind ov pleasure when the campin' ground is near,
Still I smells the old tarpaulin me an' Jimmy used ter throw
O'er the timber-truck for shelter in the days o' long ago.

Chorus: Then it's yoke up the bullicks, an' tramp beside 'em slow,
An' saddle up yer horses an' a-ridin' we will go,
To the bullick-drivin', cattle-drovin'
Nigger, digger, roarin', rovin'
Days o' long ago."(11)

The electric telegraph also reduced the autonomy of bush life. Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane were connected by 1861, and by 1872 when the overland line to

(10) Australian Encyclopaedia, Syd: 1926, Vol. II, pp.367-374.

(11) Bulletin, 24/5/1890, p.13; from "The Song of Old Joe Swallow," Lawson often returned to the theme, as in "The Roaring Days:"

"Those golden days are vanished,
And altered is the scene;
The diggings are deserted,
The camping-grounds are green;
The flaunting flag of progress
Is in the West unfurled,
The mighty Bush with iron rails
Is tethered to the world."

(Poetical Works of Henry Lawson, Syd: 1947, p.18.)

Darwin completed the link with Britain, few bush townships of any importance retained their previous isolation.(12) The effects of these changes on bush life were strikingly symbolised, in June 1880, at Glenrowan in north-eastern Victoria. There the Kelly Gang was annihilated by a train load of police from Melbourne, summoned and directed by telegraph. Fifteen years earlier, when "Gardiner's" and Ben Hall's gangs had terrorised much of New South Wales, the main western railway from Sydney had extended only thirty miles, to Penrith at the foot of the Blue Mountains.

Up-country mores were modified also by the establishment of a relatively numerous and prosperous agricultural population in the eastern part of what had once been almost purely pastoral country. Between 1860 and 1890 - despite the Selection Acts - the total area sown with wheat in Australia increased only slowly from 1¼ million to 5½ million acres. After 1890 the industry was stimulated by improved railway and road communications,(13) by Farrer's breeding of rust and drought-resistant wheats, and by the introduction

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(12) Australian Encyclopaedia, Vol. II, pp.317-322.

(13) Mrs. Ada Cambridge landed in Victoria in 1870. In her Thirty Years in Australia (Lond: 1903, p.30), she wrote: "I hear nothing nowadays of those bogs which ... made our winter drives so exciting - the 'glue-pots', the 'rotten grounds', the 'spue holes', worst of all ... 'Made' roads and drainage works seem to have done away with them this long time, for the other day I met a resident of the locality who did not know, until I told him, what a spue hole was."

of improved farming machinery, superphosphate manures, and scientific dry-farming techniques. The years from 1890 to 1920 were the boom period of Australian agricultural expansion, and a disproportionately large part of it took place on the western slopes and approaches of the Great Dividing Range in New South Wales. In the following thirty-year period, from 1920 to 1950, acreage under wheat increased by only about another 5 million acres, from 15 to 20 millions.(14) With closer settlement, railways and better roads, many small country towns and hamlets became smaller or even disappeared, while large towns became larger and the colonial capitals grew, relatively, faster still.(15) Efficient postal services, newspapers, schools of art,(16) trade union offices and other urbanising influences were

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(14) Commonwealth Year Book 1954, Graph p.875, and cf. E.G. Shann, Economic History of Australia, Melb: 1948 edn., Chap. XIII, and pp.343-348.

A disproportionate amount of the post-World War I expansion took place in Western Australia.

(15) Between 1871 and 1891 the distribution of the population in New South Wales changed as follows:

	Sydney and Suburbs	Other Towns	Rural
1871	137,776 = 27.5%	97,037 = 19.3%	266,766 = 53.
1891	383,283 = 34.3%	346,736 = 31.0%	388,231 = 34.

(Figures from A.W. Martin, Political Groupings in N.S.W. 1872-1889: etc., Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1955, p.25.)

(16) But cf. Kenneth Slessor on "Country Towns" (One Hundred Poems 1919-1939, Syd: 1944, p.81:

"At the School of Arts, a broadsheet lies
Sprayed with the sarcasm of flies:
'The Great Golightly Family
Of entertainers Here To-night' -
Dated a year and a half ago,
But left there, less from carelessness
Than from a wish to seem polite."

brought much closer to the bushman. Since the 1890's, mail-order catalogues, motor-cars, telephones, aeroplanes, moving-pictures, and wireless sets have carried the process much further.

The virtual elimination of illiteracy was another powerful factor in breaking down the distinctive ethos of the bush worker. In 1861, 24.60 per cent of the people who married in New South Wales signed the register with their marks. In 1911 this figure had dropped to 0.55.(17) Free, compulsory and secular education was introduced in Victoria in 1872 and in New South Wales in 1880.(18) By the 1890's nearly all young men could read and write. From then on many a bushman, who in earlier days might have composed a 'bush song', wrote it down instead and sent it to the Bulletin or the Worker. And of course these songs usually differed subtly from their prototypes. They were more 'literary' and selfconscious, and instead of reflecting up-country life directly they tended to romanticise it, looking back on it as something which had passed or was passing. By the time of World War I the average pastoral worker had began to lose

(17) F. Anderson, Federal Handbook, 1914; quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, Syd: 1955, p.691.

(18) Education did not become entirely free in all states until about thirty years later, but the major and quite decisive steps towards the present system were taken in the decade 1870-1880. (loc. cit.)

some of his distinctive esprit de corps. He tended to minimise those things which marked him off from the city-dweller rather than, as of old, to glory in them.(19) As 'Banjo' Paterson wrote in 1911:

> "After living three years in a very wild part of the bush I can only find the old hands that know the songs. The younger generation do not sing at all that ever I can hear of. They talk politics instead."(20)

However, while all these changes tended to end the conditions which had produced the old up-country ethos, they also tended to make city-dwelling and other Australians much more conscious of that ethos than they had ever been before. Universal education and better communications brought Sydney nearer to the bush, as well as the reverse. Even as they faded from the workaday world, the values and attitudes of the nomad tribe were embalmed in a national myth, thence to re-act powerfully, as they still do, upon thought and events.(21)

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(19) cf. pp.60-62, supra.

(20) Letter to Angus and Robertson Ltd., dated "Coodra Station, Wee Jasper, via Yass, 7 August, 1911." (M.L. Paterson MSS).

(21) cf. Emile Saillens "Le Bush Australien et Son Poète", in Mercure de France, 1/10/1910, p.429: "Or, la connaissance de la vie du bush est précisément la seule donée qui nous manque pour comprendre le reste de l'Australie." And Marjorie Barnard, "Our Literature" in Australian Writers Speak, Syd:1942, p.105: "Australians are predominantly city-dwellers. ... But our literature is bush born and bred. We think of the typical Australian as a bushman. The answer to this is that, while our cities are not so unlike other great cities of the world, our bush is unique. It is the bush that feeds and stimulates the national imagination, even sight unseen."

The extinct bushman of Lawson and Furphy became the national culture-hero on whose supposed characteristics many Australian tend, consciously or unconsciously, to model their attitude to life.

By 1893 the stereotype was so firmly established that it was already being satirised. In that year the 'typical' Australian's self-portrait was thus criticised - from an English, middle-class viewpoint:

> "The generally accepted typical cornstalk is an artistically drawn creature of some six feet, two inches, or thereabouts, in height, picturesquely habilitated in corded pants, a red shirt, wide blue sash, a blue necktie (Australian blue, of course), a cabbage-tree hat, high boots, and stock-whip wound in graceful loops on his arm. Such an artistic creation as infallibly denotes the 'Cornstalk,' as the attentuated gent in the starred and striped coat does 'Uncle Sam,' or the familiar fat-paunched country squire does 'John Bull.' All I suppose are equally authentic models. But the real Cornstalk, how can he be denoted?"(22)

Rejecting, thus, the stock figure, the critic sets out to find the "real Cornstalk," but fails lamentably and dully. Other men like W.T. Goodge, whose own work helped to establish the stereotype of the 'noble bushman' in the popular mind, were yet moved, on occasion, to gentle satire of their hero.(23

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(22) "Whaks Li Kell" [Daniel Healey], The Cornstalk: his Habits and Habitat, Syd: 1894, p.53. (The first edition was published in 1893.)

(23) Notably in his celebrated verses beginning "The sunburnt [bloody] stockman stood...," which gave rise to innumberable variants and parodies in popular currency, and which were quoted by Robert Graves in his Lars Porsena: or the Future of Swearing and Improper Language Lond: 1927. (See Appendix XXII.)

To the Sydney Morning Herald's query, "Are we evolving a distinctive Australian literature?" Goodge answered in 1899, "We are. Perpend and give ear:

There's the everlasting swaggie with his bluey on his back
Who is striking out for sunset on the Never-Never track;
O'er the flat and barren country we can hear him tramping still
And he's Billy from the Darling or he's Murrumbidgee Bill;
And his togs are pretty rusty and his blucher boots are brown,
And his shirt ain't just the color of the drapers' clerks in town,
And he's looking for the station tank his water-bag to fill.
And wherever you may find him
He's the same
Old
Bill!

There is Jim the dandy axeman who can chop six cords a day,
There is Micky from the Mulga who was ringer out at Hay,
There's McPherson, overseer at the Moonaburna shed,
And the bloke that belted Clancy, with a slip-rail, on the head.
There's the chap that struck the nugget when his credit at the store
Was so bad they stopped his tucker 'cos he couldn't pay his score,
And the jackeroo from England with his quarterly 'remit,'
And whene'er you read the story
It's the same
Old
Skit!

There's the son of Squatter Jumbuck, an unmitigated scamp,
There's the barmaid up from Melbourne at the Mundic mining camp,
There is Thompson's wife, who bolted with the chap from Bendigo,
And the bloke who broke the record when he drove for Cobb and Co.
There is 'blanky' this and 'blanky' that and more expressive term
Indicating of the vigour of our literary germs;
And the Sydney Morning Herald mustn't take us all for flats
We're a literary nation
And we ain't
Got
Rats?"(24)

(24) Hits! Skits! and Jingles! Syd: 1899, p.143; and cf. Goodge's unkind parodies (ibid.) of bush songs, "The Melodious Bullocky," and "A Genuine Bush Song."

By the time of federation, the 'noble bushman' was already firmly enshrined in both the popular and the literary imagination. What were the engines of his apotheosis? Between 1880 and 1900 the slow evolutionary process by which the up-country ethos became the core of the national outlook was vastly accelerated by two events. One was the birth and rapid growth of the industrial trade union movement, the other the somewhat belated discovery of the bushman by accredited literary men.

The new type of militant trade unionism, drawing its strength from the 'unskilled' or semi-skilled workers rather than from the more or less skilled craftsmen, burgeoned in Britain, the United States and New Zealand at the same time as it did in Australia - during the 1880's and 1890's. This congruity in time was obviously not accidental but a result of the fact that very similar, and closely inter-connected, economic and social changes in all four countries brought about similar results in all. In Australia the new unionism drew heavily on both British writers like Alfred Wallace and Americans like Henry George and Alfred Bellamy for justification of its collectivist and socialist outlook.(25)

(25) For the best treatment of this whole subject, from an Australian viewpoint, see R.A. Gollan, "Nationalism, the Labour Movement and the Commonwealth 1880-1900", in Australia: etc. (ed. Gordon Greenwood), pp.145-195; and his more detailed Radicalism and Socialism in Eastern Australia, 1850-1910 (Lond. Ph.D. thesis). And cf. F. Picard, "Henry George and the Labour Split of 1891", Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol. 6, No.21, Nov. 1953. In New Zealand the movement towards the "new unionism" was relatively weak. (See J.B. Condliff New Zealand in the Making: A Survey of Economic and Social Development, Lond: 1930, pp.158-159.

Nevertheless, as Fitzpatrick has noted,[26] the new unionism in Australia was singular in one important respect. In Britain and the United States it drew its initial strength primarily from miners and transport workers. In Australia also these groups were important, but even more influential were the shearers and other workers in the pastoral industry of the interior. Rural workers are traditionally conservative and in most western countries they have been extremely tardy in building effective trade unions; yet in Australia it was the bush workers who formed the most numerous group of employees in the great industrial disputes, amounting at times almost to civil war, between 1890 and 1894. It was they who bore the brunt of the battle, stood as symbols of its ideology, and renewed the struggle single-handed in 1894, when the transport workers and miners had admitted temporary defeat.[27] The Australian Workers' Union, which sprang mainly from the Amalgamated Shearers' Union, is still easily the largest and most powerful, though no longer the most militant, trade union in Australia.

After what has been said above of the nature of the bush-workers' outlook, their enthusiastic acceptance of the new

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(26) British Empire in Australia: etc., Melb: 1941, p.295.

(27) R.A. Gollan, in Australia etc., (ed. Gordon Greenwood), pp.163, 169; and cf. W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening: Thirty Years in the Life of an Australian Agitator, Syd: 1909, p.159 ff.

unionism should not be surprising. From the earliest times the typical Australian pastoral unit had been a large station employing, intermittently, many casual hands. Because most of the work was seasonal the employer could not generally, even had he wished earnestly to do so, have had any kind of close personal or paternalistic relationship with his workmen. As Trollope noted,(28) the squatter seldom knew even the names of the men he employed, let alone whether they were married or single. Yet at the same time the large size of the stations and the very loneliness of the pastoral country, combined with the peripatetic habits of its denizens, drove them into a peculiarly close form of association. Paradoxically, the relationship between masters and men was much closer to that existing in a large British mine or factory, than to that between employer and employee on a farm or in a small business, whether British or Australian. We have seen that these conditions very early gave rise to a strongly collectivist and "independent" outlook, which in turn often issued in purely spontaneous, ad hoc action to secure better conditions from the employers. Though the bushmen had for so long thought little of politics, and perhaps even less of formal trade union organisation, their whole way of living and feeling made them quite extraordinarily receptive to trade union ideas of the new type, when these at length did come within their ambit.

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(28) See p.82, supra.

In 1886, owing to a fall in the price of wool,[29] most pastoralists attempted to reduce the contract price for shearing from one pound per hundred sheep to seventeen and sixpence. This seems to have been the most important immediate stimulus to the formation of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union in that year,[30] although for some time bushmen had been questioning the extremely hard working conditions[31]

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(29) Between 1875 and 1884 the average price obtained for New South Wales wool only once fell below 90% of the average price for the preceding period, 1870-1874. This slight drop occurred in 1878 when the figure fell to 85%. However from 1884 on the price slumped steeply to 78% in 1885 down to a nadir of 50% in 1894. (See T.A. Coghlan, Wealth and Progress of New South Wales 1897-98, Syd: 1899, p.1070.) These figures go far towards explaining the prolonged and bitter industrial strife of the period.

(30) W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening, Cap. VII.

(31) loc. cit. For instance, it was a well nigh universal rule, accepted by the men themselves, that a shearer found in possession of intoxicating liquor during the period of his contract could be instantly dismissed, or punished by severe fines taken by the employer from his final pay cheque. The effect of course was to encourage the prevalence of 'spreeing' at the end of contracts. Rules also forbade the use of profane language, whistling or singing, while men were actually working in the shearing shed. At Mt. Eba Station, for example, near the present Rocket testing site in S.A., singing, whistling or swearing was punishable by the loss of six days' earnings. (L.E. Keik, History of S.A. Labour Unions, M.A. Thesis, Univ. Adel., p.25.) Even after the Maritime Strike of 1890 the agreement prepared by the Amalgamated Shearers' Union included a rule forbidding profane language, though, unlike the agreement prepared by the Pastoralists, it did not proscribe singing at work. (See Sydney Morning Herald, 3/1/1891, and 26/2/1891.)

which they had once accepted as part of the established order of outback life. The spontaneity of the movement is shown by the fact that in the latter half of 1886 organisations sprang up, apparently independently, in three widely separated bush towns - Ballarat, Wagga Wagga, and Bourke. William Guthrie Spence, who had been for four years the secretary of the Amalgamated Miners' Association of Victoria, was elected chairman of the Ballarat group by the shearers who met there on the evening of 12th June. By the following January (1887) the three separate groups had merged to form the Amalgamated Shearers' Union which, under the presidency of that "magnificent opportunist"[32] Spence, rapidly recruited thousands of members in the back country.[33]

The phenomenally rapid growth of the union probably sprang more from the bushmen's already existing ethos than from the organising genius and missionary zeal of prominent leaders. Once the idea of trade union combination was put before them, it seemed to most bushmen merely a natural extension of the non-political, but cherished and familiar, sentiments associated with the concept of mateship. As Spence himself wrote:

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(32) Brian Fitzpatrick, British Empire in Australia; etc., p.303.

(33) W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening, Cap. VII.

> "Unionism came to the Australian bushman as a religion. It came bringing salvation from years of tyranny. It had in it that feeling of mateship which he understood already, and which always characterised the action of one 'white man' to another. Unionism extended the idea, so a man's character was gauged by whether he stood true to Union rules or 'scabbed' it on his fellows. The man who never went back on the Union is honored to-day as no other is honored or respected. The man who fell once may be forgiven, but he is not fully trusted. The lowest term of reproach is to call a man a 'scab.' ... At many a country ball the girls have refused to dance with them, the barmaids have refused them a drink, and the waitresses a meal."(34)

Or, as the official organ of the Associated Riverina Workers, the Hummer, put it on 16th January, 1892:

> "Socialism is being mates, and you can't be made mates by legislation. Legislation can only mitigate or remove the causes which prevent men being mates."(35)

The role of leading organisers like Spence and of publicist like William Lane (36) was of course vital ; but most of the real work of building a pastoral workers' union was done by thousands of the nameless bushmen themselves. Preserved in

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(34) W.G. Spence, Australia's Awakening: etc., p.78.

(35) Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, p.588.

(36) Prophet seems in some ways a more adequate term. The visionary and idealistic side of Lane's nature comes out in his novel, written under the pseudonym of "John Miller," The Workingman's Paradise, Syd: 1892; and also in Vance Palmer's play about Lane, Hail Tomorrow, Syd: 1947. For estimates of his work see Lloyd Ross, William Lane and the Australian Labour Movement, Syd: (N.D.), and R.A. Gollan's more critical treatment in his Radicalism and Socialism in Eastern Australia 1850-1910, Ph.D. thesis: Lond.

a forgotten song-book is a cycle of very interesting ballads[37] which tell how the Union was being built on the remotest stations beyond the Darling, even before Spence called his inaugural meeting in Ballarat. One ballad begins:

> "The shearing's nearly over, but with many, much I fear,
> The price they tried to cut down has cost them very dear.
> So give your kind attention, and I'll tell you in my song
> Of squatters and those shearer boys, the way they jog along.
> The life is one of luxury, it's truly something grand
> To be a roving shearer in Australia's happy land.
>
> In February, eighty six, I left Burke [sic] with a sigh,
> I saddled up my 'neddy's' [sic], and bade the girls good-bye.
> My friends and I together, For Nocoleche bound,
> To meet those Paroo squatters, and fight them for the pound.
> They used the 'Town and Country' to break our gallant band,
> But we sent the cry of victory through Australia's happy land."[38]

Another ballad in the series seems more didactic or agitational than narrative in purpose. Two stanzas read:

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(37) Tibb's Popular Song Book, containing the latest hits on 'Bushy in Town,' 'Australia's Oarsman,' 'The Chinese and Federation,' 'Squatters' Defeat,' 'Australia's Happy Land,' 'The Jackaroo,' &c. &c., Price two shillings Sydney, Batty and Chalcroft, Printers, 24, Regent Street, Redfern. (N.D., but probably 1887 or 1888.) For full text of these ballads see Appendix XXIII.)

(38) "Nocoleche," "Dunlop," "Toorale," and "Fort Bourke," were four sheep-stations west of the Darling River. They were owned by Sir Samuel McCaughey, and comprised together about 3,000,000 acres. (C.E.W. Bean, On the Wool Track, Lond: 1945, p.77, and cf. Patricia McCaughey, Samuel McCaughey, Syd: 1955, pp.59-60, 72.) The Paroo is a tributary which flows (rarely) into the Darling from the north west. The Town and Country Journal was a weekly paper favoured, at this period, by squatters, much as the Bulletin was by their hands.

"If you give me but an hearing,
I'll tell you of the shearing,
The one we just got over,
Eighteen hundred, eighty six.
The time of which I'm singing
Is about of the beginning,
How the squatters blowed they'd cut the price
To seventeen and six.

The shearer has his version,
And with truth make [sic] the assertion,
Our hardships they are many
That we meet with going round.
You would starve us devil doubt you,
But we've lived before without you,
Take my tip a blow we'll never cut
Per hundred less a pound."(39)

And the refrain of yet another ballad, which deals with the history of this outback struggle in some detail, pillories the unfortunate shearers who at Merriula Station accepted work at the pastoralists' price of seventeen and six per hundred sheep shorn. In the eyes of union men all "scabs" were, ipso facto, incompetent bunglers who 'haggled' the beasts:

"So you Merriula haglers [sic], It's not the likes of you
That joined the Dunlop shearers, and the men on the Paroo.

All these ballads read as though the composer-narrator did in fact play the part in the struggle which he assigns to himself in the hobbling doggerel. Another section of the last quoted song shows the naive boastfulness, selfless

(39) "blowed" = boasted; "blow" = a stroke with the shears.

idealism,[40] and almost complete innocence of political theory[41] which must have been typical of the narrator and his comrades - and which yet explain vividly the mushroom-like growth of bush unionism, once the germ of the idea had been sown. In the same month that Spence was addressing his first meeting of shearers in Ballarat, others seem to have been organising themselves, in a somewhat more direct manner, nearly a thousand miles away:

"Now the fight commenced at Dunlop, then the Paroo in the bush,
The boys, too, of Yankannia they joined in the manly push.
It was out at Nocoleche shed, the latter end of June,
When Gamson came to call the roll (You might know the little coon).
When everything was quiet, and you could not hear a sound,
He told us in a crying style he could not pay the pound.

We did not hoot, but listened, for we had not much to say,
But gave him our terms in writing, boys, and then we walked away.
He then took a fortnight's practice in some very funny tricks,
And then he got two snaggers for seventeen-and-six;
But they knew to make a start, boys, that too dear they'd have to pay,
So they saddled up their Neddys [sic], and like loafers sneaked away.

Says Gamson, 'You've plenty of money, for I see it flying round,
So we'll sign last year's agreement, for I'll have to pay the pound.'
Says I, 'Old boy, don't gallop, when you start a walking race,

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(40) cf. Victor S. Clark, The Labour Movement in Australia, 1906, p.228.

(41) For an opposed, but at least equally simple-minded view of the points at issue between pastoral workers and their employers, see Robert D. Barton, Reminiscences of an Australian Pioneer, Syd: 1917, Cap. XV, "Unions and Strikes."

If you sack a man, a pound you'll pay,' I told him to
his face.
Oh, didn't he look crooked, and sarcastically did shout
To Irving, the young storekeeper, to scratch the damned
thing out.

Said he, 'If I had gained the day I'd then cheer loud and
long,'
But we showed that we were merciful, For we knew that we
were strong.
I then signed his agreement, and in action put my pen,
I wrote to the Burke [sic] paper, to inform my fellow men.
For I knew the news was welcome to those living far away,
When I told of Nocoleche boys, and how we gained the day.

In the crowd someone must do it, - speak for those shearing
knights, -
I'm black-balled at Nocoleche 'cause I spoke up for our
rights,
But don't think his shed's a fortune, it is nothing of the
kind,
One man can always live without one squatter you will find.
Other sheds start early if I'm in the living ruck,
You can bet your bottom dollar the old chap will get a cut.

I thought the price was settled and everything bid well,
But I'd scarcely rode three days, my boys, when - what an
awful sell -
I found a lot of snaggers, not a shearer in the mob,
At Mumba signed for seventeen with a bonus of three bob.
There was room for over twenty, but of course I didn't
stop,
I that day received a letter from our friends up at Dunlop.

They told me of old Jimmy, how he said it was but fear,
If it wasn't for the river men, the cockneys they would
shear.
He brought the police from Cobar, but they did not care
a pin,
They stood out like men for seven weeks, and beat old
Dunlop Jim.
They had but scarcely started when the rain it came about,
And like the Nocoleche boys, they soon were flooded out.

.....

Now I wish you young coves fortune as years go rolling on,
You may think about the old chap when some splaw [sic]
bawls out his song.
For I've shorn upon Manara, and in Queensland far out back,
But I never shore at Paddington, I could not shear for Mac.
So cheer up my Lachlan ringers, as you travel the Maroo,
Stand out like Dunlop shearers, and the men on the Paroo."(42)

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(42) "Snaggers" = incompetent shearers who haggled' their beasts. "If you sack a man, a pound you'll pay." This probably refers to a clause, known colloquially as "second price," which was traditionally written into most shearing agreements by the employer, before the advent of the Shearers' Union. By its terms the employer if he chose to declare any beast unsatisfactorily shorn, could pay the shearer 2/6 less per hundred for all beasts previously handled. Payment of "second price" was often followed by dismissal. Hence, in the ballad, Gamson's angry instruction to the storekeeper to "scratch out" the offending clause.

"Cockneys" is probably a misprint for "cockies." Small selectors often went shearing in the season, as Francis Adams wrote (The Australians: A Social Sketch, Lond:1893, p.160 ff.) to supplement "their income as petty proprietors by wage work, but compelled more and more to find that the 'supplementation' lies in the foundering homestead. ... Their present state of transition isolates them from even that mental exercise which the new ideas of union-combinations and of Socialism are making into a vital and regenerating force in the class below them. ... They combat the unions with a savage malignancy, only joining them under compulsion, and ready to throw themselves in with their hereditary enemies, the squatters, rather than admit the equality of the new democracy."

And cf., S.M.H., 4/7/1891, interview with W.E. Abbott, a pastoralist. Abbott says that the most fiercely anti-trade union of the non-union shearers were "men of the sturdy settler stamp; men having small holdings carrying say, under 1000 sheep, and who make a practice of seeking work off their holdings during the season."

"Dunlop Jim" was James Wilson, "the efficient manager of Dunlop." (See Patricia McCaughey, Samuel McCaughey, Syd: 1955, p.61.)

Thus did the bushman's ethos permeate and colour that of the trade union movement, which in turn has spread it through wide sections of the Australian community. But it may be that literature has been a more important medium of the osmotic process, both because its influence was not so much limited by class lines, and because it was exercised at a more subsonscious level. Vance Palmer has justly summed up the story of Australian literature before about 1880:

> "Faced by a strange scene and puzzling conditions, the literary mind (unless it is an extremely robust and original one) tends to return to its base and refuse the task of assimilation. What can be wrung from this raw, unfamiliar world, with its rough and ready ways? Better make a genteel escape from it, or try to translate its earthy activities into a formal literary convention."(43)

The disjunction between formal literary activity and the actual life of Australian country people was deplored by one bush bard in 1883; but the very fact of his commenting on the semi-autonomous culture of the Interior was a sign that it was ending. In a rather long piece of verse constructed something after the manner of the Canterbury Tales, Keighley Goodchild set himself, with some success, to remedy the situation. One of his songs contained in his long On the Tramp seems to have passed directly into oral tradition. Here is his original version of the Nautical Yarn, which

(43) Legend of the Nineties, p.54.

has been collected in recent years by Dr. Percy Jones and recorded on the gramophone by Burl Ives:

"I sing of a capting who's well known to fame;
A naval commander, Bill Jinks is his name.
Who sailed where the Murray's clear waters do flow,
Did this freshwater 'shellback', with his Yeo heave a yeo.

To the port of Wahgunyah his wessel was bound,
When night came upon him and darkness around;
Not a star on the waters its clear light did throw;
But the wessel sped onward, with a Yeo heave a yeo.

'Oh! Capting, Oh! Capting, let's make for the shore,
'For the winds they do rage and the waves they do roar!'
'Nay, nay!' said the capting, 'though the fierce winds may blow,
'I will stick to my wessel, with a Yeo heave a yeo.

'Oh! capting, Oh! capting, the waves sweep the deck;
Oh! capting, Oh! capting, we'll soon be a wreck -
'To the river's deep bosum each seaman will go!'
But the capting laughed lightly, with a Yeo heave a yeo.

'Farewell to the maiding - the girl I adore;
'Farewell to my friends - I shall see them no more!'
The crew shrieked with terror, the capting he swore -
They had stuck on a sandbank, so the men walked ashore."

The really interesting section of Goodchild's verse is, however, that immediately following the above. The poem continues:

"Then other songs were sang: most of them bad -
'The Wild Colonial Boy,' 'The Bourke-street Lad;'
Ballads in praise of each bushranging gang,
'Burke's Dream,' with others filled with beastly slang;
Thieve's ditties, like the famed 'Black Velvet Band' -
Such are the songs you'll hear throughout the land.
Some better things at times are heard 'tis true,
But if we bar 'The Bonnie Native Blue,'
All the good songs you hear where'er you roam,
Are not colonial but come from home.
Our bards are busy with cantatas, odes, and things,
And care not what the young Australian sings."(44)

(44) Who Are You: A Volume of Verse by Keighley [Keighley Goodchild], Echuca: 1883, pp.92-93.

In verse, before 1880, the two greatest names are Harpur and Kendall. Both were native-born and both made attempts to come to grips with the Australian environment, but neither was very successful. Often even their choice of subject was dictated by literary fashions which were already becoming passé in England. Among Harpur's titles are "The Hunter's Indian Dove," "A Dream of the Orient," "The Babylonian Captivity," "The Emigrant's Vision," and "The Witch of Hebron;" and among Kendall's, "Persia," "On a Spanish Cathedral," "Attila," and "A Spanish Love Song."(45) When they did write of the Australian scene they tended to see it through the borrowed spectacles of English literary convention. Their attitude to the Interior - "Australia proper"(46) was the very opposite of that which had long been held by the working people who lived there. Instead of glorying in its dry distances, albeit often with a rather wry humour, these early

(45) Charles Harpur, Poems, Syd: 1883 and Selected Poems of Henry Kendall (ed. F.C. Kendall), Syd: 1927.
Both books are of course selections from their work, published after the death of the two men. Harpur lived from 1813 to 1868 and Kendall from 1839 to 1882. The date of Kendall's birth is erroneously given as 1841, by his son in the preface to this book, and by A.J. Coombes, Some Australian Poets, Syd: 1938, p.23. (See E. Morris Miller, Australian Literature, 2 vols., Melb: 1940, Vol. I, p.30; and A.G. Stephens, Henry Kendall, Lecture reported in the Evening News, 5/7/1928.)

(46) See p.61, supra; and cf. Louis Esson, "Australian Literature," article in 1910: Australia To Day: Special Number of the Australian Traveller, 1/12/1909, pp.57-61: "These immigrants carry with them sweet memories of the Land of their birth, and look upon Australia usually, without sentiment, as a land of exile. It was many years before a spiritual Australia was discovered by a literary Captai Cook."

verse writers felt called upon to depict it as the Ultima Thule of horrid desolation.[47] Their attitude is exemplified in Harpur's "Creek of the Four Graves," or in this stanza from Kendall's "On a Cattle Track":

"It is far to the station, and gaunt Desolation
Is a spectre that glooms in the way;
Like a red smoke the air is, like a hell-light its glare i
And as flame are the feet of the day.
The wastes are like metal that forges unsettle
When the heat of the furnace is white;
And the cool breeze that bloweth when an English sun goeth
Is unknown to the wild desert night."

But it was only rarely that they tried to write at all about the inland plains. Naturally enough, they wrote mainly about the mountain and coastal country which they knew. It was not their fault that the wild gorges and rain-forests accorded, far more closely than the parched distances of the interior, with conventional English contemporary ideas of the 'picturesque': or that parts of the relatively domesticated coastal plain could more readily be described in conventional English 'poetic' diction. But the result was a certain anglicising of even these parts of the Australian landscape. Harpur's most successful poem, "Midsummer Noon in the Australian Forest," might be more informatively entitled "Midsummer Noon in the Pseudo-Tennysonian Forest." The one

(47) cf. Bernard Smith, Interpretation of Australian Nature during the Nineteenth Century, unpublished B.A. thesis, Sydney University.

word "lagoon" alone strikes a rather jarring colonial note. And Kendall, in his best-known lyric, draws attention to the imperfect literary taste of the bell-birds who "sing in September their songs of the May-time."

In prose writing before 1880 the story is rather different. Reference has been made in this work to a great many factual writers who caught something of the spirit of the bush life which they set out to describe. But most of these men were inspired more by practical considerations, or by the scientific temper, than by purely literary ambitions.(48) If we set aside memoirs, travel books, emigrant's guides and other forms of non-fictional writing, prose literature failed almost as completely as did poetry, to assimilate itself to what was new and characteristic of the new land. A few factual writers like Samuel Sidney, trying their hand at fiction in an Australian setting,(49) managed to preserve traces of the more realistic approach.

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(48) cf. Vance Palmer, The Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, pp.56-57: "One great virtue of the eighteenth century was its high sense of responsibility to the world it knew. It carried out careful, day-to-day scientific work like Cook's experiments in dietetics; it explored the land, observed the heavens, charted the seas; and it recorded its findings in a lucid commonsense way. It is no wonder, then, that the most memorable writing of the settlement period is that which has a solid factual basis. If the bulk of the essays, verse, and pseudo-novels were swept away, no loss would be felt; there is little in them that has even historical value."

(49) e.g., Sidney's Gallops and Gossips in the Bush of Australia, Lond: 1844, and William Howitt, Tallangetta, the Squatter's Home. A Story of Australian Life, 2 vols. Lond: 1857.

Easily the best novel of this kind is Alexander Harris's Emigrant Family. Judged as a work of art it is perhaps inferior to Henry Kingsley's more purely literary Geoffry Hamlyn; but as a social document it is very much more interesting. In his Letter from Sydney, Wakefield had written in 1829, "Whilst in old countries modes and manners flow downwards from the higher classes, they must, in new countries, ascend from the lowest class."(50) The universal validity of the statement may be queried, but hardly its appositeness to nineteenth century Australia. Thus while Kingsley gives us a picture of well-bred English ladies and gentlemen conducting an extended but decorous picnic in the 'picturesque' Australian environment, 'Harris', with his sympathy for the lower orders and his keen eye for what was new in their manners, gives us a more penetrating picture of early Australia life, if not a better novel. It may be doubted whether all the hundreds of pages Kingsley devotes to the English minor gentry add anything essential to our knowledge of their manners in the first half of the nineteenth century; but we would give much to know more about the ways of the first generation or two of native-born Australians. To compare with 'Harris's' characterisation of the latter, Kingsley gives

(50) edn. Lond: 1929 (introduction by R.C. Mills), p.51.

us in Geoffrey Hamlyn only one page of light satire. Yet his first paragraph is enough to show that 'Harris's picture of their taciturnity and complete self-assurance was not exaggerated. Three of Kingsley's self-exiled gentry were chatting with their customary urbanity when:

> "one of those long-legged, slab-sided, lean, sunburnt, cabbage-tree-hatted lads, of whom Captain Brentwood kept always, say half a dozen, and the Major four or five (I should fancy, no relation to one another, and yet so exactly alike, that Captain Brentwood never called them by their right names by any chance); lads who were employed about the stable and the paddock, always in some way with the horses; one of those representatives of the rising Australian generation, I say, looked in, and without announcing himself came up to Jim across the drawing-room, as quiet and self-possessed as if he was quite used to good society, and, putting a letter in his hand, said merely, 'Miss Alice,' and relapsed into silence, amusing himself by looking round Mrs. Buckley's drawing-room, the like of which he had never seen before."(51)

Marcus Clarke, who began writing in 1867, (52) was the first novelist to evoke, by his vivid pictures of the convict past, some historical feeling for their own country in large numbers of Australian readers; but he too had strangely little to say about the native whites and the genius loci. 'Rolf Boldrewood' (T.A. Browne) was the first prose-writer to strike the new note with some confidence. The first

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(51) Syd: 1935 edn., pp.317-318.

(52) For the Term of His Natural Life was first published as a serial in "The Australian Journal" from March 1870 to June 1872.

paragraph of Robbery Under Arms (1881)[53] reads:

> "My name's Dick Marston, Sydney-side native. I'm twenty-nine years old, six feet in my stocking soles, and thirteen stone weight. Pretty strong and active with it, so they say. I don't want to blow - not here, any road - but it takes a good man to put me on my back, or stand up to me with the gloves, or the naked mauleys. I can ride anything - anything that ever was lapped in horsehide - swim like a musk-duck, and track like a Myall blackfellow. Most things that a man can do I'm up to, and that's all about it. As I lift myself now I can feel the muscle swell on my arm like a cricket ball, in spite of the - well, in spite of everything."

Here, if anywhere in imaginative literature, is the actual birthplace of the 'noble bushman', the romanticised figure at home on horseback anywhere in the interior, and standing as a symbol of emergent nationalism. And yet, as Vance Palmer has noted, the book "has an air of unreality in spite of the vivacity with which it is imagined."[54] 'Boldrewood' came to Australia as an infant of three years old, and few knew better than he the life and values of bush workers, reflected so colourfully in such passages as the above. But he was also a gentleman squatter, a police magistrate and Gold Commissioner, and the son of an East India Company officer.[55] T.A. Browne, the pillar of morality and

(53) Published in that year as a serial in the "Sydney Mail." However, it was not until 1889, when the tale was published in London in book form, that Robbery Under Arms gained much fame, even in Australia. (See Desmond Byrne, Australian Writers, Lond: 1896, p.192.)

(54) Legend of the Nineties, p.67 ff.

(55) E. Morris Miller, Australian Literature etc., Vol. I, pp.417-418.

and respectability, is constantly at the elbow of 'Rolf Boldrewood,' the writer, deploring the irregular conduct of his characters and putting into their mouths such improbable moralising passages as the following description of a squatter:

> "Mr. Knightley was a tall, handsome man, with a grand black beard that came down to his chest. He walked like a lord, and had that kind of manner with him that comes to people that have always been used to be waited on and have everything found for them in this world. As for his wife she was given in to be the handsomest woman in the whole countryside - tall and graceful with a beautiful smile, and soft fair hair. Everybody liked and respected her, gentle and simple - everybody had a good word for her. You couldn't have got any one to say different for a hundred pounds. There are some people, here and there, like this among the gentlefolk, and, say what you like, it does more to make coves like us look a little closer at things and keep away from what's wrong and bad than all the parson's talk twice over."(56)

There is no doubt that most bushmen did recognise and respect real worth, in squatters as in other men;(57) but there is even less doubt that they were not wont to express their feelings in such self-consciously priggish terms as the above. Even one of Kingsley's old hands, when expressing the same feeling towards his employer, Hamlyn, is made to say merely that he was "one of the <u>right sort</u>, and was to be taken care of."(58)

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(56) <u>Robbery Under Arms</u>, Lond: 1937 edn., p.421.

(57) See pp.56-59; and pp.454-455, <u>supra</u>.

(58) <u>Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn</u>, Syd: 1935 edn., p.166.

In poetry Adam Lindsay Gordon provided the bridge between formal literature and folk songs and tales, just as 'Boldrewood did in prose. The great bulk of his work is completely within the mid-nineteenth century English romantic tradition and quite un-Australian in tone and setting; but Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes, published on the day of his suicide, June 23rd, 1870, contained the Sick Stockrider and one or two similar poems which had an enormous influence. There is some evidence to suggest that these 'bush' poems of Gordon's may have themselves been directly inspired by earlier folk-songs circulating orally in the pastoral country.(59

It has become a truism that the Sydney Bulletin was easily the most important single medium by which the 'bush' ethos was popularised, both in prose and verse; but a close examination of its files suggests that the paper's success was due more to the pressure of the [illegible] inchoate demand for 'up-country' material, than to the genius of Archibald in anticipating it. Except for a period in the sub-editor's chair from June 1881 till 1887, he was editor from the Bulletin's birth in January 1880 until 1903. Yet for the first fourteen months of the paper's existence there was

(59) See Appendix XXIV.

scarcely a sign of the 'outback' writing[60] with which its name later became almost synonymous. There was a great deal of verse of the political-satirical, comic, and contemporary drawing-room varieties, but of bush-balladry not a trace. Then on 5th March, 1881,[61] were printed two "Gems from Gordon," one consisting of three stanzas from The Sick Stockrider. The following issue saw Mary Hannay Foot's Where the Pelican Builds Her Nest. After these ranging shots the issue of 26th March scored a bull's-eye with a poem by 'Ironbark,' (G.H. Gibson). The social values and attitudes implicit in this Ballad of Queensland were those which had been dominant among bush-workers for half a century, and so the verses immediately passed back, as it were, into folk currency.[62] They probably also stimulated versifiers and correspondents to send in much more of the same genre. At any rate, from this point on in the Bulletin columns there is a trickle, rapidly swelling to a torrent, of 'up-country' ballads,

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(60) In the issue of 2nd April, 1881, for instance, appeared the following appeal: "To our Readers: The Editor of the Bulletin will at all times be glad to receive information from correspondents living in town or country or the other colonies, on subjects of general interest, more especially on matters connected with sport, the drama or fashion." [My italics]

(61) The year of the publication of Robbery Under Arms, (see p.505, supra.)

(62) For a fuller discussion of this important ballad, usually known as Sam Holt, see pp.472-473, supra, and Appendix XXI.

stories, and correspondence. The stream remained at full flood for thirty years and even now has by no means dried up. (63)

It is probably not too much to say that, as precisely as the appearance of Lyrical Ballads in 1798 marked the beginning of the Romantic movement in England, the publication of Gibson's poem marks the beginning of the conquest of formal literature in Australia by an indigenous and 'nationalist' approach. From this point of view the significance of the poem is heightened by the fact that it represented a new development in the work of its author, just as much as it heralded a new literary fashion for others. (64) Only three years earlier, in 1878, Gibson had published Southerly

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(63) It seems hardly necessary to say that the word is not meant to be understood in a literal sense. Obviously no change in literary fashion ever occurs suddenly.

(64) See, for example, Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing, Australian Bush Ballads, Syd: 1955. Stewart's thoughtful introduction defines the literary ballad as "the ebullition of the nineties, robust, humorous, earthy, and heroic." The book contains, in the "Bushrangers" section, a few ballads dating back before 1881, but most of these are anonymous folk-songs. In their bibliography the authors list fifty-two published collections of verse from which they have drawn their hundreds of typical 'literary' bush ballads. Only two of these books, those by F.H.Nixon and Alexander Forbes, were published before 1881. To the present writer Nixon's verses (pp.219-222) seem quite different in tone from these in the remainder of the book. Forbes' work (pp.56-59) is less so, but he has claims to be considered a folk-poet. (See Appendix XV.)

Busters, a selection of his verse from various journals. In this volume poems like "The Old Hand," "The Ancient Shepherd" and "The Shepherd's Vengeance" show first-hand knowledge and close observation of bush life, plus considerable versifying ability; but Gibson's attitude to his subject is quite close to that of 'Lewis Carrol' to his Walrus and Carpenter, or of Sir W.S. Gilbert to:

> "... a cook, and a captain bold,
> And the mate of the Nancy brig,
> And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
> And the crew of the captain's gig."

The bushman is treated whimsically as a barbarous and lazy criminal.(65) There is humour in the approach certainly, but not the realism, admiration, and pathos (or bathos), which are essential ingredients of "Sam Holt," as of the work of Lawson, Paterson, Furphy and their hosts of imitators. For long a homespun folk-hero, the bushman became from 1881 the presiding deity of formal Australian literature, not always at ease in his new, city-tailored garments.(66)

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(65) Much of the work of Brunton Stephens reflects the same attitude. See, e.g., his "Quart Pot Creek," published in Convict Once and Other Poems, Melb: (1885) and 1888, pp.227-230.

(66) For evidence that the painters too were inspired by the feeling that "the Great Beyond" was the 'real Australia', see R.H. Croll (ed.), Smike to Bulldog: Letters from Sir Arthur Streeton to Tom Roberts, Syd: 1946, pp.40, 63-64; and id., Tom Roberts, Father of Australian Landscape Painting, Melb: 1935, pp.34, 120-124 et passim.

The Bulletin 'discovered' and published the three greatest[67] writers of the 'nineties, as well as nearly all of their lesser brethren. As Palmer writes:

> "It is hard to realize now the excitement caused by such ballads as Paterson's 'Clancy of the Overflow' or such stories as Lawson's 'The Drover's Wife': but to the people who read them they seemed to open new vistas, and though these are landmarks that have remained they were surrounded by a rich growth of minor balladry, story-writing, gay and satirical verse - the work of such varied writers as Barcroft Boake, Harry Morant, John Farrell, Alex Montgomery, Harry Siebel, and Mannington Caffyn."[68]

And the journal stimulated its writers quite as much as its readers.[69] Paterson, the greatest bush-balladist of them all, drew the material for many of his pieces straight from the short paragraphs describing incidents of bush life (real or imaginary) which were sent in by hundreds of anonymous subscribers. The 'Banjo's' most humourous ballad, A Bush Christening,[70] for example, derives from the following paragraph:

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(67) Greatest, that is, in what has been since the central, nationalist Australian literary tradition, with which we are here concerned. But the Bulletin provided a forum also for Christopher Brennan and Hugh McCrae.

(68) Legend of the Nineties, pp.106-107.

(69) See Vance Palmer, op. cit., Cap.5; and Thorold Waters, Much Besides Music, Melb: 1951, pp.36-43.

(70) Collected Verse of A.B. Paterson, Syd: 1953 edn., pp.83-84 It is symptomatic of the literary climate of the time that Paterson transfers the locale of the poem from the North Coast of New South Wales to the Far West. The firs stanza reads:

"On the outer Barcoo where the churches are few,
And men of religion are scanty,
On a road never cross'd 'cept by folk that are lost
One Michael Magee had a shanty."

> "On a Northern N.S.W. river is a settler who, though a well-educated man himself, ... has let his own children run wild with the bandicoots and other stock on the selection. ... The father, though a good Catholic, had neglected having the youngsters christened through being so far from a settlement, and a priest making his house a halting-place on a professional tour was asked to do the job and turn off the lot in one batch. The youngsters no sooner heard this suspicious and incomprehensible proposal than with one accord they made for the nearest hollow log, whence entreaties and threats were alike powerless to entice them. ... His reverence then went through the ceremony over the log, until it came to naming them, and then he sat astride one end of the log with a bottle of holy water, and the father jabbed the victims up at the other with a long prop, and, as each young bandicoot broke cover and made for the bush, his reverence dashed a drop of holy water at him and yelled his name after him as he disappeared in the friendly ferns."(71)

Some idea of the influence exercised by the Bulletin(72) and the writers associated with it may be gained from sales figures. Paterson's first book of verse, The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses, was published in 1895 and reprinted in 1902, 1917 and 1924. Apparently over a hundred thousand copies of this poem were sold altogether, and this figure of course takes no account of two other books of the 'Banjo's'

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(71) Bulletin, 15/12/1888, p.8. Paterson's City of Dreadful Thirst (Collected Verse, pp.117-118) is another ballad 'rewritten' from a Bulletin paragraph in the same way. (See Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing, Australian Bush Ballads, p.xix.)

(72) The journal was popularly known as "The Bushman's Bible." For some suggestive evidence of its circulation in the back country see Vance Palmer, Legend of the Nineties, Cap. 5; W.K. Harris, Outback in Australia: or Three Australian Overlanders, Newcastle, N.S.W.: 1913, p.53; Sir Baldwin Spencer, Wanderings in Wild Australia, 2 vols., Lond: 1928, Vol. II, p.520; and Donald McLean, No Man Is an Island, Lond: 1955, pp.56, 145-148.

verse selections, though it includes his Collected Verse which ran through nine editions between 1921 and 1938.[73] In 1895 the estimated population of Australia was only 3,491,621.[74] The Literary Year Book rather understated the case in its review of The Man From Snowy River:

> "The immediate success of this book of bush ballads was without parallel in Colonial literary annals, nor could any living English or American poet boast so wide a public, always excepting Mr. Rudyard Kipling."[75]

Reviewing the same selection the Westminster Gazette justly observed:

> "Australia has produced in Mr. A.B. Paterson a national poet whose bush ballads are as distinctly characteristic of the country as Burns's poetry is characteristic of Scotland."[76]

Lawson's first book, Short Stories in Prose and Verse, appeared in 1894.[77] His sales were not as tremendous as Paterson's but his work was, if possible, even more thoroughly Australian

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(73) E. Morris Miller, Australian Literature, Vol. I, pp.50-52, 274.

(74) Commonwealth Year Book No.2, 1909, p.180.

(75) Quoted E. Morris Miller, op.cit. p.51.

(76) loc. cit.

(77) But in 1898 when The Man from Snowy River had sold 18,000 copies, Lawson's most popular book of short stories, While the Billy Boils (1896), had already sold 10,000 copies. (See Angus & Robertson Pty. Ltd., Catalogue, in end pages of Edward Dyson, Rhymes from the Mines and Other Lines, Syd: 1898.)

in spirit.[78] Moreover, the influence of Lawson's prose work has increased with the years, while that of Paterson's verse has tended gradually to decline.[79]

Of the decade 1880-1890, when both men's work had been published only in journals, Randolph Bedrod wrote in his autobiography:

> "Then I saw my first copy of the 'Bulletin', and thereby entered a new world. ... It was Australia; whereas all the daily papers of Sydney were English provincials."[80]

Even the august and remote London Times warned its readers of the new spirit in Australia, a spirit of nationalism dangerously tinged with republican and even communistic ideas, which emanated from the bushmen of the interior and which was persistently nourished and intensified by the Bulletin. The Times wrote:

> "It is hard to over-estimate the extent to which this journal modifies the opinions (one might almost say the character) of its readers. Most Australian newspapers alter no-one's opinion, being read only by those who already agree with them. ... The organ (real or supposed) of some 'ring' or clique is suspected; ...

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(78) Notably in that, unlike Paterson, Lawson was always concerned with singing the praises of the 'under-dog'.

(79) A letter dated 4/10/1955 from Mr. George Ferguson, managing director of Angus & Robertson Ltd., states that Paterson's Collected Verse still sells "about 5,000 copies or so a year" and Lawson's Collected Verse about half as many. Ferguson's letter also confirms other statements above, including those quoted from E. Morris Miller.

(80) Naught to Thirty-Three, Syd: N.D., pp.80-90; and cf. Arthur W. Jose, The Romantic Nineties, Syd: 1933, pp.3-56.

> The Bulletin is beyond suspicion in these matters; ... its candour verges on the cynical, but the Australian has no objection to humour in his politics or grimness in his jests...."(81)

We have seen reasons for supposing that the Times may have exaggerated slightly the Bulletin's power to mould Australian opinion, but there is no doubt of the faithfulness with which it reflected, and helped to bring into full consciousness, the emerging national mystique. If one examines the declared political policies of the journal it is possible to trace almost all of them back to roots in the social attitudes of the pastoral proletariat. In 1893 the Bulletin formulated these policies as follows:

> "A Republican form of Government.
> One Person one Vote.
> Complete Secularization and Freedom of State Education.
> Reform of the Criminal Code and Prison System.
> A United Australia and Protection against the World.

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(81) 31/8/1903. (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, p.806.
cf., for an early example of grim humour, the following scene reported to have taken place in the Bathurst gaol-yard circa 1840: "When this poor fellow entered ... he was crying and sobbing as if his heart would break. Leonard beckoned the others back and took on himself the office of consoler in mock gravity, but with some real spice of kindness, I believe. 'Poor fellow,' he said, 'What have you got, and what for?' 'Three months for being asleep,' blubbered the new chum. 'Well, cheer up, my poor fellow, when you hear my case it is almost as bad as your own. I was a 'lifer' for taking a bit of tin, and now, because I've run away and grazed a constable, they're going to take me next week to Sydney and 'weigh me in the county crane.'" (Rev. John Graham, ed., Lawrence Struilby; or Observations and Experiences during Twenty-Five Years of Bush-Life in Australia, Lond: 1863, p.160.)

Australia for the Australians - The cheap Chinaman, the cheap nigger, and the cheap European pauper to be absolutely excluded.
A State Bank, the issue of bank-notes to be a State monopoly.
The direct election of Ministers by Parliament, instead of Party Government or rather Government by Contradiction.
A new Parliamentary System, - one House to be elected by constituencies as at present; the other to be chosen by the whole country voting as one Constituency.
A Universal System of Compulsory Life Insurance.
The entire Abolition of the Private Ownership of Land.
The Referendum.
The Abolition of Titles of so-called 'nobility'."(82)

It is not suggested that any of these policies were derived simply and solely from the ideas of the bush workers,(83) but it is certain that all of them were thoroughly consistent with the political implications of those ideas. The points were apparently listed in something approaching what was felt to be the order of their importance, most of the first six being concerned with principles rather than with means. The first and the fifth(84) are logical conclusions (more logical

(82) Issue of June 17th.

(83) Many, obviously, derived more directly from contemporary British and American radical ideas. Some, like Protectio and the Direct Election of Ministers by Parliament, were probably taken over from David Syme and the Melbourne Age.

(84) La Nauze's study of David Syme emphasises the close connection between protection and nationalism at the period. (See his Political Economy in Australia: Historical Studies, Melb: 1949, pp.98-134.) And cf. George Cockerill, Scribblers and Statesmen, Melb: (n.d.), p.163, et passim.

and conclusive, as it proved, than most Australians desired) of the extreme nationalist sentiment symbolised so flamboyantly by the bushrangers; while the sixth emphasises (scarcely too crudely for general acceptance)(85) the 'racist' component, which had developed apace since the mid-century, of Australian nationalism. In the event a few poor European, as opposed to British, migrants were admitted; but until the end of World War II, in the face of quite strong popular prejudice. Asians and Africans are still excluded, if not quite so ignorantly reviled. The first point also, like the second and third, (and the last three) emphasises, in political terms, the levelling egalitarianism which was such a marked feature of life in the nomad tribe. The anti-clericalism of many pastoral workers, and of the Bulletin, also finds expression in the Education proposal. The fourth point translates into political language the bushman's deep-seated feeling about policemen.

It is perhaps a little far-fetched to divine the influence of up-country ideas in some of the more detailed organisational proposals. Yet the demand for a Government Bank, with its anti-individualist implications, is at least

(85) cf., e.g., the violence of William Lane's feelings about coloured people. (See Lloyd Ross, William Lane etc., p.68 ff.)

consistent with the collectivist and socialist bias of mateship, as is the Georgean (86) proposal for the abolition of private property in land and the plan for an upper house elected by the whole country voting as one constituency. Universal and compulsory life-insurance meets the sundowner's assumption that every man was entitled to the basic necessities of life whether he could pay for them or not. (87) And the proposed abolition of the party system, by means of the direct election of ministers by all members of parliament, would have seemed more feasible, not to say self-evidently right, to shearers in a strike camp than to city business-men of the period, each with their own individual interests to promote. The collectivist feeling behind the last-mentioned proposal has of course been partly put into practice within the Labour Party, by its system of electing by ballot ministries, among the members of which the party leader allots portfolios. (88) For the rest, apart from formal republican independence and Henry George's panacea, the substance (89)

(86) This particular proposal was undoubtedly due to the great contemporary influence of Henry George's ideas. The prophet himself visited Australia in 1890. (See F.Picard, "Henry George and the Labour Split of 1891", Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol.6, No.21, Nov. 1953.)

(87) See pp. 388-391 and p.467, supra, et passim.

(88) cf. Dean Mc.Henry, "The Origins of Caucus Selection of Cabinet," Historical Studies: etc., Vol. 7, No.25, Nov. 1955, pp.37-43.

(89) The Commonwealth Senate is elected by each state voting as a single constituency. It has become almost a fixed rule for the Labour Party not to recommend citizens for titles, and for the Anti-Labour parties to refrain from recommending the Royal bestowal of hereditary titles.

of the Bulletin's programme has been realised.

Behind the politics of the Bulletin, the aspirations of the new writers, and the spirit of the new trade unionism, was the concept of the 'noble bushman' whose evolution has been the subject of this thesis. His was the symbolic figure giving some kind of psychological cohesion to the dominant but disparate social forces of the time - Protection and Utopian idealism, industrial trade unionism and chauvinistic nationalism, Labour Party politics and federalism, secularism and belief in material 'progress'. Randolph Bedford records that, some time before the great strikes of 1890-94, he saw in Bourke:

> "a literary and economic enthusiast of the bush, rehearsing men in a play wherein the shearer met the squatter, and talked to him temperately but straightly. If I had known it, I was looking at the birth of that political force which has had more effect on Australian life and progress than any of the regularised parties of High Tariff and No Tariff, Low Tariff and Low Wages; which is the one party under a score of aliases. The great force behind the Australian Labour Party, was the western bush worker; not the craft-union of the factory. The Australian Workers' Union, which is the father of the Australian Labour Party, was born in the bush."(90)

To-day we may query Bedford's estimate of the Labour Party's achievement, but there is less to quarrel with in his account of its genesis. In the final analysis it is not

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(90) Naught to Thirty-Three, p.95.

so much the bushman's actual nature[91] that matters, as the nature attributed to him by so many men of the day. In 1889 the youthful Paterson, who did more perhaps than any other single individual to create the legend of the 'noble bushman,' published a pamphlet on "Land Reform and Protection - the two crying wants of New South Wales."[92] He called it Australia for the Australians. And in 1892 a poem of Lawson's addressed to the bushmen, carried the refrain:

> "Vote for Blazes and Protection and the Land ye're living in."[93]

The romantic notion that the bushman of the interior was the guardian of 'truly Australian' values had been fore-

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(91) By this time the proportion of native-born people in most outback districts was not actually very much higher than in Sydney. (See T.A. Coghlan, General Report on the Eleventh Census of New South Wales, Syd: 1894, pp.193-194 and accompanying map.) From Coghlan's figures it can be deduced that in 1891 native-born Australasians (including New Zealanders but excluding Aborigines comprised 66.4% of the population in the County of Cumberland and 74.8% of the population of the remainder of the colony.

(92) See Bulletin, 2/2/1889, p.5; and for the tendency to identify advocacy of Free Trade with anti-nationalism and the conservative squatting interest, see Bulletin, 5/12/1889, leading article: "Squatterdom and Slave-Owning," in which the politics and social outlook of the pastoralists are likened to those of the planters in the Deep South of the United States.

Of course some nationalists, including Labor leaders like W.M. Hughes, were Free-Traders. A.W. Martin deals with the complexities of the question in his Political Groupings in N.S.W. etc., Parts II and III.

(93) Bulletin, 17/12/1892, p.23. It is significant that in Free Trade New South Wales, although the squatter everywhere tended to favour Free Trade, pastoral electorates were among the first to return Protectionist candidates.

shadowed by the first native-born white man to see the plains extending westward from the Blue Mountains summits. In 1820 the youthful W.C. Wentworth had written:

> "Tho those who are acquainted with the local situation of the colony, - who have traversed the formidable chain of mountains by which it is bounded from north to south - ... the independence of this colony, should it be goaded into rebellion, appears neither so problematical nor remote, as might otherwise be imagined. ... If the colonists should prudently abandon the defence of the sea-coast, and remove with their flocks and herds into the fertile country behind these impregnable passes, what would the force of England, gigantic as it is, profit her?"(94)

In 1892 another poem of Lawson's came near the heart of the matter. The first stanza reads:

> "Ye landlords of the cities that are builded by the sea -
> You toady 'Representative,' you careless absentee -
> I come, a scout from Borderland, to warn you of a change,
> To tell you of the spirit that is roused beyond the range;
> I come from where on western plains the lonely homesteads stand,
> To tell you of the coming of the Natives of the Land!
> Of the Land we're living in,
> The Natives of the Land.
> For Australian men are gathering - they are joining hand in hand
> Don't you hear the battle cooey of the Natives of the Land?"(95)

The national 'dreaming' of the 'nineties had, of course, a sufficiently hum-drum issue. The Aborigines used to believe that conception was caused not by sexual intercourse, which these simple people regarded as an enjoyable pastime,

(94) Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of New South Wales, etc., Lond: 1820, pp.277-278.

(95) Bulletin, 27/8/1892, p.20.

but by the parents' dreaming of the child's spirit.[96] Slight doubts began to arise with large numbers of half-caste babies. Wiser in our own conceit we tend to explain historical events largely in terms of material causation, heavily discounting the role of dreaming; and no doubt we are in the main right. The dreaming of the 'nineties resulted, not in a republic embodying such noble practices as would have stupefied the actual bushman, but in much hard political horse-trading and in federation. The discovery of silver at Broken Hill in 1883, and the vast industrial growth that sprang therefrom, has probably had more effect on Australian history than the publication of Sam Holt in 1881 and of all the reams of prose and verse of which it was the prototype. Certainly the results of Broken Hill silver-lead mining are easier to measure and to demonstrate. Yet while economic and other material factors are, at least in a gross sense, the principal determinants of events, it is wrong to dismiss entirely less tangible influences. The dreams of nations, as of individuals, are important, because they not only reflect, as in a distorting mirror, the real world, but may sometimes re-act upon and influence it.

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(96) A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them, Syd: 1948, pp.123, 145; and cf. Sir Baldwin Spencer, Wanderings in Wild Australia, Vol. I, p.289 and Vol. II, pp.816-817.

The tradition inherited from the nomad tribe perhaps has had less influence on what we do than on how we do it. Thus, in a very stimulating essay,[97] Sir Keith Hancock points to the strongly egalitarian and collectivist feeling which underlies the Australian concept of 'Democracy', and argues that this sentiment was decisive in the choice of the word 'Commonwealth' for the name of the new national government in 1901. He also suggests that this particular kind of democratic sentiment, in some ways "opposed to the notions of individualism which appeared with later democratic theory,"[98] derived ultimately from the ideas of Tudor England. We have now seen some reasons for thinking that the sentiment derived, more immediately and significantly, from the ideas of the Australian pastoral proletariat,[99] though the name 'Commonwealth' was chosen, at the conscious level, because of its associations in English history.

Similarly, the Australian Army is organised formally in very much the same way as the British Army, or that of any other dominion, but the way Australian soldiers behave is widely believed to be rather different. Surprisingly, that

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(97) "A Veray True and Comyn Wele," published in Politics in Pitcairn and Other Essays, Lond: 1947.

(98) ibid., p.100.

(99) cf. present writer, "Collectivist Notions of a Nomad Tribe," in Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol. 6, No.24, May, 1955.

notable propagandist of Australian nationalism, 'Banjo' Paterson, en route to the great war as a correspondent in November 1914, wrote of the two A.I.F. infantry battalions aboard his ship:

> "A topsy-turvy force this, for the Brigadier, General MacLaurin, has never seen any active service, while the ranks are full of English ex-service men, wearing as many ribbons as prize bulls. These English ex-service men, by the way, volunteered to a man when the war broke out, and the Australian ranks were full of Yorkshiremen, Cockneys, and Cousin Jacks. ... Any one of them would sooner be shot as a private in the Coldstream Guards than get a decoration in a nameless Australian force."(100)

Yet, such was the latent power of the myth that, as Paterson wrote with some understatement in his next sentence, "By the end of the war, we ourselves had a tradition." And though the men of the first A.I.F. may well have included at least many more Englishmen than is popularly supposed,(101) even the English at home insisted on seeing them as noble, if regrettably undisciplined, bushmen, every one slouching six feet or more tall in his socks. No Australian has ever drawn a more highly idealised picture of the Anzacs than John Masefield's:

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(100) A.B. Paterson, Happy Despatches, Syd: 1934, p.179.

(101) C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Vol. I, "The Story of Anzac: the First Phase," Syd: 1937 (6th edn.), p.43: "Old soldiers of the British regular army [enlisted] to a man, ... hundreds of those newly-arrived younger men who knew the old country as the land of their childhood, English and Scottish immigrants to whom their 'home' was calling; Irishmen with a generous semi-religious hatred of the German horrors in Belgium..."

> "the finest body of young men ever brought together in modern times. For physical beauty and nobility of bearing they surpassed any men I have ever seen; they walked and looked like kings in old poems, and reminded me of a line in Shakespeare:
> 'Baited like eagles having lately bathed.'
> ... there was no thought of surrender in those marvellous young men; they were the flower of the world's manhood, and died as they had lived, owning no master on this earth."(102)

And not even the Bulletin exaggerated more fondly the casual "independence" of the Australian character than did some cartoons (103) in the London Punch of the war and post-war years. At home in Australia too the 'noble bushman' was all but universally cast in the role of 'typical digger'. "The newspapers stated that by April, 1915, there had been enrolled 12,000 shearers and station hands, members of the Australian Workers' Union, and 1,000 bank clerks." (104) Obviously even newspaper men felt, paradoxically, that the pen was still a much more ignoble and un-Australian implement than the shears or the stockwhip.

C.E.W. Bean, the official historian of World War I, implies that in fact the diggers came from city and country in about equal proportions, but that in the earliest days of

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(102) Gallipoli, Lond: 1916 (edn. of 1926), pp.19, 49.

(103) One showed a London street in which all the very tall lamp-posts were bent over at the top - from having been leaned on by Australian soldiers.

(104) C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War etc., Vol. I, "The Story of Anzac: The First Phase," p.44.

the war those who "crowded the recruiting offices came mostly from the great cities."(105) Yet he goes on to proclaim that even city-bred Australians were bushmen at heart, equipped with all the bushmen's virtues and vices - though, to the eye of faith, the latter were inconsiderable. Many of the commanding officers expected that there would be great difficulty in training the rank and file in the techniques of war, but they were wrong. Bean writes:

> "The bush still sets the standard of personal efficiency even in the Australian cities. The bushman is the hero of the Australian boy; the arts of bush life are his ambition; his most cherished holidays are those spent with country relatives or in camping out. He learns something of half the arts of a soldier by the time he is ten years old - to sleep comfortably in any shelter, to cook meat or bake flour, to catch a horse, to find his way across country by day or night, to ride, or, at the worst, to 'stick on.'"(106)

He goes on to draw a close analogy between fighting bush-fires and fighting battles, and makes the rather extravagant claim that the Australian was a natural leader among all the allied soldiers:

> "The British 'Tommies,' ... best natured of men, extraordinarily guileless, humble-minded to a degree, never boastful, and seldom the cause of any serious trouble, instinctively looked up to the Australian private as a leader. If he was a good Australian he led them into good things, and if he was a bad Australian he led them into evil, but he always led.

(105) C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Vol. I, pp.43-45.

(106) ibid., pp.45-46.

> He was more a child of nature even than the New Zealanders. When the Americans foregathered with him at the end of the war, he led them also."(107)

One may doubt whether, even in 1914, most Australian soldiers had ever fought a bush fire in their lives, and whether most city slum-dwellers were wont to spend camping holidays in the country; but no one knew better than Bean that up-country values were not acquired mainly in such direct and material ways. As he had written in 1911:

> "The Australian, one hundred to two hundred years hence, will still live with the consciousness that, if he only goes far enough back over the hills and across the plains, he comes in the end to the mysterious half-desert country where men have to live the lives of strong men. And the life of that mysterious country will affect Australian imagination much as the life of the sea has affected that of the English. It will always be there to help the Australian to form his ideals; and one knows of no land where they have a more definite ideal than in Australia, or where the whole people, men, women, and even youngsters, are more consciously employed in working it out."(108)

The spirit of the 'noble bushman' still manifests itself in a great many ways. For instance the 1953 literary anthology, Australia Writes, contains twenty-nine prose contributions, twenty-four of which show more or less strong

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(107) C.E.W.Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Vol. I. pp. 46-48.
In this connection it seems significant, though the connection is not made by Bean, that in World War I the Australian private soldier's pay was higher than that of soldiers in any other army. Base rates were: Australia 6/, New Zealand 5/, America 4/7, Britain 1/. (ibid. p. 42)

(108) The Dreadnought of the Darling, Lond:1911, pp. 317-318.

'outback' influence in spirit or in setting or in both.(109) But man and society being what they are, it is natural that the tribal myth should be most apparent in wartime. When the existence of a nation is threatened men seek comfort by recalling the old ways they have in common, because it is then easier to keep at bay their fear of the unknowable future. And the Australian tradition being what it is, it is natural that it should be particularly potent in wartime, because active military service reproduces so many of the conditions of life in the nomad tribe. Like the bond or free pastoral workers of the pre-gold era, the serviceman lives in a male world where women and drunkenness are available, only exceptionally, as concomitants of the occasional spree. Like the bushman the soldier is a wanderer by profession, and one whose basic material needs are assured, despite the dangers and hardships which his work involves. Comradeship and loyalty, resourcefulness and adaptability are as necessary to the one life as to the other. And just as the bushman liked, on principle, to emphasise his 'independence' of his masters, while being sometimes on good terms with the in-

(109) Of the remaining five contributions by Dorothy Harrison, [illegible] C.P. Fitzgerald, Vance Palmer, Alan McCullough, and Geoffrey Sawer, two are the work of recent immigrants. Flora Eldershaw's article, "The Landscape Writers," is a stimulating discussion of the influence of outback nomadism on Australian literature and life.

dividual squatter, so the digger liked it to be thought that he cared nothing for officers as a class.

Thus the official historian writes cautiously of the soldiers of the First World War:

> "The fact that a man had received a good education, dressed well, spoke English faultlessly and belonged to the 'officer' class, would merely incline them, at first sight, to laugh at him. ... But they were seriously intent upon learning, and were readily controlled by anyone really competent to teach them. ... At first there undoubtedly existed among them a sort of repressed resentfulness, never very serious, but yet noticeable, of the whole system of 'officers.'"(110)

Unofficial writers state the case a good deal more strongly. The best novels (111) so far written on the Australian army in World War II are probably those of Eric Lambert and Tom Hungerford. Lambert's work suggests that he stands, politically, near the extreme left of Australian opinion, while Hungerford's books imply, just as strongly, that he is near the extreme right. Yet the work of both men shows, not indeed a "noticeable," but a very strong, resentment "of the whole system of 'officers'." Interestingly, some might say oddly, it is Lambert whose characters are prepared to

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(110) C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia etc., p.48; and cf. Vol. VI, "The Australian Imperial Force in France during the Allied Offensive, 1918, Syd: 1942, pp.5-6 ff.

(111) Eric Lambert, The Twenty Thousand Thieves, Lond: 1952, and The Veterans, Lond: 1954.
Tom Hungerford, The Ridge and the River, Syd: 1952; and Sowers of the Wind, Syd: 1954.

admit that there are some good officers and to take these to the ir heart accordingly - though on their own terms.(112) And none of his officers are so vile, and so thoroughly hated by the men, as Hungerford's Lefevre, the C.O. of the unit.(113)

We have now seen enough of the evolution of the Australian national tradition to say that such an unlooked for co-incidence in outlook is not entirely fortuitous. Stories and jokes about the Australian soldiers' reluctance to salute his officers are legion, but Kingsley noted of the bushmen a hundred years ago that:

> "the touching of the hat is a very rare piece of courtesy from working men in Australia. The convicts were forced to do it, and so the free men made it a point of honour not to do so."(114)

In Lambert's first novel there is a striking scene, which, with brilliant artistic insight, gives in a few sentences the essence of the whole matter. Old Middle East campaigners and newly-arrived reinforcements are being drilled in Palestine by:

> "a reinforcement officer called Hollis, a man in his early twenties with an adolescent voice who tried to hide his nervousness behind a mixture of bullyragging and unbearable disdain. The ex-men laughed at him, flouted him, and used all the cunning of the hardened

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(112) e.g., Henry Gilbertson and 'Chips Prentice' in Twenty Thousand Thieves; and David Bruce in The Veterans (see esp. pp.112-114).

(113) In Sowers of the Wind.

(114) Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn, p.166.

campaigners to outwit him. He hated the ex-men and singled them out for abuse.

The atmosphere on this particular morning was tense with mutual hatred. The reos who had had months of him were choking with resentment and the ex-men obeyed his orders sluggishly, with a weary contempt. ...

At last, white and trembling, he gave up and faced them, his temper almost gone. For a minute he glared at them. Then he burst out:

'You look like a pack of bloody convicts. Your drill's a bloody disgrace!'

Through the three platoons swept a wave of suppressed muttering. Then the lanky figure of Sullivan stepped smartly to his left front as the drill book required and said equably:

'And so are you.'

Then he stepped back into the ranks.

'What did you say?' stammered Hollis thinly, his eyes looking a little alarmed.

Sullivan repeated his precise movement.

'I said: And so are you.'

Hollis was suddenly calm and subdued.

'Report to the orderly room,' he said.

He broke off the three platoons and followed Sullivan." (115

Since the slaughter at Gallipoli the anniversary of the Landing has become not only a day of Australian mourning and remembrance for the war dead, but also the Australian national day above all others. Solemn religious services are conducted and patriotic orations are delivered by prominent citizens; but the rank and file carry out also, different, unofficial ceremonies. During and after the official performances knots of old soldiers gather in the public streets

(115) Twenty Thousand Thieves, pp.173-174.

and squares, there to assert their birthright by playing, in the face of the law and the constables,(116) ritualistic games of "two-up".(117) For most of the players, too, it seems both natural and fitting to end the day with a serious attempt to make it the greatest alcoholic debauch of the year. Lawson's words, written about the bushmen of the 'nineties, would be equally true of these men who crossed the North African Desert and the Owen Stanley Range, or of the old hands who crossed the Blue Mountains over a century earlier:

> "There were between us the bonds of graft, of old times, of poverty, of vagabondage and sin, and in spite of all the right-thinking person may think, say or write, there was between us that sympathy which in our times and conditions is the strongest and perhaps the truest of

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(116) cf. W.E. Harney, North of 23°: Ramblings in Northern Australia, Syd: N.D., p.80.

(117) cf. pp. 306-307 supra; for an account of the popularity of the 'national game' during World War I, see C.E.W. Bean, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Vol. VI, "The Australian Imperial Force in France during the Allied Offensive 1918", pp.15-16. And for contemporary feeling on this subject, see Sydney Sun-Herald, 30/10/1955, p.3: "On Thursday night police arrested 10 men alleged to be playing two-up outside a Waterloo hotel. Most of the men work at the Dowling Street tram depot. Nine of them pleaded guilty and were sentenced to gaol. They have lodged notices of appeal. ... At the tram depot yesterday, tramwaymen said they would 'take round the hat' to help their mates with their appeals. The federal president of the Tram and Bus Employees' Union, Mr. T. Junor, said: 'The Union cannot give financial assistance, but the men at the depot will look after that. It seems a bit harsh in Australia; two-up is regarded as a national game - not so much a criminal offence.' In the city yesterday the usual two-up schools flourished."

all human qualities, the sympathy of drink. We were drinking mates together. We were wrong-thinking persons too, and that was another bond of sympathy between us."(118

A very fine poem written in 1946 bodies forth faithfully the more heroic aspects of the 'noble bushman' tradition. It also suggests the extent to which this tradition, originally belonging only to a section of society, has captured the imagination of the whole Australian people; for the author and the subject of the following elegy both belong to old squatting families in the Victorian Western District - traditionally held to be the most conservative and 'aristocratic' social group in Australia:

"THE TOMB OF LT. JOHN LEARMONTH A.I.F."

"At the end on Crete he took to the hills, and said
he'd fight it out with only a revolver. He was a
great soldier. ..." (One of his men in a letter.)

"This is not sorrow, this is work: I build
A cairn of words over a silent man,
My friend John Learmonth whom the Germans killed.

There was no word of hero in his plan;
Verse should have been his love and peace his trade,
But history turned him to a partisan.

(118) From Lawson's story, "For Auld Lang Syne," published in While the Billy Boils, Syd: 1896. My attention was drawn to the significance of this passage by Mr. Barton Maughan, official Commonwealth historian of the Ninth Division's part in the War in the Middle East. Of course Lawson uses the word "graft" in its Australian slang sense of "hard work."

Far from the battle as his bones are laid
Crete will remember him. Remember well,
Mountains of Crete, the Second Field Brigade!

Say Crete, and there is little more to tell
Of muddle tall as treachery, despair
And black defeat resounding like a bell;

But bring the magnifying focus near
And in contempt of muddle and defeat
The old heroic virtues will appear.

Australian blood where hot and icy meet
(James Hogg and Lermontov were of his kin)
Lie still and fertilise the fields of Crete.

x x x

Schoolboy I watched his ballading begin:
Billy and bullocky and billabong,
Our properties of childhood, all were in.

I heard the air though not the undersong,
The fierceness and resolve; but all the same
They're the tradition and tradition's strong.

Swagman and bushranger die hard, die game,
Die fighting, like that wild colonial boy -
Jack Dowling, says the ballad, was his name.

He also spun his pistol like a toy,
Turned to the hills like wolf or kangaroo,
And faced destruction with a bitter joy.

His freedom gave him nothing else to do
But set his back against his family tree
And fight the better for the fact he knew.

He was as good as dead. Because the sea
Was closed and the air dark and the land lost,
'They'll never capture me alive,' said he.

x x x

That's courage chemically pure, uncrossed
With sacrifice or duty or career,
Which counts and pays in ready coin the cost

Of holding course. Armies are not its sphere
Where all's contrived to achieve its counterfeit;
It swears with discipline, it's volunteer.

I could as hardly make a moral fit
Around it as a lightning flash.
There is no moral, that's the point of it,

No moral. But I'm glad of this panache
That sparkles, as from flint, from us and steel,
True to no crown nor presidential sash.

Nor flag nor fame. Let others mourn and feel
He died for nothing; nothing's have their place.
While thus the kind and civilised conceal

This spring of unsuspected inward grace
And look on death as equals, I am filled
With queer affection for the human race."(119)

(119) John Manifold, Selected Verse, New York: 1946, pp.77-79.

Chapter X

TWO NOBLE FRONTIERSMEN.

"No Yankee hide e'er grew outside such beef as we can freeze;
No Yankee pastures make such steers as we send o'er the seas
As we send o'er the seas, my boys, a thousand pounds they weigh -
From the far Barcoo, where they eat nardoo, a thousand miles away."

Having traced the steps by which the ethos of the Australian pastoral workers came to have a quite disproportionate influence on that of the whole nation, we may ask why this happened. The simple answer may be best given in terms of the American historian, F.J. Turner's, 'frontier theory,' the germ of which he summed up in the conclusion of an early article:

> "What the Mediterranean Sea was to the Greeks, breaking the bond of custom, offering new experiences, calling out new institutions and activities, that the ever retreating Great West has been to the eastern United States directly, and to the nations of Europe more remotely."(1)

Professor Hancock has drawn attention to the importance of the frontier concept for the understanding of colonial history;(2) and in so far as it emphasises new and emergent

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(1) "Problems in American History," in The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner with a List of All His Works, (E.E. Edwards, ed.), University of Wisconsin Press: 1938, p.83.

(2) Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, Vol. II, 1918-1939, Part I, Oxford University Press: 1940, Section I, Chapter I, esp. pp.2-5.

forces as opposed to old and traditional ones it is in agreement with Marxist doctrine.(3)

Turner's new approach to American history was first clearly outlined in his paper The Significance of the Frontier, delivered on July 12th, 1893, in Chicago, the old 'capital of the West.' For many years afterwards his teaching generated mounting enthusiasm(4) - for two reasons.

(3) J. Stalin, "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" in Karl Marx, Selected Works, 2 vols., Lond: 1947, Vol. I, pp.69-96, esp. p.71: "The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing."

(4) Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: an Interpretation of American Thought and Character since the 1880's, Yale Univ. Press: 1950, pp.293-294: "There were those scholars who did stamp their personality indelibly upon history and whose formulas commanded wide support and exercised an influence far beyond the realms of historical scholarship. Frederick Jackson Turner, Vernon Louis Parrington and Charles A. Beard. ... of the three, Turner was the first on the scene, and he remains in many respects, the most influential."

And cf. Carl Becker, "Frederick Jackson Turner", in American Masters of Social Science etc. (ed. H.W. Odum), New York: 1927, pp.273-320.

The approach was new, even revolutionary, casting much light on aspects of American history which had previously been unnoticed rather than misunderstood: and the spirit of the new gospel was at least thoroughly consistent with all the most popular and powerful beliefs of the time. Like other great historians, Turner explained the past in a significant new way, without altogether realising the extent to which his work would also constitute for the future, a picture of the mind of his own time. Before seeking to set his doctrine in perspective, however, we shall ask just what it was and what significance his ideas have for Australian as well as for American history.

Since new countries like Australia, the United States or the Latin American republics, were settled by Europeans, the natural tendency of historians - by definition students of the past - was to explain developments in terms of successive influences from Europe. Turner's achievement was to show that indigenous, and particularly 'frontier' influences, were not less important for a just understanding of American history. In so far as the American was not just a transplanted European but a different kind of man, the change could only have been brought about by influences met with in the new land. And, as we have seen in Australian history, these indigenous influences, of necessity, were most potent on the expanding frontier of settlement where they were met

by the colonists in their most undiluted form. As Turner put it in a well known passage:

> "The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilisation and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the mocassin. ... In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is, that here is a new product that is American."(5)

Charles Reade, the English novelist, who never set foot in Australia, had the germ of the same idea when he wrote that the settlement of the continent and the rush for gold furnished the theme for a great epic:

> "in the sudden return of a society far more complex, artificial and conventional than Pericles ever dreamed of, to elements more primitive than Homer had to deal with."(6)

In Australia the frontier has not had so much lasting effect on the external forms of life - political, legal, institutional and so on - as it has had upon men's attitude to life and so, at one remove as it were, upon the way in which these institutions are made to work in practice. Most

(5) The Frontier in American History, New York: (1948 edn.), p.4.

(6) Quoted Desmond Byrne, Australian Writers, Lond: 1896, p.197.

Australians no longer bake dampers nor wear cabbage-tree hats, but their ethos, like the speech which clothes it, differs from that of their British congeners more than it did a hundred years ago. The same is obviously true of Americans, and it is this side of Turner's doctrine which has been least shaken by subsequent criticism.(7) As Harper says, "The important change was perhaps not the change in political structure so much as the change in intellectual outlook."(8) In this sense at least then, according to Turner and his followers, the two most important effects of the frontier were to promote national unity and nationalism,(9) and to promote democracy.

We have seen abundant evidence for believing that in Australia too the frontier was a forcing ground for the growth of distinctive national habits and sentiments, and that these in turn made for political unity of the separate colonies These frontier influences made themselves felt surprisingly strongly in South and Western Australia, the two colonies

(7) For trenchant criticisms, from differing viewpoints, of Turner's thesis, see The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History, (ed., G.R.Taylor Boston: 1949, articles by B.F. Wright Junior, F.A.Shannon, Louis M. Hacker, G.W. Pierson, C.J.H. Hayes, and Avery Craven.

(8) N.D. Harper, "Frontier and Section", Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand, May, 1952, p.14.

(9) It is significant that, as in Australia, the proportion of native-born citizens was very much higher on the American frontier than on the eastern sea-board. Robert E. Riegel, America Moves West, New York: 1951, p.71, writes that "the vast majority of these self-elected Westerners were native-born."

farthest removed by distance, and by their lack of convict origins, from the social patterns which were spreading from 'Botany Bay'.

In part this was no doubt due to like conditions having like effects. The early labour shortage in Western Australia, for example, unalleviated by convicts, would alone have been enough to evoke in working men the saucy and independent attitude so much deplored by their masters on the other side of the continent. The Advocate General and Judge of the Colony's first Civil Court complained constantly that masters there were such only in name, being actually "the slaves of their indentured servants." He wrote:

> "In my absence, — does nothing, and if I speak to him — exit in a rage. I could send him to gaol, but I do not like this extremity, and yet I cannot afford to lose the advantage of his time, and pay £30, besides diet, to another in his place."(10)

But when we hear that, within two years of the first landing at Fremantle, workmen had "got into the habit of demanding" a daily rum ration, we may suspect that manners were being directly influenced by those of early New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. At the end of the following year, 1831, the Judge Advocate noticed:

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(10) George Fletcher Moore, Diary of Ten Years Eventful Life of an Early Settler in Western Australia; etc., Lond: 1884, p.60. And pp.87 ("they talk of having meat and beer three times a day!"), 142, 176, 184-185, 196-197 etc. And cf. Letters of Elizabeth Shaw, quoted A Story of a Hundred Years: Western Australia 1829-1929 (ed. Sir Hal Colebatch), Perth: 1929, pp.50-51.

> "Great visitings among the neighbouring servants; seven or eight of them patrolling about; and all this is sure to end in drunkenness and mischief - they talk of forming a club! They have too much control over their masters already; and club-law would be a terrible exercise and increase of their power."(11)

And "a man who had come from Van Diemen's Land" seems to have been largely responsible for 'trouble' with the Aborigines Relations had been fairly good until early in 1833 when this man:

> "saw some unoffending natives in the way. 'Damn the rascals,' said he, 'I'll show you how we treat them in Van Diemen's Land,' and immediately fired on them."(12)

Samuel Sidney recorded in 1852 that:

> "The timber of Australia is so different from that of Europe that English workmen are very helpless until instructed by bush hands. The first South Australian colonists could not even put up a fence until the overlanders and Tasmanians taught them how."(13)

Even before they set foot on the mainland, some South Australian pioneers were taught, in 1836, how to bake a damper by two 'frontiersmen' - sealers named Whalley and Day who had

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(11) G.F. Moore, Diary of Ten Years Eventful Life etc., p.91.

(12) E.W. Landor, The Bushman; or Life in a New Country, Lond: 1847, p.263 et passim.

(13) Three Colonies of Australia etc., Lond: 1852, pp.307-308. And cf. Douglas Pike, Forthcoming work on the history of South Australian Settlement, Cap. I, and F.K. Crowley, Working Class Conditions in Australia 1788-1851, Melb: Ph.D. thesis, 7/11/1949, p.220: "A very considerable number of escaped convicts had found their way into the Mount Lofty Ranges where they engaged as sawyers and splitters, and it was recognised that those settlers who secured their services got more work done in a day by them than by immigrants at the same wages. An unofficial understanding was arrived at, that as long as no crimes were committed the police would not look for them."

lived with kidnapped native women on Kangaroo Island since 1818.[14] In the early 1840's a visitor found that bushmen to the south east of Adelaide and, even more surprisingly, on the edge of the isolated wilderness of Eyre's Peninsula, had already acquired a perfect familiarity with Australian slang, which was largely convict-derived, and with the art and terminology of bush cooking.[15] Bush slang was also established, at the same early date, on the then pastoral frontier of Western Australia south of York.[16]

Half a century later the Federation referenda provided a convincing demonstration of the frontier's unifying national influence. The overwhelmingly strong sentiment for federation on the new goldfields frontier in Western Australia has often been remarked upon, and the Yes votes of these 'T'other-siders,' most of whom came from Victoria where federal sentiment was strongest, was overwhelming. But the 'outback' constituencies in the north west also returned large Yes majorities. In fact it was the outback pastoral areas which carried the day in the three doubtful colonies

(14) Letter, dated Dec. 10th, 1836, from a "private settler;" quoted 2nd Supplement, 1st Report of South Australian Company, 1837, p.25.

(15) George French Angas, Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand etc., 2 vols. Lond: 1847, Vol. II, pp.101, 122, 203.

(16) E.W. Landor, The Bushman; or etc., p.263 et passim.

of New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland. In the latter state the bushmen seem to have voted Yes in spite of the powerful exhortations to the contrary of the popular Brisbane Worker.(17) Provincialism and inter-state jealousies were strongest in and near the coastal capital cities.(18) Vance Palmer's assessment of the situation at the time of the first convention to discuss Federation in 1891 is hardly an overstatement:

> "There was an element of paradox in the situation. In the interior there was little talk of federation but the essential unity of Australia as a country with common interests was taken for granted: in the capital cities, federation was discussed as an important issue, but it was regarded almost as an alliance between countries foreign to one another and having rival economies."(19)

It is clear then that frontier conditions exerted a unifying, nationalist influence in Australia as in America. But what of Turner's other main effect of the frontier ethos - democracy? Though no less emotive a term than nationalism, it is even vaguer and more compendious in meaning. The Communist for instance, though not the Fascist, really believes his form of government is more 'democratic'

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(17) See F. Alexander, Moving Frontiers, Melb: 1947, p.30 ff.; and A.G.L. Shaw, The Story of Australia, Lond: 1955, pp.190-195.

(18) loc. cit.

(19) Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, p.142.

than those of advanced western countries.(20) Though the differences between the Australian and American democratic impulses are obviously much slighter and more elusive than those between East and West, such an omnibus word as 'democracy' must serve to obscure as many differences as it reveals. We may start by asking what 'democracy' meant to Turner:

> "The most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here and in Europe. As has been indicated the frontier has been productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organisation based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control. The tax-gatherer is viewed as a representative of oppression."(21)

Here and elsewhere Turner insists that an individualist outlook was easily the most important single component of American frontier democracy, and he explains how individualism was stimulated by the material conditions of frontier life. The chief factor was free land:

> "So long as free land exists, the opportunity for a competency exists, and economic power secures political power. But the democracy born of free land, strong in selfishness and individualism, ... has its dangers as well as its benefits."(22)

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(20) V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, Lond: 1946, Vol. VII, pp. 23-103, "The State and Revolution," esp. pp.78-87, and cf., John Somerville, Soviet Philosophy, New York: 1946, Cap. 2.

(21) The Frontier in American History, p.30.

(22) ibid., p.32.

Critics have pointed out that the frontier lands were not absolutely free, that in fact it was not usually the discontented eastern city workman but the small farmer's younger sons and such people who went west to improve themselves, and that to have a good chance of success they needed a modest accumulation of capital and equipment.(23) These objections modify Turner's "safety-valve" theory,(24) but do not alter the fact that in most areas and times(25) up to 1890 the typical American frontiersman was a small, individual agriculturist.

Throughout the nineteenth century American land legislation facilitated the settlement of the west by small farmers. Each of the Acts of 1800, 1820, and 1841 went further than its predecessor in making it easy for poor men to become their own masters on their own soil.(26) Finally the Homestead Act of 1862 gave 160 acres of free land to each adult, or head of a family, who could prove five years' continuous residence and cultivation.(27) Even more important

(23) N.D. Harper, "Frontier and Section", p.12.

(24) Fred. A. Shannon, "A Post-Mortem on the Labor-Safety-Valve Theory" in The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History.

(25) The chief exceptions were, of course, the westward moving frontier of big plantations in the South, and the comparatively short-lived "open range" frontier of the Great Plains from about 1870 to 1885. (See W.P. Webb, The Great Plains, Oxford: 1931, pp.205-207.

(26) Robert E. Riegel, America Moves West, pp.54-55, 203, 414.

(27) op. cit., p.427.

was the fact that American geographical conditions favoured the farmer rather than the pastoralist. Clearing the forests of the Mississippi Valley was back-breaking work, but once the land had been prepared for the plough, soil, rainfall and relatively accessible markets made it perfectly possible for a poor man, backed by his wife and family, to achieve a competence if not riches. As Turner says,(28) the American farmer knew no real check until the 1880's when the wave of settlement reached the semi-arid area of the Great Plains beyond longitude 98°.(29) But by then agricultural settlement had been well established also in Oregon, California and the whole western littoral. In older lands the small-scale agriculturalist farmer is known as a peasant. It is quite a long time since the European peasant has been a frontiersman in something like the American sense of the word, and so his claim now to be a promoter of democracy is dubious, but his unshakeable individualism is proverbial.

In Australia land laws and geography combined to produce in the frontiersman's mind quite a different concept of

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(28) The Frontier in American History, p.147.

(29) But cf. W.P. Webb, The Great Plains, pp.205-207: "For the greater part of half a century the frontier line was held practically stationary along the vicinity of the ninety-eighth meridian. During this period - which lasted, roughly, from 1840- to 1885 - the agricultural frontier first jumped across the plains, established itself on the Pacific slope, and then began to work backward into the plains."

democracy.[30] Australia is of roughly the same size and shape as the United States, but being nearer the equator and having much lower mountain chains, it is much more arid. As in the U.S. settlement proceeded inland from the eastern coastal plain, which, however, is much narrower in Australia. Crossing the Great Dividing Range, which corresponds roughly in height and position with the Appalachian Mountain system, Australian pioneers found the farther slopes rapidly merging into a region like the Great Plains beyond the ninety-eighth meridian in America - except that the western plains in Australia were hotter and drier, and shaded off after a few hundred miles into desert too arid for even temporary pastoral occupation. On the coast and on the slopes of the Great Divide there is sufficient rainfall to sustain a rather sparse agricultural population, but even to-day the vast bulk of Australia's habitable land is fit only for pasturing sheep and beef-cattle. We have seen that in the nineteenth century, with comparatively backward farming techniques, it was even more difficult for a small farmer to take root and survive in the Australian west.[31]

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(30) A very interesting indication of the marked difference in outlook between small farmers in the American West and in Australia, is provided by the attitude of the former to bandits and highwaymen. In America, at most times and places, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, banditry was strongly condemned by public opinion, and it was common for bands of outlaws to be exterminated by voluntarily organised posses of small settlers. (See Robert E. Riegel, America Moves West, p.94 ff.)

(31) See pp.391-395, supra.

We have seen too that the effect of these geographical controls was accentuated by Government land policies and legislation. British manufacturers wanted more and ever more wool for the Yorkshire textile mills, and at least from 1828 onwards the effect, if not always the intention, of legislation was to favour the big pastoralists at the expense of the small settler.(32) After the granting of responsible government to the south-eastern colonies in the 'fifties, Free Selection Acts from 1861 onwards aimed ostensibly(33) at "unlocking the lands" to the small agriculturist: but none of these acts were really successful, perhaps as much because of intractable geographic facts as of the machinations of the squatters.(34) Only in the last decade of the century did small scale agriculture begin to become a reasonably secure and profitable occupation.(35) But by then much good arable land had passed permanently into the hands of big graziers or pastoral companies.(36)

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(32) See pp.269-272, supra; and cf. Brian Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, Melb: 1941, p.59.

(33) D.W.A. Baker, in his recently submitted Melbourne M.A. thesis, gives reasons for doubting whether John Robertson's first Free Selection Act of 1861 was seriously aimed at putting farmers on the land.

(34) cf. pp.391-395; 461 ff.; and p.497, footnote 42, supra.

(35) Except in Tasmania and South Australia and, to a lesser extent, in Victoria.

(36) See footnote (27), p.56, supra.

Thus the typical Australian frontiersman was not a small, individualist farmer, tilling his own soil with the help of his family and perhaps a hired hand or two at harvest time. Indeed he usually had no family and scorned agricultural pursuits. It is true that the squatter was a rugged individualist[37] even to the point of displaying a "tendency to large-scale larceny where land was concerned"[38] but pastoral runs were so large that there were few squatters and many hands, most of them employed on a casual basis. It was not impossible for an Australian pastoral worker by superior industry, thrift, sobriety, or skill at cattle-stealing, to become his own master, but for the reasons outlined above it was very much more difficult than it was for an American frontiersman.[39] Men like James Tyson and Sir Sidney Kidman, who rose successfully from the ranks of bush-workers to become great squatters, were sufficiently rare for their names to become legendary - not however, among bush-workers,

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(37) But because of poor communications, sparseness of settlement and so on, local government did not develop as widely or rapidly in Australia as in America, and so even the squatter was apt to tolerate government from afar, somewhat more readily than did the American farmer. (cf. C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900, Syd: 1955, pp.320, 603.)

(38) N.D. Harper, "Turner the Historian: 'Hypothesis or Process?'", University of Kansas City Review, Autumn: 1951, pp.82-83.

(39) And cf. K. Buckley, "Gipps and the Graziers of New South Wales", Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol. 6, No.24, May 1955, esp. pp.406-408.

as symbols of heroic endeavour,[40] but as by-words for meanness and presumptive dishonesty.[41] The plain fact is that the typical Australian frontiersman in the last century was a wage-worker who did not, usually, expect to become anything else.[42] The loneliness and hardships of outback life, as on the American frontier,[43] taught him the virtues of co-operation, but his economic interests, unlike those of the American frontiersman, re-inforced this tendency towards a social, collectivist outlook. By loyal combination with his fellows he might win better conditions from his employer,

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(40) As in more respectable circles. cf. Harry H. Peck, Memoirs of a Stockman, Melb: 1942, p.77 ff.; E. Marin la Meslée, L'Australie Nouvelle, Paris: 1883, p.96; and Eileen Berry, "Australian Cattle King" (article in Melbourne Age, 15/10/1955).

(41) "Millionaire James Tyson was sixty-seven on the 10th inst. and presented himself with a new clay pipe as a birthday gift. James is getting extravagant as he grows older." (Quoted Vance Palmer, Legend of the Nineties, p.43, from Bulletin of January 1890.)
I have heard numerous such tales about Sir Sidney Kidman in the 'Kidman country' in the north of S.A., and the Northern Territory. One, firmly and widely believed, is that Kidman would instantly dismiss any employee whom he observed to light his pipe with a match round the camp-fire at night, instead of using a brand from the fire. A man so careless of his own money would be equally feckless of his employer's property.
And cf. "Tom Collins" [Joseph Furphy], Rigby's Romance, Syd: 1946, p.103 et passim; and Alan Marshall, I Can Jump Puddles, Melb: 1955, p.180.

(42) cf., 'A. Harris,' Settlers and Convicts, Melb: 1953, p.224 ff.

(43) F.J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, pp.165, 257-258.

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but the possibility of becoming his own master by individual enterprise was usually but a remote dream. So far from being "precipitated by the wilderness into a primitive organisation based on the family,"(44) he was precipitated into an equally primitive organisation of "nomad tribesmen" - if one may conceive of a tribe without women and children. Thus it came about that differing frontiers in the United States and Australia produced two different kinds of frontiersmen, with mental attitudes which were very similar in some respects but very different in others.

We have seen that both frontiers promoted a national outlook, and indeed it is also true that both frontiers promoted 'democracy,' but 'democracy' had a different meaning in the two countries. As Turner himself (unlike some of his disciples) recognised:

> "If ... we consider the underlying conditions and forces that create the democratic type of government ... we shall find that under this name there have appeared a multitude of political types radically unlike in fact."(45)

American and Australian frontiersmen both liked to think that they were the most democratic people on earth; but for the American the implicit meaning of 'democracy' tended to be freedom to make his own way to the top by his own individual efforts, and regardless of his fellows. The implicit

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(44) See p.545, supra.

(45) The Frontier in American History, p.243.

meaning of the word for Australian frontiersmen tended to be freedom to combine with his mates for the collective good - and the discomfiture of "those wealthy squatters." Thus the Australian labour movement has been, and continues to be, much more collectivist in outlook as well as much stronger, relatively, than the American. And collectivist and socialist ideas are much more widely tolerated, if not accepted, in Australian society generally, than they are in America.(46)

Twenty-seven years ago this vital difference in the two frontier legacies was pointed out, in a very able article, by an American visitor to Australia who wrote:

> "Certainly the United States owes its individualism largely to its small man's frontier; I think it is not fanciful to suggest that Australia owes much of its collectivism to the fact that its frontier was hospitable to the large man instead."(47)

Yet only eight years ago an Australian historian, attempting to apply Turner's ideas to his own country, could suggest that "dominant individualism" had once been an Australian trait "frontier-inspired," but that it had been:

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(46) cf. my article "Collectivist Notions of a Nomad Tribe," in Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, Vol.6, No.24, May 1955.

(47) Carter Goodrich, "The Australian and American Labour Movements" in The Economic Record, November 1928, pp.206-207. And cf. H.G. Adam, An Australian Looks at America: Are Wages Really Higher? Syd: 1927. Though he does not derive them from differing historical 'frontier' conditions, Adam was just as forcibly impressed as Goodrich by the same differences between the labour movements and general outlook of the two countries In 1827 P. Cunningham emphasised the contrast imposed by geography, between the petty agriculturist's economy of the United States and the great pastoralist's economy of Australia. (Two Years in N.S.W., etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1827, Vol. I, pp.255-261.)

> "over-ridden by habits of leaning on authority and of co-operative action, by an increasing casualness which has extended from manners to thought and by too passive acceptance of ready-made forms of recreation."(48)

And four years ago another Australian historian seemed to endorse this rather mechanical view - that since the American frontier fostered individualist attitudes, then the Australian frontier, and by implication all frontiers, ought to have had the same influence:

> "How far is this aggressive individualism, this dislike of authority, a frontier product? ... The legacy from either source seems to-day to have been more meagre than was suspected: the democratic, individualistic society has been transformed into a society largely socialised and accepting with little complaint the regulations of a complex modern government."(49)

In this sense then the Australian frontier had an exactly opposite effect to that of the American, which Turner correctly described as individualistic and "anti-social."(50) But in another sense Australian frontiersmen were also anti-social. While being anything but individualistic within their own social group, they displayed no less "dislike of authority,"(51) no less "antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control,"(52) than did their American counterparts. Though there was less actual physical violence on

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(48) F. Alexander, Moving Frontiers, p.35.
(49) N.D. Harper, University of Kansas City Review, Autumn: 1951, pp.82-83.
(50) See p.545, supra.
(51) N.D. Harper, p.554, supra.
(52) See p.545, supra.

the Australian frontier,[53] the nomad tribe was incorrigibly anti-social from the point of view of its employers, and from that of the Government and constituted authority generally. Waltzing Matilda, the most popular of Australian folk-songs,[54] epitomises the frontiersman's attitude towards authority. Like 'the black police' and landlords in Ireland,[55] troopers and squatters in Australia were the natural enemies of all honest bushmen, to be spoiled as opportunity offered. A quatrain from Henry Lawson gives just weight to both aspects of the democratic impulse on the Australian frontier - the strongly social sense of solidarity within the nomad tribe, and the equally strong, anti-social hostility to any control, or even patronage, from above:

> "They tramp in mateship side by side -
> The Protestant and Roman -
> They call no biped lord or sir,
> And touch their hat to no-man!"(56)

Where, as in some other comparatively minor ways, Australian frontier characteristics differ from American, the divergences seem to stem primarily from the same cause - the differing relationships of the pioneers to the land.

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(53) Mainly perhaps because of the greater helplessness of the Aboriginal inhabitants, and the much greater racial homogeneity of the colonists. See G.V. Portus, The American Background, Melb: 1928, pp.104-105, and N.D. Harper, University of Kansas City Review, pp.82-83. And cf. pp.302-303, supra.

(54) See footnote (61), p.31, supra.

(55) See pp.168-174, supra.

(56) Poetical Works of Henry Lawson, Syd: 1947, p.169.

After noting the effect of frontier life in stimulating national and democratic outlooks, Turner listed some other important American frontier traits as follows:

> "That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and acquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom."(57)

Professor Alexander accepts the first two and the last of these traits "not only as marks of the Australian frontiersman but as substantial Australian characteristics to-day."(58) We have seen much evidence that Australian bushmen attached great importance to 'practical' virtues ("that coarseness and strength" and "that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic"); and that they certainly possessed "that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients." Both are characteristics likely to be evoked by any crude and uncultivated environment, far removed from the niceties and specialist services of civilisation. But we may query whether bushmen were particularly 'acute and acquisitive,'(59) and, as Alexander does, their ability

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(57) The Frontier in American History, p.37.

(58) Moving Frontiers, pp.34-35.

(59) Though they were generally thought to be "smarter" than their British cousins if less so than their American ones (see footnote (21), p.211, supra.).

to "grasp [sic] great ends."(60) These, with the "restless nervous energy" also denied by Alexander, were not typical frontier traits at all in Australia, but rather characteristic primarily, of middle class(61) and city people. Francis Adams and other contemporary observers of Australian social life drew attention to this fact at the time, even using Turner's phrase "nervous energy" or "nerve energy" to describe the latter groups.(62) We have seen that the Australian bushman was anti-individualist, but that he nevertheless possessed a comparatively carefree and light-hearted outlook if not quite "that buoyancy and exuberance that comes with freedom." "Buoyancy and exuberance," however, may stem not only from freedom but also from the possession, or potential possession, of good land blessed with an abundant rainfall. At least by comparison with Americans, Australians are a taciturn people. As Adams wrote of the bushmen in 1892:

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(60) Moving Frontiers, pp.34-35.

(61) Including, of course, many squatters.

(62) Francis Adams, The Australians: a Social Sketch, Lond: 1893, pp.42-43, 90 et passim; P. Clarke, The 'New Chum' in Australia or etc., Lond: 1886, pp.241-242; and George Ranken (ed.), Windabyne, a Record of By-gone Times in Australia, Related by Reginald Crawford etc. in 1880, Lond: 1895, pp.256-257.
(Clarke does not point the contrast between bushman and middle class people or city dwellers, but it is clear, in context, that he is thinking of these latter. Crawford points the contrast in much the same way as Adams, and ascribes restless 'nerve energy' naturally enough, to the successful bushman become squatter and merchant.)

> "Every one is at heart a pessimist. ... After a good spell of drought, endured on a diet of mutton, bread, jam, and stewed Bohea, one's indifference to life becomes all but complete. There is nothing wild or hysterical about it. ... Their doctrine is simple. Life being mostly a curse, it is no good pretending it is anything else. But it is only the coward who whines ... that is one step lower than the animals."(63)

There is every reason to think then that the frontier tradition has been, at least, not less influential and persistent in Australia than in America. But the really interesting puzzle is why, in the nineteenth century and particularly towards the end of it, the frontier should have possessed so much prestige. Why should so many men have paid to the relatively uncouth frontiersman the supreme compliment of imitating, often unconsciously, his manners and outlook? Turner was perhaps too much of a man of his age for the question to have occurred to him, at any rate in the form in which it may occur to us. If a man in love ever asks himself why, it is only to answer in terms of the self-evident beauties of the beloved. Turner's imagination was fascinated by the frontier as was the mind of his time.

In the broadest possible terms it may be suggested that admiration for the 'simple' virtues of the barbarian or the frontiersman is a sentiment which arises naturally in

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(63) Francis Adams, The Australians: a Social Sketch, pp.148-149.

highly artificial, megalopolitan societies.[64] Thus Tacitus extolled, and romanticised, the 'simple', democratic virtues of the Germani:[65] but in the relatively simple and rural world of mediaeval Christendom, when the population of Rome itself had fallen from upwards of a million to twenty or thirty thousand, there was little tendency to glorify either the savage or the hind, whether or not the latter dwelt in a border march.[66] On the contrary, mediaeval literature, including popular literature, was much concerned with kings

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(64) For a detailed study of this theme see A.O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, Baltimore: 1935, esp. Preface, Prolegomena, and Cap. XI: "The Noble Savage in Antiquity."
The authors distinguish between "soft" noble savages like the inhabitants of the Hesperides, and "hard" ones like the Germans or Scythians; and their documents suggest that interest in the former tended to precede interest in the latter. In the same way, as will be shown below, eighteenth century interest in the predominantly "soft" noble savage, of the South Seas and elsewhere, preceded nineteenth century interest in the predominantly "hard" noble frontiersman.

(65) ibid., pp.364-367; and H.N. Fairchild, The Noble Savage, a Study in Romantic Naturalism, Columbia University Press: 1928, p.5 et seq. "Tacitus pictures a noble and virtuous race living in a state of savage simplicity, and implies a contrast between the moral excellence of that race and the vices which were sapping the strength of the more complex and pretentious Roman civilization. ..."

(66) The Robin Hood ballads, in some important ways, obviously constitute an exception to this statement.

and noblemen, or with the worthies of antiquity, and these were admired not for any kind of 'simplicity', but for quite opposite reasons. Aristotle, Caesar, the Knights of the Round Table and Amadis de Gaul charmed the imagination of men because they were felt to belong to worlds more civilized, complex, rich and cultivated than that of the middle ages. Even the wonders reported by Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville were received in a kindred spirit. Cathay and the land of Prester John (67) were more exotic, rich and strange than Norwich perhaps, but not primarily, simpler or more virtuous. Indeed Mandeville's first chapter, undertakes "to teche zou the Weye out of homely 'Englond' to the rich, mighty and wondrous city of 'Constantinoble'." The symbolic figure is that of Dick Whittington, the simple country boy who becomes Lord Mayor of London.

A few hundred years later, in the much more complex mercantilist age when England was already approaching the threshold of the industrial revolution, a very different symbolic figure was created. Robinson Crusoe, the man of parts who found the good life by 'returning' to 'nature', may stand as the harbinger in England of the 'noble frontiers-man' of the nineteenth century, just as his Man Friday may be considered, in some ways, as a progenitor of the 'noble

(67) The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundevile, Kt., etc., (ed. J.O. Halliwell), Lond: 1883 edn., pp.270-290.

savage' of the eighteenth.[68] But such changes in taste do not take place overnight. From our point of view even a book like Robinson Crusoe is an isolated symptom rather than a cause. In 1694 Cotton Mather was at one with most of his contemporaries in feeling that the then frontiersman of western Massachusetts were godless barbarians "on the Wrong side of the hedge" where "the Angel of the Lord becomes their enemy."[69] And in 1777 Dr. Johnson still discountenanced romantic enthusiasm by his reproof to Boswell: "When a man is tired of London he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."[70] Even as late as 1820 when Fennimore Cooper started to publish, frontier life still had so little prestige that he felt it proper to write about high life in England, of which he knew nothing from personal experience. In The Pioneers (1823) however, he turned to the familiar backwoods and, with the character of Natty Bumppo, began to develop the portrait of "Leatherstocking" which, under various names, formed the altogether

(68) But see Mrs. Aphra Behn, Oroonoko (1694). The titular hero of this novel, which ante-dates Robinson Crusoe by twenty-five years, has a much better claim than Man Friday to be the progenitor of the 'noble savage' of the eighteenth century.

(69) Quoted F.J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, pp.63-64.

(70) James Boswell, Life of Johnson, 6 vols., Oxford: 1934, Vol. III, p.178.

noble and heroic archetype for the innumerable noble frontiersman who were to crowd the pages of subsequent nineteenth century popular novels. Indeed, "Leatherstocking" was a not unworthy psychological successor of the 'noble savage' whose life span extended "from about 1730 to 1830."(71) As a result of closer acquaintance and the reports of missionaries the noble savage had become rather ignoble by the 1820's.(72) By 1832 he had fallen on such evil days as to be represented as a gross comic buffoon in catchpenny British street songbooks.(73)

A substitute, however, had already been born. Here is a portrait of "Leatherstocking," under the style of "Deerslayer:"

> "In stature, he stood about six feet in his mocassins, but his frame was comparatively light and slender, showing muscles, however, that promised unusual agility, if not unusual strength. His face would have had little to recommend it except youth, were it not for an expression that seldom failed to win upon those who had leisure to examine it, and to yield to the feeling of confidence it created. This expression was simply that

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(71) Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Noble Savage, a Study in Romantic Naturalism, Columbia University: 1928, p.498.

(72) Bernard Smith, "European Vision and the South Pacific", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, Vol. XIII, 1950, p.90 et passim.
And cf. the characterisation of the Negro, Billy Waters, a leading London thief, in W.T. Moncrieff, Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London. An Operatic Extravaganza, in Three Acts, Lond: 1826, pp.121-123.

(73) e.g., Several songs in the series Wiseheart's Merry Songster; or Gems of Comicality, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. Wiseheart's New Comic Songster, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., Dublin, 1832.

> of guileless truth, sustained by an earnestness of purpose, and a sincerity of feeling, that rendered it remarkable. At times this air of integrity seemed to be so simple as to awaken the suspicion of a want of the usual means to discriminate between artifice and truth; but few came in serious contact with the man, without losing this distrust in respect for his opinions and motives."(74)

It will be seen that the essential attributes of this early heroic frontiersman corresponded very closely with those of the obsolescent noble savage. Both were guileless, yet not gullible, sons of 'nature', whose physical and moral excellence is held up to the admiration of readers 'corrupted' by the artificialities of a sophisticated society. For comparison we may take the following typical portrait of a noble savage of the late eighteenth, King Abba Thulle of the Pelew Islands:

> "With regard to the excellent man, who ruled over these sons of Nature, he certainly, in every part of his conduct, shewed himself firm, noble, gracious, and benevolent; there was a dignity in his deportment, a gentleness in all his manners, and a warmth and sensibility about his heart, that won the love of all who approached him. - Nature had bestowed on him a contemplative mind, which he had himself improved by those reflections that good sense dictated, and observation confirmed."(75)

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(74) Quoted R.H. Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought, New York: 1940, pp.20-21.

(75) George Keate, Account of the Pelew Islands etc. in 1783 etc., Lond: 1789 (3rd edn.), pp.261-262.
And cf. the treatment of King Kamehameha of Hawaii in Archibald Campbell, A Voyage Round the World from 1806 to 1812; etc., Edinburgh: 1816, p.126 ff.

Frances Burney's long description of the celebrated Omai from Othateite, the home par excellence of noble savages,[76] strikes the same note:

> "Indeed he appears to be a perfectly rational and intelligent man, with an understanding far superior to the common race of us cultivated gentry."[77]

Omai was an a-typical specimen of his genus in one respect however, being a man from the middle ranks of Tahitian society. The cultivated gentry of the eighteenth century usually liked their noble savages to be kings or chiefs among their own people. It was in keeping with the spirit of the following century, which witnessed the dissemination of the doctrines of the Rights of Man and universal education, that the typical noble frontiersman should be an uncultivated workman.[78]

In Australia too the first signs of the new attitude to frontiersmen appeared in the same decade 1820-1830. Settlers and Convicts was not published until 1847, but the book was written from experience of up-country life gained during the period 1825-1841. Though written in a rather sober and factual style, the work is instinct with that kind of admiration for frontiersmen which, by the time of

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(76) Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period, Lond: 1949, p.14.

(77) Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768-1778 etc. (ed. Annie Raine Ellis), 2 vols., Lond: 1907, Vol. I, pp.331-337.

(78) cf. pp.99-101, supra.

H.W. Haygarth's Recollections of Bush Life in Australia (1848)[79] was becoming quite common among writers. Two passages which actually compare the life of the Australian frontiersman with that of the 'noble savage' help to show the transference of emotions from one to the other which was taking place in men's minds. James Macarthur (or the man who wrote his book) asked whether those who opposed emigration to the colonies thoroughly weighed "the pernicious influence of poverty upon the moral character?" He then quoted a Dr. Channing who urged paupers to emigrate because:

> "The want of a neat, orderly home, is among the chief evils of the poor. Crowded in filth they cease to respect one another. ... In these respects the poor often fare worse than the uncivilised man. True, the latter has a ruder hut, but his habits and tastes lead him to live abroad. Around him is boundless, unoccupied nature, where he ranges at will, and gratifies his passion for liberty. Hardened from infancy against the elements, he lives in the bright light and pure air of heaven..."[80]

Most travel books about the life of the bushman written before 1850, stress the 'naturalness' and freedom of the frontier life, without consciously comparing it with that of the 'noble savage.' But in 1845 another writer made the connection even more explicitly than in the above passage. He wrote:

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(79) See, for example, Haygarth's treatment of the native-born, up-country stockman, Amos, quoted p.211, supra.

(80) New South Wales: Its Present State and Future Prospects etc., Lond: 1837, pp.161-162. (For authorship of book see footnote (77), p.182, supra.)

> "The greatest drawback to the life of an Australian settler is the solitude, and the absence of the conveniences of civilization. With some persons, however, this would be more than counter-balanced by the feeling of unrestrained independence they would enjoy; and the bushman of Australia, unshackled by the customs and constraint of civilized communities, may roam through the grassy wilderness, with his horse, gun, and kangaroo-dogs, with a thousand times more freedom than the wildest chiefs of the African deserts, or American savannahs."(81)

The same transference of attitudes is apparent in the visual arts. The earliest Australian landscape drawings are embellished with groups of Aborigines, becoming more ignoble with the years; or with figures of "cultivated gentry" who look as though they have been transported from Strawberry Hill in a vain attempt to impart an air of urbanity to the exotic frontier landscape. Then in 1823 Joseph Lycett, a convict artist, first introduced a group of white kangaroo-hunters.(82)

F.J. Turner, apparently unwittingly, gives a clue to the economic reasons why the noble frontiersman should have replaced the noble savage at about this time. In listing American frontier traits he notices that "colonial [i.e., eighteenth century] travellers agree in remarking on the

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(81) Clement Hodgkinson, Australia from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay etc., Lond: 1845, pp.144-145.

(82) Bernard Smith, Ph.D., thesis in preparation, Australian National University, on The European and the Pacific 1769-1851. And see Joseph Lycett, Views in Australia, Lond: 1824.

phlegmatic character of the colonists."[83] He goes on to ask how such people who were of course, in the terms of his thesis, at that time frontiersmen, could have acquired "that strained nervous energy,"[84] which he saw as a later American frontier characteristic. However he is content to leave the question unanswered beyond merely noting that "the transition appears to become marked at the close of the War of 1812, a period when interest centred upon the development of the West. ..."[85] It seems to be only a coincidence that his phrasing of the last-quoted clause shifts the focus of attention from frontier characteristics themselves to popular attitudes towards the frontier. Beauty may reside partly in the eye of the beholder.

The "transition" from mercantilism to industrialism was also "becoming marked" during the twenty years or so "after the War of 1812." In the eighteenth century when European expansion depended largely upon profitable contact with remote and economically backward peoples, the noble savage had fired the imagination of cultivated persons. To say this is emphatically not to suggest that many Europeans consciously regarded him as a source of wealth. Those who did probably thought him quite ignoble. Similarly industrial

(83) The Frontier in American History, p.37.
(84) ibid.
(85) ibid.

capitalism, giving rise in its turn to imperialism, depended not so much upon trade with primitive peoples as upon the production of raw materials and the growth of markets in 'new countries'; and these were provided, to an increasing extent, not by any kind of savage, but by the European pioneer in frontier lands.

Few historians or literary men would deny that there is a causal connection, however indirect and complicated, between economic changes and changes in taste.(86) Thus even Mr. T.S. Eliot, an eminent literary critic who proclaims that his position is both anti-romantic and anti-materialist, observes of the Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century, that "any radical change in poetic form is likely to be the symptom of some very much deeper change in society and the individual."(87) And elsewhere he admits that this, and other such changes in taste,(88) stem from "deeper changes" which are primarily economic in nature - "perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery."(89) In another place still Eliot writes:

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(86) Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, 2 vols., Lond: 1951, Vol.2, p.695 et passim, and cf. Bernard Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, Syd: 1945, p.27.
For a Marxist statement of this position see G.V.Plekhanov Art and Social Life, Lond: 1953.

(87) The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Lond:1946, p.7

(88) e.g. Elizabethan Essays, Lond: 1934, "Thomas Middleton," pp.97-98.

(89) Selected Essays, Lond: 1949, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," p.16.

> "It would be of interest to divigate from literature to politics and enquire to what extent Romanticism is incorporate in Imperialism; to enquire to what extent Romanticism has possessed the imagination of Imperialists, and to what extent it was made use of by Disraeli."(90)

If it be agreed that the whole Romantic temper of the nineteenth century stems, in an important measure, from the growth of industrialism and imperialism,(91) it is even more a truism that one of the strongest motifs of Romanticism is the desire to escape from reality to a dream world.(92) Even in William Blake's lifetime (1757-1827), to unusually sensitive spirits such as his, distant fields looked greener than the "dark satanic mills" which were spreading over

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(90) The Sacred Wood, Lond: 1934, "Imperfect Critics," p.32.

(91) cf. Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, 2 vols., Lond: 1928, Vol. II, p.108: "The essence of Alexandrism and of our Romanticism is some thing which belongs to all urban men without distinction. Romanticism marks the beginning of that which Goethe, with his wide vision, called world-literature - the literature of the leading world-city."

(92) cf. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, "Andrew Marvell," p.301; and William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, Lond: 1930, pp.26-27: "For a variety of reasons, they [Romantic and Victorian poets] found themselves living in an intellectual framework with which it was very difficult to write poetry, in which poetry was rather improper, or was irrelevant to business, especially the business of becoming Fit to Survive, or was an indulgence of one's lower nature in beliefs the scientists knew were untrue. On the other hand they had a large public which was as anxious to escape from this intellectual framework, on holiday, as they were themselves. ... Of all these men an imposed excitement, a sense of uncaused warmth, achievement, gratification, a sense of hugging to oneself a private dream-world, is the main interest and material."

England, and so the Romantic temper came to choose subjects distant in time and space. Consciously or not, the Romantic writers and their public fled, in imagination, from the depressing problems of the "Bleak Age,"(93) to the bucolic simplicities of the Lake District, to Xanadu or Camelot, and later on to Samarcand, Chimborazo, Cotapaxi or where you will.

Hence the rise to power in popular imagination of the noble frontiersman, around whom there clings an aura of high romance - in Turner's writings scarcely less than in those of Fennimore Cooper and his legions of successors.(94) As mechanisation and urbanisation proceeded in Western Europe and along the eastern seaboard of the United States, the noble frontiersman became a kind of popular culture-hero possessed, like the Divinity, of three aspects. He provided for the Romantic imagination, first, a symbol of escape from the drabness of urban, industrial civilisation; second, a symbol of compensation and justification for the evils incidental to the process of expanding imperialism; and third, a symbol for the polarisation, particularly in "new" countries like Australia and America, of patriotic nationalist sentiment.

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(93) J.L. & Barbara Hammond, The Bleak Age, Lond: 1907 (revised edn.).

(94) H.N. Fairchild, The Noble Savage, etc., shows (p.498) that "the Noble Savage idea is interwoven with other strands that make up the thought fabric of the Romantic Movement. ... the Noble Savage is also related to ... political radicalism."

We have already noted (95) examples of the frontiersman's first function. Practically every book on the Australian outback contrasts very favourably the 'independence,' the 'freedom,' and the closeness to 'Nature' of the bushman's life, with the drabness and meanness of life in cities. It is the principal theme of Furphy, Lawson and Paterson, epitomised in the latter's tremendously popular "Clancy of the Overflow."

The frontiersman's second function, which became more important with the growth of imperialism towards the end of the nineteenth century, is well exemplified in the work of Kipling and a host of lesser popular writers like G.A. Henty. (96) From the viewpoint of this analysis, such men were concerned chiefly with popularising the noble frontiersman of the Empire conceived as a unit, (97) just as Paterson popularised the romantic figure of the bushman for city-dwellers in Australia. The spectacle of Kipling's soldiers and civil servants, selflessly bearing "the white man's burden" in far places, showed beyond all doubt that

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(95) See pp.562-566, supra.

(96) The importance of juvenile literature in building the myth of the 'noble frontiersman' can scarcely be over-estimated. Writers like Ballantyne and W.H.G. Kingston in England, Edward S. Ellis in the United States, or Mary Grant Bruce in Australia, have implanted in whole generations of young minds an attitude towards the frontiersman, much of which persists sub-consciously in adult life, even though the conscious mind may have long disowned romantic fancies.

(97) Obviously there are other, and more permanently important, elements in Kipling's work; though they do not concern us here.

empire was good for the governed.[98] It is perhaps worth noting that, in this second aspect, the frontiersman was at least as likely to be a "gentleman" as a member of the lower orders - as was only fitting for a symbol of empire. For Kipling 'the colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady were sisters under the skin, just as the squatter and the rouseabout were brothers for the conservative Paterson,[99] though not for Lawson, and only occasionally for Furphy.

This thesis has been principally concerned, however, with the noble frontiersman in his third aspect - as a symbol of nationalism. Most Romantic writers were, like American and Australian frontiersmen, both democratic and nationalist in outlook, and both sentiments were obviously, like the Romantic temper itself, connected with the great economic changes of the period. "But during the nineteenth century," wrote J.A. Hobson, "the struggle towards nationalism ... was a dominant factor ... as an inner motive in the life of masses of the population."[100] It is probable, that as C.M.H. Clark has suggested,[101] nationalism was in part a

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(98) cf. J.A. Hobson, Imperialism, Lond: 1948 edn., Part II, Chap. III, "Moral and Sentimental Factors."

(99) Paterson, who served in the Boer War as a newspaper correspondent, was a great admirer of Kipling whom he met in England, and whose verse style strongly influenced Paterson's. (See A.B. Paterson, Happy Despatches, Syd: 1934, pp. v, 129-139, and Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing, Australian Bush Ballads, Syd: 1955, Stewart's introduction, p.x.

(100) Imperialism, p.3.

(101) Select Documents 1851-1900, pp.661-663.

meretricious spiritual substitute for the religious faith, which was waning so markedly, especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century.(102)

Turner has rightly insisted that the frontier tended to promote nationalism, but it is surely not less true that the sentiment of nationalism tended to make men, including Turner, romanticise the frontier. During the last century the United States and Australia(103) were both new countries seeking, unconsciously in part, for national self-consciousness and cohesion. Vance Palmer, in the most valuable part of his Legend of the Nineties, calls the process "myth making." He writes:

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(102) cf., a remark on secular education made in 1914 by F. Anderson, Professor of Logic and Mental Philosophy in the University of Sydney: " It may be true that there is, as asserted, a 'growing recognition that a purely secular education is nationally unsatisfactory'." (Quoted C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents 1851-1900, p.691. [My italics.] This would, to say the least, have seemed a curious reason for opposing secular education in the ages of faith, or even one hundred years earlier in, say, 1814.

(103) And other countries like Brazil, with which they are comparable in area and some other respects. It is interesting that in 1902, the year before the publication of Furphy's Such is Life, there was published in Brazil a book which held up to admiration as the national culture-hero, the noble (and lower class) frontiersman of the Interior. Euclides da Cuhna's Os Sertões, is agreed to be the "greatest and most distinctive [book] which [the Brazilian] people has produced, the most deeply expressive of that people's spirit. ... 'The Bible of Brazilian nationality' ... it is commonly looked upon as marking Brazil's intellectual coming-of-age." The title means "The Backlands." (See translation by Samuel Putnam, Univ. Chicago: 1944.)

> "Men cannot feel really at home in any environment until they have transformed the natural shapes around them by infusing them with myth. ... It is the original urge towards art: it creates food without which the imagination would starve. ... Myth-making is an important means of communication, of bringing people together, of giving isolated communities something to hold in common."(104)

Anthropologists take it for granted that in primitive societies this activity is of crucial importance, and that it provides much of the social cement which gives them cohesion and purpose. But historians do not always seem to realise that more complex and sophisticated societies like our own have by no means entirely outgrown the process.

In this partly unconscious search for a folk-hero who should symbolise the nation, what other possible candidate for the position was there but the frontiersman? The average American or Australian is not the same person as the typical American or Australian. How could one, in the last century, apprehend a typical American or Australian except by reference to those traits and manners which distinguished him most sharply from his ancestors and congeners in Europe? It was commonplace for visitors to remark that the coastal cities were just "like home."(105) The disappointment this circum-

(104) Legend of the Nineties, Melb: 1954, p.52.

(105) This was even more true of Sydney than of Melbourne, which, in the nineteenth century, was felt by many travellers to be a more 'Yankee-fied,' cosmopolitan city. In the present century the roles have been reversed.

stance caused to the romantically inclined, is well brought out by John Henderson:

> "I confess that, notwithstanding its vast extent and population (considering that it was but fifty-six years since its foundation), I was somewhat disappointed with the appearance of Sydney. It was too like home; I had looked for something foreign and Oriental in its appearance; but I found that, excepting a few verandahs, and the lofty and stately Norfolk Island pine, it coincided much with a second or third-class town in England."(106)

Other visitors found pleasure in the English appearance of the cities. About twenty years after Henderson's sojourn in it, Charles Allen wrote of Sydney:

> "On the green plots of grass around the flat summit of the Observatory Hill boys were playing cricket, precisely as in England; and in the same rough and ready style. In fact, what with the stone houses, and the ugly unpicturesque manner in which they are built in the crooked narrow streets, you might easily fancy your self in England."(107)

The relatively domesticated landscape of the coastal plains near the capitals was also felt to be comparatively home-like. In 1883 a French visitor wrote:

> "Après avoir atteint le point le plus élevé des montagnes que la voie ferrée est obligée de traverser entre Goulburn et Sydney, nous descendions rapidement dans la plaine. Nous entrions au milieu d'un pays coupé de fermes, de prairies et de champs en pleine culture

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(106) Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales etc., 2 vols., Lond: 1851, Vol. I, p.68.

(107) A Visit to Queensland and Her Goldfields, Lond: 1870, p.50; and cf. R.G. Jameson, New Zealand, South Australia, and New South Wales etc., Lond: 1842, p.111; Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' in Australia, or etc.,p.22.

> qui nous rappelait l'Europe. La végétation de cette partie du pays est, du reste, toute différente de celle de la contrée située de l'autre versant de la montagne; les arbres sont moins hauts, plus touffus et plus verts."(108)

And even as early as the 1840's Mundy felt that the Illawarra landscape - "more than anywhere else in this country - might recal [sic] England."(109)

But all agreed that the typical (i.e. most un-English) Australia, and the typical Australians, were to be found on the western plains beyond the mountains. As one man observed in 1886:

> "Formerly new chums could be more easily detected by colonials than at present. Up country the strangeness of the scene and life makes the 'new chum' declare himself in a thousand actions; and he betrays himself by speech and by the cut of his clothes. Down in the towns, however, where Britannic fashions arrive in all their Britannic folly almost as soon as they come out in England, a new chum is more readily told by the colour of his face. ... The twelve thousand miles of separation from the old country was annihilated that night by the English-like reception in an English-like suburban villa by an essentially English-like matron and children, and the full tide of civilisation was at its height."(110)

And as another wrote in 1895:

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(108) E. Marin la Meslée, L'Australie Nouvelle, p.76. And cf. James Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies, Lond: 1843, pp.447-449.

(109) Our Antipodes or etc., Lond: 1855 (3rd edn.), p.434.

(110) Percy Clarke, The 'New Chum' in Australia or etc., p.26.

> "Townspeople in Australia do not differ very much from their congenors [sic] at home, but the inland life and climate do certainly tend to produce a peculiar type, distinct altogether from their northern kinsmen, and this type often indicates [sic] great capacity of a certain kind."(111)

Turner has explained why the frontiersman was necessarily, in this sense, the typical representative of his countrymen, but he does not seem to have been at all conscious of the underlying forces which impelled him to see the frontiersman in this light. We have seen that he was not alone in this. It is significant that, like Paterson who did so much to popularise the idea of the noble frontiersman in Australia, he was a fervent admirer of Kipling, the apostle of the imperial frontiersman. He was a friend and admirer, not only of the democratic (with a small 'd') Woodrow Wilson,(112) but also of Theodore Roosevelt,(113) the father of American imperialism:(114) and Roosevelt himself had written in 1889,

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(111) George Ranken (ed.), Windabyne or etc., pp.256-257.

(112) Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner (ed. E.E. Edwards), F. Mood's Introductory Essay, "Turner's Formative Period," pp.20-27, 36. Mood says that Turner and Wilson talked and thought much together about "the then moot point of the nature of American nationality."

(113) ibid., pp.21-23; and see Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, (ed. E.E. Morison), 8 vols. Harvard: 1951. Roosevelt carried on a warm personal correspondence with both Turner and Kipling.

(114) R.H. Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought: etc., pp.351-355.

"The Winning of the West," a history which anticipated in some respects Turner's ideas on the importance of the frontier.(115) All four men, Paterson, Kipling, Roosevelt, and Turner, believed strongly in another romantic myth which, in Australia also, was intimately associated with the cult of the noble frontiersman - the myth of the innate superiority of European, and especially Northern European, peoples:

> "While the Germans, according to Turner, had given the state added solidity and strength and fostered its best ideals, the contribution of South Italians 'to American racial characteristics' he considered 'of doubtful value.' ... Even less desirable, he thought, were the southern and eastern European Jews, the very opposite of the frontier type which Turner so much admired - 'the world over, a city people. ... The Jew is not ready to depart from the synagogue and the market place'."(116)

In Australia this particular part of our 'frontier' heritage has fortunately suffered some depreciation since World War II.(117)

In a review, published in 1889, of Theodore Roosevelt's book, Turner wrote:

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(115) Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner, pp.20-27, 36. "Now look," said Mark Hanna, prominent Republican party organiser, when Roosevelt succeeded McKinley in Sept. 1896, "that damned cowboy is President of the United States." (R.V. Harlow, The United States: from Wilderness to World Power, New York: 1949, p.555.)

(116) Edward N. Saveth, American Historians and European Immigrants 1875-1925, Columbia University Press: 1948, p.129.

(117) But in such newspapers as the Sydney Daily Mirror may still be read articles in support of the 'White Australi Policy,' the sentiments and language of which would have been applauded by the late Herren Rosenberg and and Goebbels. (It need hardly be said that 'racism' does not derive purely from the 'frontier'.)

> "American history needs a connected and unified account of the progress of civilisation across the continent. Aside from the scientific importance of such a work, it would contribute to awakening a real national self-consciousness and patriotism."(118)

The work of Francis Adams provides a further very interesting piece of evidence that Turner was not only a great historian, but also an instrument of history, unconsciously motivated by the complex of sentiments outlined above - romanticism and nationalism stemming ultimately from the industrial revolution. Adams - poet, novelist, journalist and critic - was a gifted young Englishman who spent only about five years, from 1884 to 1889, in Australia. In 1893, at the age of thirty-one, he shot himself when at the last stage of tuberculosis. His reaction to Australian city-dwellers was very much that of Matthew Arnold to the contemporary middle-class culture of Great Britain. Adams found Australian philistinism even more contemptible since, as he saw it, it did not even stand on its own clay feet, but was a shoddy copy of its vulgar British original. About Australian bush-men, however, he wrote quite differently:

> "The gulf between colony and colony is small and traversable compared to that great fixture that lies between the people of the Slope and of the Interior. Where the marine rainfall flags out and is lost, a new climate, and in a certain sense, a new race begin to

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(118) Quoted E.E. Edwards (ed.) Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner, p.23. [My italics.]

unfold themselves. The 'fancy' stations on this side of The Great Dividing Range produce something just different enough from anything in England to make the Englishman accept the dictum of the Australian cockney that this is at last the typical example of 'the bush life.' People in the country districts of Illinois and Kentucky doubtless talk in the same way of 'the West.' But they are mistaken. It is not one hundred, but three and four and five hundred miles that you must go back from the sea if you would find yourself face to face with the one powerful and unique national type yet produced in the new land."(119)

"Frankly I find not only all that is genuinely characteristic in Australia and the Australians springing from this heart of the land but also all that is noblest, kindliest and best."(120)

"The Anglo-Saxon has perished or is absorbed in the Interior much more rapidly than on the sea-slope and in the towns."(121)

"It should be recognised more fully than it is that the successful issue of the American Secession War was due to the Western States. ... The West was the heart of the country, the genuine America, and the Interior is the heart of the genuine Australia, and, if needs be, will do as much for the nation and the race."(122)

Adams never visited America,(123) and the above passages were published about a year before Turner delivered his celebrated paper on(124) "The Significance of the Frontier," on

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(119) The Australians: A Social Sketch, Lond: 1893, p.144 (And cf. Alan Marshall, I Can Jump Puddles, pp.42-43.)

(120) The Australians: etc., p.154.

(121) ibid., p.166.

(122) ibid., p.171

(123) Clive Turnbull, These Tears of Fire, Melb: 1949. The only published biography of Adams.

(124) Adams' essays were first published in the Fortnightly Review in 1892, before being collected and re-published in book form as The Australians: A Social Sketch, 1893.

July 12th, 1893. It is therefore impossible that Adams was directly inspired by Turner and it seems almost equally unlikely, at this distance, that Turner owed anything to Adams.(125) Yet the basic ideas and the spirit of their writing are extraordinarily like. Both men wrote towards the close of an historical epoch when it was possible to see something of the pattern of what had been taking place but not, perhaps, to see it from outside. Both shared fully in the assumptions of their time. They believed in the innately 'natural' virtue of nationalism, in the inevitability of 'progress,'(126) and in the self-evident superiority of white men and their civilisation. Since the Napoleonic Wars there had been no

(125) See Fulmer Mood's introduction to Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner.

(126) cf. particularly, F.J. Turner, The Significance of Sections in American History (ed. Max Farrand), New York: 1950, Cap. VIII. This chapter treats of the wonders made manifest between the foundation of Clark University in 1889, and 1924. In certain respects its style reaches a pitch which has rarely been equalled, and probably never surpassed, by a great historian. e.g., "The automobile began to be an occasional sight shortly after Clark was founded. Its manufacture was not reported in the census of 1890, but by 1923 over fourteen millions were registered in the United States, or about as many automobiles as telephones - one for every seven or eight people in the nation. ... Speed undreamed of, heights inconceivable, have been mastered, and the airplane and the Zeppelin are still in their infancy. ... To this generation belongs the development of high-speed tools, the use of carborundum, bauxite, helium, aluminium, the extraction of nitrates from the air to fertilise impoverished soils, the electric furnace and electric welding, the alternating-current motor, and all the wonders of high-power current, even to rivaling the lightning flash." (pp.213, 215).

international clashes of comparable scope, and innumerable little wars with ignoble savages, and other "lesser breeds without the law", had convincingly demonstrated the rightness of current beliefs.

Since then we have had more and more reason to question some of the shibboleths of the age which created the 'noble frontiersman' and found him good.

APPENDICES

It was originally intended to illustrate what has been said in each chapter of the thesis by giving in the appendices full texts, with variants, of all the ballads which have been collected for each period, together with some explanatory and critical notes on each. As material accumulated, however, it became clear that this plan would have necessitated the compilation of another volume more bulky than the thesis itself. Its execution has therefore been postponed.

The appendices actually contain brief notes on only a few ballads. These have been selected, both because they are often particularly interesting in their own right, and because they illustrate more fully certain points made in the text.

On the Road to Gundagai.

A great many songs have been made and sung about Gundagai. Some are related and some connected with each other by little except the use of the place name. When overlanders and others began travelling from New South Wales to Port Phillip and South Australia in the late 1830's, Gundagai became and remained the Murrumbidgee crossing-place on the Sydney-Melbourne road. It was too, for some years, the last outpost of 'civilisation' from which the Riverina was occupied by New South Wales squatters. After 1860, when Wagga Wagga became the head of navigation on the Murrumbidgee, this town gradually superseded Gundagai as the chief entrepot centre to the Riverina for New South Wales. These facts help to account for the popularity of Gundagai in folk-song; but perhaps too there was something unusually evocative about the mere sound of the word.

The first record of a specific song about Gundagai occurs in Charles Macalister's Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South (Goulburn:1907). This author writes (p. 139 ff.):

> "It was not long till the author again visited Gundagai, as about eight months later [in July 1849] I met Henry Turnbull - a Gundagai storekeeper - at the Woolpack Hotel, Sydney, and agreed with him to take up two tons of loading at £10 per ton. Our contract was that, bar accidents, the goods should be delivered at Gundagai within twenty-one days. However, owing to heavy weather it was twenty-four days before we reached the town. In our cargo there was a consignment of saddles and bridles, etc., required for the Gundagai Races, and as the meeting was just over, Mr. Turnbull, though he took delivery of the goods, refused to pay a penny for the carriage from Sydney. He said our delay had lost him fully £50, and the race-goods would be left on his hands for a long time. He also said that as we were four days behind time, he had no liability in the matter. On reaching home I put my case before the late Charles Hamilton Walsh, and Mr.

Walsh simply said, 'Well, Charlie, before fourteen days go by he'll be glad to pay you every penny, and find my costs, too.' . . . I got the money due within the time stated. . . . Upon this Gundagai incident I composed an effucion [sic] entitled, 'The Road to Gundagai,' which, I believe, had a slight 'vogue' among the carriers on the main southern road for some years. It ran as follows: -

The Way to Gundagai

Oh, boys, you've heard of Gundagai - to see that
town I meant;
And so, upon the southern road to'ards Gundagai I went,
At Sydney town with merchandise I loaded up my dray,
And signed to get to Gundagai in three weeks to a day:
But keep to that arrangement it was in vain to try,
When in the rains of '49 I left for Gundagai.

To view the Murrumbidgee banks I had made up my mind,
So bid good-bye to all my friends, and left them far
behind;
And bye-and-bye I camped a night at Jugiong so green:
'A pretty place - but Gundagai's a far more pretty
scene' -
That was what the people said as they came passing
by,
When we camped at 'Sugar' O'Brien's Creek, two
miles from Gundagai.

But when I got to Gundagai, so far, and far away,
My Mr. Henry Turnbull he just refused to pay -
He said, 'I've missed the races here, and all because
of you,
I will not pay a half-penny, you're three days
overdue';
'Well, then, Mr. Turnbull, you're a paltry rogue,'
said I,
As homeward bound I started from the town of
Gundagai.

When next the spires of Goulburn town most joyfully
I hailed,
To Mr. Walsh, the lawyer there: the man who never
failed,
I took my tale of injury, and Mr. Walsh full soon
Made Mr. Henry Turnbull sing quite another tune:
For Mr. Walsh 'adduced the law', and thus the foe
at bay
Alias Henry Turnbull made haste his debt to pay.

And now a moral I would add - Let trader never try
To 'sharp' an honest teamster on the road to Gundagai.

This ballad appears to have no connection with later Gundagai songs, apart from the name of the town and the circumstance of the bullock-driver's being delayed by rain and mud at a creek on the road nearby.

Anyone who has driven over the route can hardly doubt, however, that the place where teams were most frequently bogged was not "two miles from Gundagai," as in Macalister's ballad, but five miles north along the road to Sydney where the 'Dog on the Tucker Box' memorial was erected in 1932. These two stage-properties figure more or less obscenely in several extant snatches of traditional doggerel which seem to date from the 1840's or 1850's. The following two are reproduced as printed in The History of the Dog on the Tucker Box (q.v.), a pamphlet sold in Gundagai to tourists:

"Good morning mate, you are too late,
The shearing is all over,
Tie up your dog behind the log,
Come in and have some dover.
For Nobby Jack has broke the yoke,
Poked out the leader's eye,
And the dog ---- in the tucker box,
Five miles from Gundagai."

"As I was coming down Conroy's Gap
I heard a maiden cry,
'There goes Bill the Bullocky,
He's bound for Gundagai.
A better poor old -------
Never earnt an honest crust,
A better poor old -------
Never drug a whip through dust.'

His team got bogged at the Five Mile Creek,
Bill lashed and swore and cried,
'If Nobby don't get me out of this,
I'll tatoo his ------ hide.'
But Nobby strained and broke the yoke,
And poked out the leader's eye,
Then the dog sat on the tucker box
Five miles from Gundagai."

In both these fragments the dog's defecation, or euphemistically, his 'sitting' in or on the tucker box comes as the climax of the story. Jack Moses published in his Beyond City Gates (Syd:1923, p. 27) Nine Miles from Gundagai, the text of which is as follows:

"Nine Miles from Gundagai.

I've done my share of shearing sheep,
Of droving, and all that,
And bogged a bullock team as well
On a Murrumbidgee flat.
I've seen the bullock stretch and strain,
And blink his bleary eye,
And the dog sit on the tucker box
Nine miles from Gundagai.

I've been jilted, jarred, and crossed in love,
And sandbagged in the dark,
And if a mountain fell on me,
I'd treat it as a lark.
It's when you've got your bullocks bogged,
That's the time you flog and cry,
And the dog sits on the tucker box,
Nine miles from Gundagai.

We've all got our little troubles
In life's hard, thorny way,
Some strike them in a motor car,
And others in a dray.
But when your dog and bullocks strike,
It ain't no apple pie,
And the dog sits on the tucker box,
Nine miles from Gundagai.

But that's all past and dead and gone,
And I've sold the team for meat,
And perhaps some day where I was bogged
There'll be an asphalt street.
The dog - ah! well, he got a bait,
And thought he'd like to die,
So I buried him in the tucker box,
Nine miles from Gundagai."

Moses claimed to be the 'original'author and his clai has been widely accepted. (See, for instance, Jas. Tyrell, Old Books, Old Friends, Old Sydney, Syd:1952, pp. 110-111.) Undoubtedly he was the author of the exact lines quoted

above, but it is extremely difficult to believe that he did not base them on some orally transmitted version of the incident, such as those quoted above on page three. (Cf. J.G.Castleton, "Gundagai's Dog," in Digest of World Reading, 1/3/1938).

Moses' lines themselves show slight signs of becoming traditional. The versions in, for instance, Will Lawson's Australian Bush Songs and Ballads, Syd: 1944 (p. 70) and in the Gundagai History of the Dog on the Tucker Box, embody sufficient changes in words and punctuation to make it highly unlikely that they were printed from memory rather than from Moses' text. And is the following "anonymous" ballad from Bill Bowyang's Bush Recitations (Brisbane: N.D. but c. 1940-44) a folk-version of Moses' lines, or is it rather an earlier folk ballad on which, or on a variant of which, Moses' verses were based?

"Nine Miles from Gundagai.

I'm used to punchin' bullock-teams
Across the hills and plains,
I've teamed outback these forty years
In blazin' droughts and rains,
I've lived a heap of troubles down
Without 'er bloomin' lie,
But I carn't forget what happened me
Nine miles from Gundagai.

'Twas gettin' dark, the team got bogged,
The axle snapped in two,
I lost me matches an' me pipe,
So what was I ter do?
The rain came on, 'twas bitter cold,
And hungry too was I,
And the dorg - he sat in the tucker-box,
Nine miles from Gundagai.

Some blokes I knows has stacks o' luck,
No matter 'ow they fall,
But there was I, 'Lor', luv a duck!'
No blessed luck at all.
I couldn't make a pot o' tea,
Nor get me trousers dry,
And the dorg sat in the tucker-box,
Nine miles from Gundagai.

I can forgive the blimkin' team,
  I can forgive the rain,
I can forgive the dark and cold,
  And go through it again,
I can forgive me rotten luck,
  But hang me till I die,
I carn't forgive that plurry dorg,
  Nine miles from Gundagai."

There were two other very popular ballads in which Gundagai figured prominently - On the Road to Gundagai and Flash Jack from Gundagai. Both are shearers' songs, versions of which may be seen in A.B.Paterson's Old Bush Songs, Syd: 1930 edn., pp. 26-31. Neither has anything to do with the dog and tucker-box incident, though it may be significant that in the first the shearers, bound for "Sydney town, with a three-spot cheque between us as wanted knocking down," conduct their spree instead at "Lazy Harry's" shanty on "the road to Gundagai! not five miles from Gundagai!"

Many still remember too the words of a popular song by Jack O'Hagan. It was published, with music, in An Album of Digger Songs (Allan & Co.) Melb:1922, p. 23:

"There's a scene that lingers in my memory
  Of an old bush home and friends I long to see -
That's why I am yearning - just to be returning
  Along the road to Gundagai.

Chorus:
  There's a track winding back
  To an old-fashioned shack,
    Along the road to Gundagai;
  Where the blue-gums are growing
  And the Murrumbidgee's flowing
    Beneath the sunny sky -
Where my daddy and mother are waiting for me,
And the pals of my childhood once more I will see -
  Then no more will I roam
  When I'm heading right for home
    Along the road to Gundagai."

Waltzing Matilda in America.

The following American version of Waltzing Matilda is copied from the Fireside Book of Folk Songs (ed. Margaret Bradford Boni with music arranged for the piano by Norman Lloyd, New York:1947). It shows how quickly a folk-song may change in its passage from singer to singer, even in the literate world of to-day. The text is introduced (p. 216) simply as "a nineteenth-century Australian bush song", without any acknowlddgement to Paterson. Perhaps it was transcribed from the singing of an American serviceman who had been in Australia during the second World War. At any rate the 'billy' has disappeared, the"squatter mounted on his thoroughbred" has become, somewhat ludicrously, a "stockman", and the explanatory notes are also often wide of the mark:

"Once a jolly swagman sat beside the billabong
Under the shade of a coulibah tree,
And he sang as he sat and waited by the billabong,
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'
And he sang as he sat and waited by the billabong,
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'

Down came a jumbuck to drink beside the billabong,
Up jumped the swagman and seized him with glee.
And he sang as he talked to that jumbuck in his tucker-bag,
'You'll come a -waltzing Matilda with me.'
And he sang as he talked etc..

Down came the stockman,riding on his thoroughbred,
Down came the troopers, one, two, three.
'Where's the jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag?
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'
'Where's the jolly jumbuck etc..'

Up jumped the swagman and plunged into the billabong,
'You'll never catch me alive,' cried he,
And his ghost may be heard as you ride beside the billabong,
'You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me.'
And his ghost may be heard etc..

"Note: swagman - a hobo; billabong - a water-hole in a dried-up river bed; waltzing Matilda - the bundle on a stick carried by a hobo; jumbuck - a small lamb; tuckerbag - knapsack."

Erin's Lovely Home.

Mrs. Mary Byrnes, a septuagenarian of Concord, New South Wales, was born in the same state, and of Australian parents, at Springside, a small farming hamlet in the hills near Orange. She remembers many eighteenth and nineteenth century British folk-songs but few indigenous Australian ones. Of the latter she says, "Of course I've heard them. The young chaps who went out west for a shearing season would bring them back; but we didn't sing them much in Springside." Mrs. Byrnes' version of the above ballad reads:

"When I was young and in my prime, my age being twenty-one,
I had become a servant unto a gentleman,
I served him true and honestly and very well 'tis known,
For with cruelty he banished me from Erin's lovely home.

The reason that he banished me, I mean to let you know,
Because I loved his daughter and she loved me also,
She had a weighty fortune but of riches I had none,
And that's the reason I was sent from Erin's lovely home.

It was in her father's garden all in the month of June,
Whilst receiving of the flowers all in their youthful bloom,
She said, 'My darling Willie, if along with me you'll roam,
We'll bid farewell to all our friends in Erin's lovely home.'

That very night I gave consent along with her to go,
To leave her father's dwelling, which proved my overthrow,
The night being bright with moonlight, we both set off alone,
Thinking we might get safe away from Erin's lovely home.

It's when we thought all danger past, her father did appear,
Which soon did separate me from the arms of my dear,
He marched me off to Honeford gaol in the County of Tyrone,
From which I was transported from Erin's lovely home.

When I received my sentence, it grieved my heart full sore;
Te leave my love behind me, it grieved me ten times more.
There's seven links upon my chain and every link a yea
Before I can return again to the arms of my dear.

But when the rout came to the gaol to take us all away,
My true love she ran up to me, and this to me did say,
'Bear up dear heart, be not afraid, for you I'll ne'er disown,
Come back and find me waiting still in Erin's lovely home.'"

Mrs. Byrnes commented, "I thought they used to sing 'Honan Gaol,' but I suppose 'Honeford' is right. The line, 'It's when we thought all danger past . . .' I think sometimes was sung, 'But to my great misfortune her father did appear.'"

Mrs. Byrne's version may be compared with the following from Somerset, collected by Cecil Sharp (Folk Songs from Somerset etc., Lond:1905, p. 25):

"When I was young and in my prime, my age just twenty-one,
Then I became a servant unto some gentleman.
I served him true and honest, and that is very well known,
But cruelly he banished me from Erin's lovely home.

'Twas in her father's garden, all in the month of June,
His daughter viewed those pretty flowers so freshly in their bloom.
She said: 'My dearest Johnnie, if with me you will roam,
We'll bid farewell to all our friends and Erin's lovely home.'

That very night I gave consent along with her to go,
Forth from her father's dwelling-place. It proved my overthrow.
The night shone fair with pale moonlight. We both set off alone,
A-thinking we'd got safe away from Erin's lovely home.

But when we came to Belfast, at the breaking of the day
And we were both aboard the ship and nearly now away;
Her father dragged me back to gaol i' the county of Tyrone,
And thence I was a banished man from Erin's lovely home

I heard my cruel sentence: it grieved my heart full sore,
But parting from my true Love was the heavier grief I bore.
Seven links there were upon my chain, and every link a year,
Before I could return again to see my dearest dear.

But when the rout came to the gaol to take us all away,
My true Love, she ran up to me, and thus to me did say:
'Bear up true heart, be not afraid, for it's you I'll ne'er disown,
Come back and find me waiting still in Erin's lovely home.'"

W. Roy Mackenzie prints another version of the song in his Ballads and Sea Songs of Nova Scotia, Harvard:1928. He comments (p. 117):

"This is probably an Irish song, but it has been current in many parts of England also, and during the sixties and seventies of the last century it appeared in many of the popular songsters published in the United States."

Van Diemen's Land and Botany Bay.

W. Roy Mackenzie prints the following version of Van Diemen's Land in his Ballads and Sea Songs of Nova Scotia with the comment:

> "This doleful ballad has been sung extensively in England, Scotland and Ireland, and the names of the dramatis personae, their provenience, and the scenes of their earlier activities, have been varied so as to domesticate the song practically wherever it happened to be current."

"O come all ye men of learning, and rambling boys beware!
It's when you go a-hunting, take your dog, your gun, your snare.
Think on lofty hills and mountains that are at your command,
And think on the tedious journey going to Van Dieman's Land.

O there was three men from Galloway town, Brown, Martin and Paul Jones.
They were three royal comrades; to their country they were known.
One night they were trepanded by the Keeper of the Strand,
And for seven long years transported unto Van Dieman's Land.

O Brown he had a sweetheart, Jean Summer was her name;
And she was sent to Dublin town for playing of her game.
Our captain fell in love with her and married her out of hand;
And the best of treatment she gave us going to Van Dieman's Land.

O the place we had to land upon was on some foreign shore;
The people gathered around us about five hundred score.
They yoked us up like horses and sold us out of hand;
They chained us to a chain, boys, to plough Van Dieman's Land.

O the place we had to sleep upon was built of sods and clay,
And rotten straw to lie upon and dare not a word to say.
The people gathered all round us saying, 'Slumber if you can,
And think on the Turks and tigers that's in Van Dieman's Land.'

O one night as I lay upon my bed I dreamed a pleasant dream;
I dreamed that I was in old Ireland down by a spurling stream,
With a handsome girl upon my side and she at my command,
When I woke quite broken-hearted all in Van Dieman's Land."

Versions, or at least fragments, of Van Diemen's Land are known by all the Australian folk-singers whom I have met, and whose memories go back to the last century. Among printed versions available in Australia are those in:

Joanna C. Colcord, Roll and Go: Songs of American Sailormen, New York:1924.
Colm O'Lochlainn, Irish Street Ballads etc., Lond:1939.
Charlotte M. Waters, An Economic History of England, Oxford:1925.
H.V.Morton, Book of the Martyrs of Tolpuddle, Lond:1934.
John Ashton, Modern Street Ballads, Lond:1888.
Cecil J. Sharp, English Folk Songs etc., 5 vols., Lond:1919 -.

There is also an H.M.V. recording of a Liverpool version sung by Ewan McColl.

Of Botany Bay there are almost as many extant versions as there are of Van Diemen's Land. The following is an American version sent by Dr. George Mackaness of Sydney to Miss Nancy Keesing with an accompanying note:

"This song was sung by Mr. Euclid I. Williams, now (1937) deceased, of Lower Waterford, Connecticut, U.S.A., at the age of 84 years. The last words of the closing stanza, after the fashion of many early folk-singers, were spoken, not sung.

"I was brought up in London town, a place I know so well,
Brought up by honest parents - the truth to you I'll tell -
Brought up by honest parents, and reared most carefully,
Till I a roving lad became, which proved my destiny.

Taken was my character, and I was sent to jail;
My father tried to save me, but nothing would prevail,
Till at the Court of Sessions, I heard the Judge did say,
'The jury's found you guilty boy, and you're going to Botany Bay.'

I saw my aged father there while standing at the bar,
Likewise my aged mother, who tore her long grey hair;
While tearing at those long grey locks, those words I heard her say,
'O Son, O Son, what have you done, that you're going to Botany Bay?'

As we sailed down the River St. Clair, on the twentieth day of May,
Every ship that we passed by, I heard the sailors say:
'There goes a load of jolly lads, for they'd something for to say,
'Tis for some crime or other, my boys, that they're going to Botany Bay.'

There is a girl in London Town, her name I know full well,
And if ever I gain my liberty, along with her I'll dwell,
And if ever I gain my liberty, I'll forsake all other girls,
I'll forsake all evil company, my boys, and adieu to New South Wales."

It is interesting that many of the transportation ballads contain memories of transportation to the North American cotton and tobacco colonies before the American War of Independence. In many versions of Van Diemen's

Land, for instance, the convicts are said to have been "ranked up like horses" upon landing, and "sold out of hand" to "the planters." Mrs. Byrnes did not remember Botany Bay very well, and she had no knowledge of transportation to America or of the existence of such a place as Charleston, Carolina; but when I read her Euclid Williams' version of Botany Bay she stopped me at the end of the third stanza with the words:

"No, that's wrong. That's the only verse I remember. We used to sing:

To see my aged father as trembling he stood there,
Likewise my tender mother, a-tearing of her hair:
The tearing of these old grey locks, it made the tears roll down:
'My son, my son, what have you done, to be sent to Charler's Town?'"

There are printed versions of the ballad in:

Colm O'Lochlainn, Irish Street Ballads etc..
John and Alan Lomax, Our Singing Country etc., New York:1949.
Cecil J. Sharp, English Folk Songs etc..
John Ashton, Modern Street Ballads.
Broadside, printed by Harkness, 121 Church St., Preston (Mitchell Library).

The Death of Bill Brown

This text has been chosen from A.L.Lloyd's Singing Englishman (pp. 49-50), because Lloyd's is a Marxist work concerned to stress the revolutionary aspects of British folk-song:

"Come all you gallant poaching lads,
That ramble through the midnight woods,
Pray listen to my tragic clown.
I'll sing you the death of poor Bill Brown.
I'll sing you the death of poor Bill Brown.
One stormy night as you shall hear,
All in the season of the year,
We went in the woods to catch a buck,
But ah, that night we had sad luck,
For they shot at Bill and his head was struck.
When we got to the wood our sport begun,
But I seen the keeper present his gun.
I called on Bill to climb the gate
And drop the buck, but it was too late,
For Bill was struck and he met his fate.
Then dying he fell upon the ground,
And in that state poor Bill I found.
And when he seen me he did cry:
Revenge my death! I will, said I,
I'll kill the sod you were caught by.
I knew the man as shot Bill Brown,
I knew him well and could tell his clown.
And to describe him in this song,
Black jacket he had and red waistcoat on,
I knew him plain and his name was Tom.
I dressed in black next night in time,
I got to the wood and the clock struck nine.
The reason was, and I tell you why,
To find that keeper I did go try,
Who shot my friend and he shall die.
I ranged the wood all over then,
I heard the steeple striking ten,
I heard a footstep on the green,
And I lay in the ditch lest I be seen.
For up come the moon and I seen Tom Breen.
Then I took my gun fast in my hand
Resolved to fire if Tom did stand,
Tom heard the noise and he turned him round;
I fired and brought him down to the ground.
My hand gave him his deep death wound.
Now revenge you see my hopes have crowned.
I've shot the man as shot Bill Brown.
I've shot the keeper, our enemy.

Farewell, Bill Brown, farewell to thee.
For I've crowned your hopes and your memory."

Caledonia and Glencoe

The following version of Caledonia was sung to me in 1953 by Mr. Joseph Cashmere of Sylvania, New South Wales, an octogenarian bushman from the Western Riverina. In a letter dated 11/10/1954, Mr. Cashmere wrote:

"Now something about the old chap who used to sing Caledonia. I knew him 65 years ago when I was 17 years of age, working on a Murrumbidgee Station. He was one of the many 'whalers' who used to travel up one side of the river and down the other, calling at stations at sundown for a 'handout' and 'lugging' the station-hands for tobacco. We used to know him as old 'Jimmy the Lag.' He said he was born in Scotland, and left there when 18 years of age what his other name was I never heard, or whether the song was made up about him or not. He was over 70 years of age when I knew him. He was a whisky drinker of renown, and seldom worked more than a week or two at any place. Some of the station hands if they happened to have a 'wee drap in the bottle,' would give him one so as to get him to sing. That was a long time ago, and the 'Murrumbidgee Whalers' are never seen now. I think that the Old Age Pension has kept them from trampin the river. I suppose that 'Jimmy the Lag' has carried his last swag in this world, and no body knows whether he ever gets a handout across the 'Silent River.'"

"My name is Jimmy Randell, in Glasgow I was born.
All through a sad misfortune, I was forced to leave in scorn.
From my home and occupation, I was forced to 'gang awa''
And leave those bonnie hills and dales of Caledonia.

It was early one morning before the break of day
There came a cruel turnkey, who unto us did say,
'Rise up you seven convicts, I warn you one and a',
'It is to-day you sail away from Caledonia.'

We slowly rose, put on our clothes, our hearts bowed down with grief;
Our friends they gathered round us but gave us no relief.
With heavy chains they bound us down for fear we'd gang awa'
And leave the bonnie hills of dear old Caledonia.

Farewell unto my father: he was the best of men.
Likewise unto my sister: her name was Catheren.
Her bonnie locks of auburn hair, I loved them that
she wore,
She far excels those haughty belles of Caledonia.

Farewell unto my mother: I was her darling son.
I hope they won't cast up to her the reckless life
I've run.
Heaven guard her and protect her now I am far awa',
Far from the place where I was born in Caledonia.

My sweetheart came to see me and bid me a goodbye.
She said to me, 'Cheer up, my man,' as in the cell I lie.
No more we'll roam together down by old 'Bromulah,'
The rolling seas divide us now from Caledonia.

I'm longing for the day to come when I'll again be free.
I'll lose no time in going home across the deep blue sea,
To see the loved ones whom I left as in the days of yore
And meet the sweetheart whom I love in Caledonia."

'Bromulah'in the sixth stanza is a corruption of Broomielaw, a quay on the Clyde built in 1688.

Another version of this ballad, given below for comparison, is printed in Ford's Vagabond Songs of Scotland, 1901, vol. II, pp. 243-244:

"My name is Jamie Raeburn, in Glasgow I was born,
My place and habitation I'm forced to leave with scorn;
From my place and habitation I now must gang awa',
Far frae the bonnie hills and dales of Caledonia.

'Twas early one morning, just by the break of day,
I overheard the turnkey, who unto us did say -
'Arise ye hapless convicts, arise ye ane and a',
This is the day ye are to stray from Caledonia.

We all arose, put on our clothes, our hearts were full
of grief,
Our friends they a' stood round the coach, could grant
us no relief;
Our friends they a' stood round the coach, their hearts
were broke in twa',
To see us leave the bonnie braes of Caledonia.

Fareweel, my aged mother, I'm vexed for what I've done,
I hope none will upcast to you the race that I have run;
I hope you'll be provided for when I am far awa',
Far from the bonnie hills and dales of Caledonia.

Fareweel, my honoured father, he is the best of men,
And likewise my own sweetheart, it's Catherine is her name;
Nae mair we'll walk by Clyde's clear stream, nor by the Broomielaw,
For I must leave the hills and dales of Caledonia.

If e'er we chance to meet again I hope 'twill be above,
Where hallelujahs will be sung to him who reigns in love;
Nae earthly judge shall judge us then, but He who rules us a';
Fareweel, ye bonnie hills and dales of Caledonia."

Ford writes:

"The above was long a popular street song, all over Scotland, and sold readily in penny sheet form. The hero of the verses, in whose mouth the words are put, I recently learned on enquiry, through the columns of the Glasgow Evening Times, was a baker to trade, who was sentenced to banishment for theft, more than sixty years ago. His sweetheart, Catherine Chandlier, thus told the story of his misfortunes:- 'We were parted at ten o'clock, and Jamie was in the police office at twenty minutes past ten. Going home, he met an acquaintance of his boyhood, who took him in to treat him for auld langsyne. Scarcely had they entered when the detectives appeared and apprehended them. Searched, the stolen property was found. They were tried and banished for life to Botany Bay. Jamie was innocent as the unborn babe, but his heartless companion spoke not a word of his innocence.'"

On this note of Ford's, Gavin Greig comments in his Folk-Songs of the North-East: Articles Contributed to the 'Buchan Observer' from December, 1907, to September 1909 (XXXVI, pp. 1-2):

"My friend, Mr. John Ord, Superintendent of the Glasgow Detective Department, had all the criminal records from 1833 to the present time searched, and failed to find any person of the name of James Raeburn who had been banished from Glasgow for theft or any other crime during

that period. A neighbour who sang the song to me said she learned it more than thirty years ago from a young man whose grandmother knew Jamie, and that forgery was the crime for which he was banished - all which just shows how difficult it is to establish anything which depends on tradition."

Following is the version of Glencoe sung to me in 1954 by Mrs. Mary Byrnes (see Appendix III, p. 9 supra):

"As I was out walking one evening of late
Where Flora' gay mantle the scenes decorate,
I carelessly wandered, where I did not know,
To the banks of a fountain that lies in Glencoe.

When one that approached me . . .
. . . a lassie as fair as the sun,
While ribbons and tassels all round her did flow,
Where once lived Macdonald the pride of Glencoe.

I said, 'My dear lassie your enchanting smile
Uncommon sweet affection on you would beguile;
If your kind affection on me you'd bestow,
You'd bless the happy hour that you roamed in Glencoe.'

She said, 'My dear laddie your suit I'll disdain,
For I once had a lover, young Donald by name;
He's gone to the wars about seven years ago,
And a maid I'll remain till he returns to Glencoe.'

'Perhaps your young Donald did you disdain,
And placed his affection on some foreign dame;
Or he might have forgotten, and you did not know,
The sweet, lovely lassie he left in Glencoe.'

'My Donald's true promise shall never depart,
For there's love, truth and honour to be found in his heart.'
'Perhaps your young Donald, it may happen so -
The lad you love dearly, perhaps he lies low.'

'My Donald's true virtue was tried on the field,
With his gallant ancestors disdaining to yield.
The French and the Spaniards he will soon overthrow,
And in splendour he'll return to my arms in Glencoe.'

In finding her constant I pulled out a glove
Which in parting she gave me as a token of love.
She hung on my breast while the tears overflow -
She said, 'You're my Donald returned to Glencoe.'

'Cheer up, my dear Flora, your troubles are o'er.
Whilst life does remain we will part never more.
The storms of the wars at a distance may blow,
But we'll live in peace and content, and reside in
Glencoe.'"

Ford (Vagabond Songs of Scotland, 1901, Vol. II, (pp. 247-248) writes of his version of the ballad:

"When recently I appealed to the older readers of the People's Journal for copies of such wandering songs and ballads as were popular in their youth and still lingered in their memory, I received, of course, many duplicates of the more widely known pieces. But of few ballads did so many copies come to hand, and from such widely separated parties, as this one of 'Donald and Glencoe.' Mr. R. Mutch, Ellon, Aberdeenshire, says he learned it when he was a hired laddie in the Parish of Udny, upwards of fifty years ago, and it was then a popular song in that district. Correspondents, south and west, furnishing almost identical versions, tell a similar story."

"As I was a-walking one evening of late
Where Flora's gay mantle the fields decorate,
I carelessly wandered, where I did not know,
On the banks of a fountain that lies in Glencoe.

Like her whom the prize of Mount Ida had won,
There approached me a lassie as bright as the sun;
The ribbons and tartans around her did flow,
That once graced Macdonald, the pride of Glencoe.

With courage undaunted to her I drew nigh,
The red rose and lily on her cheek seemed to vie;
I asked her her name, and how far she'd to go.
'Young man,' she replied, 'I am bound for Glencoe.'

I said, 'My dear lassie, your enchanting sweet smile
And comely fair features my heart does beguile;
If your young affections on me you'll bestow,
You'll aye bless the hour that we met in Glencoe.'

'Young man,' she made answer, 'your love I disdain;
I once had a sweetheart, young Donald by name;
He went to the wars nearly ten years ago,
And a maid I'll remain till he comes to Glencoe.'

'Perhaps your young Donald regards not your name,
But has placed his affections on some foreign dame;
And may have forgotten, for aught that you know,
The lovely young lassie he left in Glencoe.'

'My Donald's true valour when tried in the field,
Like his gallant ancestors, disdaining to yield,
The Spaniards and French he will soon overthrow,
And in splendour return to my arms in Glencoe.'

'The power of the French, love, is hard to pull down,
They have beat many heroes of fame and renown;
And with your young Donald it may happen so -
The man you love dearly perchance is laid low.'

'My Donald can ne'er from his promise depart,
For love, truth, and honour abound in his heart;
But should I ne'er see him I single will go,
And mourn for my Donald, the pride of Glencoe.'

Now proving her constant, I pulled out a glove,
Which at parting she gave me in token of love;
She flew to my breast, while the tears down did flow,
Crying, 'You're my dear Donald, returned to Glencoe.'

'Yes, yes, my dear Flora, your sorrows are o'er,
While life does remain, we will part never more;
The rude blasts of war at a distance may blow,
But in peace and content we'll abide in Glencoe.'"

Castle Gardens

This is one of several songs like Erin's Lovely Home (see Appendix III, p. 9 supra) sung to me by Mrs. Byrnes. The basic theme of all of them is stated succintly in the fragment, also remembered by the same singer:

"The grey shades of poverty
Darkened our door.
I was forced to leave Ireland
Because I was poor."

Castle Garden (sing.), now known as Battery Park, is situated at the southern extremity of Manhattan Island. It was the principal American immigrant reception depot from 1855 until it was replaced by Ellis Island in 1892.

"Hurrah my boys, the sails are set and the winds are blowing fair;
We're bound for Castle Gardens - in a few days we'll be there.
It's hard to part from those you love, and it's in my heart I know
We're leaving dear old Ireland where the dear little shamrocks grow.

I bid farewell to relations and friends both one and all.
My lot is in America to rise or to fall:
For alas! I am convicted, and I am forced to go
And leave the shabbit island where the dear little shamrocks grow.

We owed the landlord two years' rent, and I wished we owed him more
The day the bully bailiff put the notice on the door.
My poor old aged mother, 'twould break her heart I know,
To leave the house my father built full fifty odd year ago.

She waited for a little while: she fretted and she died.
My only consolation she sleeps by my fathers side.
Both night and day went for to pray wherever we may roam,
And leave the shabbit island where the dear little shamrocks grow.

Scotland may boast of the thistle and England of the rose,
But give to me old Ireland where the dear little shamrock grows;
And if you go the boys and girls will take you by the hand,
And treat you all with whiskey too in that dear old Paddy's land."

Escape of the Fenians

This ballad is particularly interesting for several reasons. It illustrates the connection between Irish nationalism in Australia and the growth of Australian nationalism. It is little known outside Western Australia. It is almost certainly the last of the long line of folk-songs concerned with transportation; and it shows that the tradition of town street-ballad composition and singing still retained some vitality, even in Australia, as late as 1876.

Western Australia received convicts from Britain from 1850 till 1868. Towards the end of the period a number of Fenians were transported, among them John Boyle O'Reilly who later gained some reputation as a literary man in Boston, Massachusetts. The prisoners were incarcerated in the gaol "on the hill" near the entrance to Fremantle Harbour. In April 1876, on the annual Regatta Day when many police officials were enjoying the festivities at Perth twelve miles up the Swan River, O'Reilly and five other leading Fenians were whisked away to freedom by brother conspirators aboard the American whaler Catalpa, out of New Bedford. The authorities hastily commissioned the S.S.Georgette which, with a party of armed pensioners aboard, overhauled the Catalpa off Fremantle. The Georgette's commander decided, however, that it would be impolitic to fire on the American flag, and so the Fenians made good their escape.

J.T.Reilly gives some details of the incident in his Reminiscences of Fifty Years' Residence in Western Australia, Perth:1903, p. 142 ff. He quotes from the Fremantle Herald of 22/4/1876:

> "The general feeling was clearly one of pleasure that the pursuit had so far been unsuccessful. This arose chiefly out of the popular impression that the Fenian convicts are pol-

itical prisoners, convicted and punished for offences against a government, not against society, and from the sympathy that the public everywhere displays towards the weak in a contest against the strong. Never were the people of Fremantle so upset or so excited. Business was almost entirely suspended, and the imposing Masonic ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new Fremantle Hall, which was to take place at 4 o'clock was almost forgotten, and attracted but little, if any attention . . ."

George Mackaness also deals with the incident in his Lags and Leg-Irons, Syd:1944.

The following version of the ballad was heard being sung in a Fremantle waterside hotel by Mr. Victor Courtney, editor of the Perth Sunday Times, when he was a young cadet reporter:

"A noble whale ship and commander
Called the Catalpa, they say,
Came out to Western Australia
And took six poor Fenians away.

Chorus: So come all you screw warders and gaolers,
Remember Perth regatta day;
Take care of the rest of your Fenians,
Or the Yankees will steal them away.

Seven long years had they served here
And seven long more had to stay,
For defending their country, Ould Ireland,
For that they were banished away.

You kept them in Western Australia
Till their hair began to turn grey,
When a Yank from the states of America
Came out here and stole them away.

Now all the Perth boats were a-racing,
And making short tacks for the spot;
But the Yankee she tacked into Fremantle,
And took the best prize of the lot.

The Georgette, armed with bold warriors,
Went out the poor Yanks to arrest;
But she hoisted her star-spangled banner,
Saying, 'You'll not board me, I guess.'

So remember those six Fenians colonial
And sing o'er these few verses with skill,
And remember the Yankees that stole them,
And the home that they left on the hill.

Now they've landed safe in America,
And there they'll be able to cry,
'Heist up the green flag and shamrock,
Hurrah for Ould Ireland we'll die."

"Frank the Poet" and Irish-Australian Ballads.

The best-known ballads, authorship of which may be fairly confidently attributed to Francis Macnamara, are Moreton Bay or the Convict's Lament, Seizure of the Cyprus Brig in Recherche Bay, and the Convict's Tour to Hell. Versions of the first are printed in:

Will Lawson (ed.), Australian Bush Songs and Ballads, Syd:1944.
Jack Bradshaw, Highway Robbery under Arms etc., Syd: N.D.
G.C.Ingleton, True Patriots All, Syd;:1952.
John Manifold, Bandicoot Ballads, Brisbane:1949 -
(These are a series of broadsheets with music)

Good versions of the Seizure of the Cyprus and of the Convict's Tour to Hell are printed by Ingleton. Captain Harry O'May of Bellerive, Tasmania, has a fragmentary version of the former. The Sydney Gazette of 8/2/1840 printed another set of verses by Macnamara, A Dialogue between Two Hibernians in Botany Bay. There are several manuscript versions of these and other verses attributed to Macnamara in the Mitchell Library. One such MS marked Don Donall, 1932, (Unbound Pamphlet file A 821), reads as follows:

Laboring with the Hoe

(Composed by Frank Macnamara, better known as Frank the Poet)

"I was convicted by the laws of Englands hostile crown
Conveyed across those swelling seas in slavery's fettered bound
For ever banished from that shore where love and friendship grow
That loss of freedom to deplore and work the laboring hoe.

Despised, rejected and oppressed in tattered rags I'm clad
What anguish fills my aching breast and almost drives me mad
When I hear the settlers threatening voice say 'Arise! to labor go,
Take scourging convicts for your choice or work the labouring hoe.

Growing weary from compulsive toil beneath the beneath the noon tide sun
While drops of sweat bedew the soil my task remains undone
I'm flogged for wilful negligence or the tyrants call it so
Ah what a doleful recompense for laboring with the hoe.

Behold yon lofty woodbine hills where the rose in the morning shines
Those crystal brooks that so distil and mingle through those vines
There seems to be no pleasure gained they but augment my woe
Whilst here an outcast doomed to live and work the laboring hoe.

You generous sons of Erins Isle whose heart for glory burns
Pity a wretched exile whose long lost country mourns
Restore me heaven to liberty whilst I lie here below
Untie that clue of bondage and release me from the hoe.'

Easily the most popular of Irish-rebel ballads which survived in Australia was Bourke's Dream. Composed about the events of 1798 it was still popular in the bush a hundre years later and is still sung by Mrs. Byrnes and other surviving folk-singers. I have not been able to find a version in any of the Irish ballad collections available in Australia, and the song was not known to Dr. T.J. Kiernan, late Irish Ambassador to Australia. It therefore seems possible that the ballad was actually composed here. The style and versification are like Macnamara's, but this is only to say that they are equally like the general Irish folk-balladist's manner of a century and more ago. (Cf.

e.g. P.W.Joyce, Old Irish Folk Music and Songs, Dublin: 1909, "Mackenna's Dream"; and R.R.Madden, Literary Remains of the United Irishmen of '98, Dublin:1846, "Heroes of '98".)

The following version, with its reference to Fenianism and other later accretions, is from A.B.Paterson's Old Bush Songs:

"Lonely and sadly one night in November
I laid down my weary head in search of repose
On my wallet of straw, which I long shall remember;
Tired and weary I fell into a doze.
Tired from working hard
Down in the labour yard,
Night brought relief to my sad, aching brain.
Locked in my prison cell,
Surely an earthly hell,
I fell asleep and began for to dream.

I dreamt that I stood on the green fields of Erin,
In joyous meditation that victory was won.
Surrounded by comrades, no enemy fearing,
'Stand,' was the cry, 'every man to his gun.'
On came the Saxons then,
Fighting our Fenian men,
Soon they'll reel back from our piked volunteers.
Loud was the fight and shrill,
Wexford and Vinegar Hill,
Three cheers for Father Murphy and the bold cavaliers.

I dreamt that I saw our gallant commander
Seated on his charger in gorgeous array.
He wore green trimmed with gold and a bright shining sabre
On which sunbeams of Liberty shone brightly that day.
'On,' was the battle cry,
'Conquer this day or die,
Sons of Hibernia! fight for Liberty!
Show neither fear nor dread,
Strike at the foeman's head,
Cut down horse, foot, and artillery!'

I dreamt that the night was quickly advancing,
I saw the dead and dying on the green crimson plain.
Comrades I once knew well in death's sleep reposing,
Friends that I once loved but shall ne'er see again.
The green flag was waving high
Under the bright blue sky,
And each man was singing most gloriously.
'Come from your prison, Bourke,
We Irishmen have done our work,
God has been with us, and old Ireland is free.'

I dreamt I was homeward, back over the mountain track,
With joy my mother fainted and gave a loud scream.
With the shock I awoke, just as the day had broke,
And found myself an exile, and 'twas all but a dream."

Billy Barlow and Paddy Malone

Billy Barlow was probably written by Benjamin Pitt Griffin of Maitland and Sydney. For discussion of the ancestry and authorship of the ballad, see my article Jemmy Green and Billy Barlow in Meanjin 2/1955, and Dr. Colin Roderick's Jemmy Green in Australia, Syd:1955. The following is the original text printed in the Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser, 2/9/1843:

"When I was at home I was down on my luck,
And I yearnt a poor living by drawing a truck;
But old aunt died and left me a thousand - 'Oh, oh,
'I'll start on my travels,' said Billy Barlow.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
So off to Australia came Billy Barlow.

When to Sydney I got, there a merchant I met,
Who said he could 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.'
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
A gentleman settler was Billy Barlow.

So I got my supplies, and I gave him my bill,
And for New England started, my pockets to fill;
But by bishrangers met, with my traps they made free,
Took my horse, and left Billy bailed up to a tree.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
I shall die of starvation, thought Billy Barlow.

At last I got loose, and I walked on my way;
A constable came up, and to me did say,
'Are you free?' Says I 'Yes, to be sure, don't you know?'
And I handed my card, 'Mr. William Barlow.'
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
He said, 'That's all gammon,' to Billy Barlow.

Then he put on the handcuffs, and brought me away
Right back down to Maitland, before Mr. Day;
When I said I was free, why the J.P. replied,
'I must send you down to be i-dentified.'
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
So to Sydney once more went poor Billy Barlow.

They at last let me go, and I then did repair
For my station once more, and at length I got there;
But a few days before, the blacks, you must know,
Had spear'd all the cattle of Billy Barlow.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
'It's a beautiful country,' said Billy Barlow.

And for nine months before, no rain there had been,
So the devil a blade of grass could be seen;
And one third of my wethers the scab they had got,
And the other two thirds had just died of the rot.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
'I shall soon be a settler,' said Billy Barlow.

And the matter to mend, now my bill was near due,
So I wrote to my friend, and just asked to renew;
He replied he was sorry he couldn't, because
The bill had passed into Tom Burdekin's claws.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
'But perhaps he'll renew it,' said Billy Barlow.

I applied; to renew it he was quite content,
If secured, and allowed just 300 per cent;
But as I couldn't do it, Carr, Rodgers & Co.,
Soon sent up a summons for Billy Barlow.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
They soon settled the business of Billy Barlow.

For a month or six weeks I stewed over my loss,
And a tall man rode up one day on a black horse;
He asked, 'Don't you know me?' I answered him 'No.'
'Why,' says he, 'My name's Kingsmill. How are you Barlow?'
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
He'd got 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 thrown in.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
'I'll go back to England,' said Billy Barlow.

My sheep being sold, and my money all gone,
Oh! I wandered about then quite sad and forlorn,
How I managed to live, it would shock you to know,
And as thin as a lath got poor Billy Barlow.
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
Quite down on his luck was poor Billy Barlow.

And in a few weeks more the sheriff, you see,
Sent the 'tall man on horseback' once more unto me,
Having got all he could by a writ of fi.fa.,
By way of a change he'd brought up a ca.sa..
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
He seized on the body of 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.

Then once more I got free, but in poverty's toil;
I've no 'cattle for salting,' no 'sheep for to boil';
I can't get a job - though to any I'd stoop,
If 'twas only the making of 'portable soup.'
Oh dear, lackaday, oh!
Pray give some employment to Billy Barlow.

But there's still a 'spec' left may set me on my stumps,
If a wife I could get with a few of the dumps;
So if any lass here has 'ten thousand' or so,
She can just drop a line addressed 'Mr. Barlow.'
Oh dear, lackaday, oh;
The dear angel shall be 'Mrs. William Barlow.'"

The ballad was reprinted by R. Howitt in his Impressions of Australia Felix etc., Lond:1845. Howitt wrote that:

> "the following song, written by a gentleman of Maitland, and sung in Australia with abundant mirth, is so real a history, if not of Billy Barlow, of many a wiser man . . . that its reprint in England will explain much of the juggling played off on newly arrived emigrants by the older colonists . . ."

Versions of the ballad appeared also in:

J.C.Byrne, Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847, 2 vols., Lond:1848.
The Steckwhip, 20/11/1875.
James Bonwick, Romance of the Wool Trade, Lond:1887.
A.B.Paterson, Old Bush Songs, Syd:1905 (and in subsequent editions).
Will Lawson, Australian Bush Songs and Ballads, Syd: 1944.

Following is the Mitchell Library's 'original' MS version of Paddy Malone:

"Oh my name's Pat Malone 'twas in sweet Tipperary,
I don't know what 'tis now, I'm so bothered Och Hone,
The girls that I've danced wid light hearted and airy,
Would hardly remember poor Paddy Malone.
It's twelve months or so since our ship she cast anchor
In happy Australia the immigrants' home,
From that day to this there's been trouble and canker,
And grief and vexation for Paddy Malone.
Musha, Paddy Malone; Arrah, Paddy Malone,
'Twas a thief of an agent that coax'd you from home.

Wid a man called a Squatter I soon got a place sure,
He'd a beard like a goat, and such whiskers, Och, hone
And he said as he look'd thro' the hair on his face su
That he liked the appearance of Paddy Malone.
So he hir'd me at once to go up to his station,
Say'n abroad in the bush, you'll find yourself at home
Faix, I like'd the proposal, so without hesitation,
Sign'd my name wid a X crass that spells Paddy Malone.
Musha, Paddy Malone, you're no writer Mavrone,
But you can leave your mark my brave Paddy Malone.

SO I herded the sheep in the bush as he calle'd it,
'Twas no bush at all, but a mighty big wood,
Wid auld ancient trees that were small bushes one time
A long time ago I suppose 'fore the flood.
So to find out this big bush one day I went farther,
The trees grew so thick I couldn't find it Och hone,
I turned to come back, but that was much harder
So bother'd and lost was poor Paddy Malone.
Poor Paddy Malone thro' the wild bush did roam,
What a babe in the wood was poor Paddy Malone.

I was soon overcome then wid grief and vaxation,
So I campe'd you must know by the side of a log,
I was found the next day, by a man from the station,
I cooied and roar'd like a bull in a bog,
Says the master that day to me, Pat where's the sheep no
Faith says I, I don't know, I see one here at home,
Sure he took the hint and kick'd up a big row,
And said, he'd stop the wages of Paddy Malone.
Now Paddy Malone, you're no shepherd you'll own,
So we'll try you at bullocks, brave Paddy Malone.

Oh to see me dressed out wid my team and my dray too,
My whip like a flail and such gayters you'd own,
The bullocks as they eye'd me, the brutes seem'd to say now,
Do your best Paddy, we're blessed if we'll go.
Gee Redman says I, Come hither Damper,
Whoop Blackbird and Magpie, Gee up there Wallone,
The brutes they turn'd short and away they did scamper,
And head over heels they pitched Paddy Malone.
Oh Paddy Malone, sure you've seen Bulls at home,
But the Bulls of Australia, Cow Paddy Malone.

I was found the next day where bullocks had threw me,
By a man passing by, upon hearing me groan.
After wiping the mud from my face then he knew me,
Why, says he, your name's Paddy, yes Paddy Malone.
Oh! murder says I, you're an Angel sent down sure,
Says he no I'm not, but a friend of your own,
So wid his persuasion I started for town sure,
And you see now before you poor Paddy Malone.
Arrah, Paddy Malone, your've been cheated Malone,
Bad luck to that agent that coax'd you from home."

Hugh Anderson quotes (Colonial Ballads, Ferntree Gully:1955, pp. 129-131) another version which was published in The Australian Melodist No. 4 (1880), and Paterson prints another in his Old Bush Songs. Paddy Malone is so close in style and spirit to Barney O'Keefe as to suggest the possibility that the two songs had a common author, who may have been Benjamin Griffin, the writer of Billy Barlow in Australia. (Cf. my article Jemmy Green and Billy Barlow in Australia in Meanjin, 2/1955, and Dr. Colin Roderick's Jemmy Green in Australia, Syd:1955, which gives a text of Barney O'Keefe.)

Flash Songs

For purposes of comparison snatches of two other flash songs may be given here. They are quoted in two passages from Pierce Egan, Finish to the Adventures of Tom, Jerry, and Logic in Their Pursuits through Life in and out of London, Lond:1881:

> "He [Jack Doublehead] was of a lively turn of mind, fond of company, a Free and Easy his delight, and no 'gay boy of the village' could throw off a flash chaunt with more naivete than Jack Doublehead:-
>
> It was on Easter Monday, springtime of the year,
> When Rolling Tom, the drover, to Smithfield did repair;
> His togs were tight and clever, his dogs were staunch and free,
> With a blue bird's eye about his squeeze, and his garters below his knee.
> Fall-de-dal-de-de . . . ." [p. 168]

> "Tom Open-Mouth, the chaunter, commenced the following old flash song, at the request of the lady patroness:-
>
> Come all you rolling kiddy boys, that in London does abound,
> If you wants to see a bit of life, go to the Bull in the Pound; $
> 'Tis there you'll see Pol, Bet, and Sal, with many other Flames,
> And 'pitch and hustle,' 'ring the bull', and lots of fancy games.
> With my fal de lal, fal de lal, de di do.'
>
> $ A well-known flash house fifty years ago, denominated the 'Bull in trouble,'' and contiguous to Bagnigge Wells Tea Gardens. A place of great resort at that period, and for several years afterwards, by the rolling kiddies of the old school, their girls, family people, &c.. The 'Bull in Trouble' has been long since razed to the ground, and, on the old site, a capital new house has been erected, and called The Union." [p. 238.]

"The Inimitable Thatcher"

The popularity of Thatcher's songs among bushmen is suggested by the following paragraph from 'Giles Seagram' (H.J.Driscoll), Bushmen All, Adel:1908, p. 230. A bush worker called Pat McDermott is bargaining with a travelling hawker called Dudley, who says to him:

> "Here you are, classics every one. 'Burke's Speeches,' hurrah for old Ireland. There you have politics, patriotism and political economy. Four bob. Dalton's 'Atomic Theory' - that's science up to date, that is two half-crowns. Ah, here we are, 'Night Thoughts,' by Young - that's poetry, beats old Thatcher all to pot, comes next to Byron does that, and only three and six. . ."

M.J.Conlon's scrap-book (Nat. Lib.) contains variant 'anonymous' versions of both the Thatcher songs quoted in full in Chapter VI, The Bond Street Swell and Where's Your Licence? Of the former only the last stanza remains from a number of missing pages. In his Old Australian Bush Ballads, Melb:1951, Vance Palmer gives a charming traditional folk-song (the Song of Ballarat), which obviously derived from the following original in Thatcher's Colonial Minstrel: New Collection of Songs etc Melb:1864:

"A young man left his native shores,
For trade was bad at home;
To seek his fortune in this land,
He crossed the briny foam:
And when he went to Ballarat,
It put him in a glow,
To hear the sound of the windlasses,
And the cry 'look out below.'

Wherever he turned his wondering eyes,
Great wealth he did behold -
And peace and plenty hand in hand,
By the magic power of gold;
Quoth he, as I am young and strong,
To the diggings I will go,
For I like the sound of the windlasses,
And the cry 'look out below.'

Amongst the rest he took his chance,
And his luck at first was vile;
But he still resolved to persevere,
And at length he made his pile.
So says he I'll take my passage,
And home again I'll go.
And I'll say farewell to the windlasses,
And the cry 'look out below.'

Arrived in London once again,
His gold he freely spent,
And into every gaiety
And dissipation went.
But pleasure, if prolonged too much,
Oft causes pain, you know,
And he missed the sound of the windlasses,
And the cry 'look out below.'

And thus he reasoned with himself -
Oh, why did I return?
For the diggers' independent life
I now begin to yearn.
Here purse-proud lords the poor oppress,
But there it is not so;
Give me the sound of the windlasses,
And the cry 'look out below.'

So he started for this land again,
With a charming little wife;
And he finds there's nothing comes up to
A jolly digger's life.
Ask him if he'll go back again,
He'll quickly answer, no;
For he loves the sound of the windlasses,
And the cry 'look out below.'"

Another most interesting example of the way in which Thatcher's songs were taken up by the 'folk' is provided by Dick Briggs. This ballad, which has nothing to do with gold-digging, also shows how strongly the up-country ethos influenced the minds of the Gold Rush immigrants. The following original version is from the Thatcher MSS (P.L.V.):

"Air - King of the Cannibal Islands

Dick Briggs a wealthy farmer's son
To England lately took a run
To see his friends and have some fun
He'd been five years in Australia.
Arrived in London off he went
To his native village down in Kent
For in that pleasant spot he meant
That lots of his rhino should be spent
No splendid fine clothes on had he
But a jumper & boots up to the knee
With a dirty hat of cabbage tree
The costume of Australia.

Chorus: So if you ever take a run
To England for a bit of fun
You're safe to astonish everyone
With the queer ways of Australia.

To the farm he went in this array
And his sister came out and did say
We don't want anything to-day
To her brother from Australia.
Says he what don't you know poor Dick
She recognised him pretty quick
And the family all rushed out slick
And his dad embraced him like a brick
There was joy and feasting there that night
Dick was quite a welcome sight
For of course they hailed him with great delight
The wanderer from Australia.

Now instead a glass of home brewed ale
Every morning he'd not fail
To sing out for a gin cocktail
A favourite drink in Australia.
He talked away at a fearful rate
Of nobblers and of brandy straight
On spiders too he would dilate
And astonish his poor sister Kate
He kissed the buxom servant maid
Nice pranks I tell you he played
Says he, 'My dear don't be afraid
It's a way we've got in Australia.'

The blessed cattle on the farm
Regarded him with great alarm
His swearing acted like a charm
  He gave 'em a touch of Australia.
He talked bullock & no flies
And when he blessed poor Strawberry's eyes
They regarded him with great surprise
For out of them he took a rise
'Fie fie' his mother cried one day
'What dreadful wicked words you say'
Says he 'Lor mother that's the way
  We wake 'em up in Australia.

To a great fox hunt he went one day
And on horseback made a grand display
And in his red coat looked so gay
  So different to Australia.
The huntsman said with a joyous brow
There's music for you listen now
Says Dick I hear no music I vow
For those dashed dogs make such a row
Fox-hunting's pretty sport it's true
But I'd sooner I declare to you
Run down an old man kangaroo
  Or a flying doe in Australia.

The winter he found dreadful cold
And instead of rising early I'm told
Till ten o'clock in the blankets rolled
  And wished himself in Australia
He couldn't stand the frost and snow
My word it made him shiver so
Out of doors he wouldn't go
But sit at the fire to get in a glow
The summer came and his blood was thinned
But he couldn't exist without a hot wind
And he grumbled because his nose wasn't skinned
  By the glaring sun (Like it used to be) of Australia."

Thirty years or so later Dick Briggs had become just a typical 'anonymous' bush song, especially well known in North Queensland. In the following version two stanzas have been dropped and a third - that on Australian drinking habits - 're-created' to the point where it is no longer recognisable. The following passage is quoted from A.J.Vogan, The Black Police - A Story of Modern

Australia, Lond:1890, pp. 137-139:

"Down below [on a Queensland coastal ship], an impromptu concert is being given by a cluster of young men round the piano at the end of the saloon, and the performers, who are mostly smoking, turn round constantly for refreshments to the interesting collection of bottle and glasses on the table behind them. A grand finale chorus, composed of a conglomeration of 'Ballyhoo' and 'Finnegan's Wake,' is just coming to a close, and the gifted accompanist, being only six bars behind the leading tenor, is hurrying up to be 'in at the death' when Dr. Junelle's entrance is noticed. . . . Striking a few preliminary chords to silence the 'bhoys' who are all shouting for different songs, the doctor forthwith 'trates' the company to the following thoroughly 'up country' song, well known in Northern Queensland, which goes to the ancient air of 'The King of the Cannibal Islands.'

"Dick Briggs, a wealthy farmer's son,
To England lately took a run,
To see his friends, and have some fun,
For he'd been ten years in Australia.
Arrived in England, off he went
To his native village down in Kent, -
'Twas there his father drew his rent,
And many happy days he'd spent.
No splendid fine clothes on had he
But 'jumper'n boots up to the knee,
With dirty Sydney 'cabbage-tree,' -
The costume of Australia.

Chorus: Now when a fellow takes a run
To England for a bit of fun,
He's sure to 'stonish every one
With the queer ways of Australia.

Now Dick went home in this array;
His sister came out and did say,
'No, we don't want anything to-day,'
To her brother from Australia.
Cried he, 'Oh, don't you know poor Dick?'
They recognized him precious quick;
The 'old man' hugged him like a brick.
And there was feasting there that night,
For Richard was a welcome sight,
For each one hailed with great delight
The wanderer from Australia.

The blessed cattle on the farm
Regarded Dick with great alarm;
His swearing acted like a charm
When he gave them a 'touch' of Australia.
He could talk 'bullock' and 'no flies,'
And when he bless'd poor Strawberry's eyes,
She looked at him with great surprise
As out of her 'he took a rise.'
'Fie, fie,' his mother said one day,
'What naughty, wicked words you say.'
'Bless you, mother, that's the way
We wake 'em up in Australia.'

Dick went to London for a spree,
And got drunk there most gloriously;
He gave them a touch of 'Coo-oo-ee!'
The bush cry of Australia.
He took two ladies to the play,
Both so serene, in dresses gay;
He had champagne brought on a tray
And said, 'Now girls, come fire away.'
They drank till they could drink no more,
And then they both fell on the floor.
Cried Dick, as he surveyed them o'er,
'You wouldn't do for Australia.'"

This ballad reminds one of such bar stories as that which ends with an English Master of the Hunt rebuking his Australian guest with the words, "When we descry the fox it is our custom to cry 'Tally-ho! tally-ho!' - not 'There goes the b----- b------!' Like many other ballads of the Gold Rush period, Dick Briggs certainly shows that the nationalist feeling which gives rise to such stories was already strong a hundred years ago.

Anti-Police and Anti-Military Songs on the Goldfields

There are dozens of such songs scattered through the song-books of the 'fifties and later. A few of the more interesting specimens are:

Life of a Warden (Thatcher's Colonial Minstrel etc., Melb:1864)
Laying Information (Thatcher's Colonial Songster etc., Melb:1864)
Song of the Trap (ibid..)
Trap! Trap! Trap! (Melbourne Vocalist etc., No. 8, new series, Melb. & Castlemaine:1855)
Justice on the Mines (Native Companion Songster, Brisbane:1889)
Coming down the Flat (Barry O'Neill Songster etc., Melb:N.D.)

Two other samples, not now available in published form, will be given here. The first is a folk-version of a Thatcher song, reproduced verbatim from M.J.Conlon's scrapbook, now in the National Library. (Thatcher was brought up in Brighton, England.)

"The Unfortunate Man

Air: Bow Wow Wow:

As I was standing on the wharf
In fact I had but just come,
From off the Isca in the bay,
So I was but a new chum.
As impatiently as I stood there
Awaiting for my clothes trunk,
Alonging for to have some beer
To wash down the nasty salt junk.

Chorus: Oh, dear what an unlucky thing
It was to call out Joe.

As I was standing there alone
And while my pipe was lighting
I saw a chap, unlucky fate,
Whom I had known in Brighton.
This chap's name was Joseph South
My old school mate and so I
Put my hand up to my mouth
And loudly hollowed, Joey.

Ch: Oh, dear, I got into it
For calling out Joe.

Now when I found he heard me not,
Once more Joe I did hollow,
When a crusher came up to the spot
And caught me by the collar.
I'll very soon learn you, said he,
To put the Government at defiance,
So just come along with me
And you'd better give compliance.

Ch: Oh, dear, I was taken to the lockup
For calling out Joe.

I looked surprised, so well I might,
And commenced expostulation,
Says he what you say is very right,
But just come to the station.
As along the streets we took our way,
He by the collar held me
I struggled hard to get away
When to the ground he fell me.

Ch: Oh dear, Oh then I got the darbies on
For calling out Joe.

As I was standing by the door,
My hard fate to bewail,
The tears in torrents fell,
And a voice cried Jam his tail.
As I was laying on the floor,
A drunken brute he bawled out
If you don't hold you horrid jaw,
I will knock your brains out.

Ch: Oh dear, Oh I was in the lockup,
For calling out Joe.

Next morning I appeared before
The mayor, my head did ache with pain,
Clearly my innocence to prove,
But alas it was all in vain.
You were caught in the very act, said he
And so I had to fork out,
So with an empty pocket and broken head
They told me I might walk out.

Ch: Oh dear, oh I was out of pocket
For calling out Joe."

The following song of Thatcher's, with its echoes of the fighting at Eureka, is taken verbatim from his MSS in the Public Library of Victoria:

"Private Despatch of Captain Bumble of the 40th.
Stationed at Ballaarat
to His Excellency Sir Charles Hotham

Tune - Jeremiah.

Don't talk about Sebastopol
The Russian War is flat now
Just listen to despatches
Just come from Ballarat now.
Our noble Governor, Sir Charles
And where is there a better
Has permitted to publish
Captain Bumble's private letter.

He writes thus to His Excellency
'Myself and Major Stiggins'
Got our brave fellows all equipped
And started for the diggins
Our band struck up God save the Queen
Into cheers our men were bursting
And every gallant soldier was
For glorious action thirsting.

Our first attack was on two drays
Which we saw in the distance
But the enemy surrendered
After just a slight resistance
We were disappointed in our search
Of these two wretched traitors
For instead of seizing powder
It was loaded with potatoes.

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We marched but were obliged to halt
  On behalf of Sergeant Trunnions
Who was unable to proceed
  On account of having bunions
We stationed pickets all around
  To give us timely warning
And there we bivouacked and slept
  Till nine the following morning.

At length into the diggins
  Footsore our men did tramp there
And we took up our position
  Within the Gov'ment camp there
Provisions were served out to all
  And my very soul it tickles
To contemplate their ravages
  On the cold boiled beef and pickles.

We watched at night, but all was still
  For glory we were yearning
And we fired upon a tent in which
  A candle was seen burning
We killed a woman and a child
  Though 'twas not our intention
But that slight mistakes sometimes occur
  Of course I needn't mention.

At length in earnest was the strife
  While buried in their slumbers
We made a bold and desperate charge
  And cut them down in numbers
Our gallant fellows fought like bricks
  The rebels were defeated
And then by hundreds off they ran
  And to the bush retreated.

Thus all is quiet & I now
  Subscribe myself your humble
Devoted servant of the Crown
  Frederick Augustus Bumble
Postcript: Pray send us up some good cheroots
  And anything that's handy
And by all means, pray don't forget
  We're nearly out of brandy."

Anti-Chinese Songs on the Goldfields

For typical samples of these see Thatcher's Chinese Immigration (Thatcher's Colonial Songster etc., Part I, Melb:1857; reprinted by G.C.Ingleton in True Patriots All, Syd:1952, p. 257) and The Fine Fat Saucy Chinaman (Thatcher's Colonial Songster etc., Melb:1864). The following specimen, much cruder in sentiment, was the work of another popular Goldfields entertainer(from The Colonial Songster, containing several new Irish Colonial Songs written by Mr. J. Small etc., Castlemaine:N.D.)

"Dick the Digger
A Tale of the 'Buckland'.

Copyright.- Air, 'Kit the Cobbler.'

Dick the digger had pitched him a tent
By the side of a running creek,
Where, he had been told, there was plenty of gold,
For all who'd take the trouble to seek.
With his spade and his pick
To his work he would stick,
No matter where others might roam;
Love lightened his toil,
As he thought with a smile,
Of the dear ones he'd left at home.

Chorus: And pick, pick, like an hearty old brick
He worked without dreaming of failure;
And he merrily sung, as his cradle he swung,
'Ho, a cheer for happy Australia.'

But soon there rose, just under his nose,
A crowd of ugly tents;
And the masters they'd got were a sad ugly lot,
Both in manners and lineaments;
And whilst he toiled,
The water they spoiled,
And prigged all the fruits of his labors.
Dick was fain to be kind,
But it riled him to find
Them such very unneighborly neighbors.

Chorus: For pick, pick, it made him sick,
To think he was getting daily, a
Heap for these accursed Chinese,
And he cried, 'They'll ruin Australia.'

Then up rose Dick, and, seizing his pick,
Went sallying out with his mates;
Leaving the gold, these diggers, so bold,
Had a pick at the Chinamen's pates:
Poor John Chow Chow
Found himself in a row,
And away down the creek he ran,
'Till in his place
Was left no trace
Nor the ghost of a Chinaman.

Chorus: Then pick, pick, to his labour went Dick,
And he calls their day's work, gaily, a
Jolly good spree, and he chuckles with glee,
'Oh! they'll soon get enough of Australia.'"

Some Educated Composers of 'Bush Songs.'

George Carrington was an Oxford man who spent some years in the 1860's working as a shepherd, and in other menial capacities, in north-western Queensland then but newly occupied. The following passage from his Colonial Adventures and Experiences (Lond:1871, pp.202-204) shows, with unusual directness, how naturally some 'broken-down swells' assumed the role of folk-bard:

> "In order to illustrate these remarks, I will recall one of my tramping and roving reminiscences, the date of which comes immediately after that of my life as tutor with the blacksmith. During the time spent in his employ, I had become intimate with such of the squatters in the district as had from time to time visited the township; and as I was at that time well dressed, and had little to do, I had ceased to be regarded by them as a working-man, and I had almost given up the idea of descending again to my old social status. The consequence was, that when, afterwards, I went from station to station, looking for a job, these men turned up their noses at me, cursing my impudence for having pushed myself into their confidence. I had also damaged my character by writing several songs in my leisure time, chiefly parodies, which were utterly without merit in themselves, but happened to suit the fancy of the working men. As an example, I will give a verse or two of one which was in everybody's mouth, and gave considerable offence. It was written in allusion to the new settlement of Burke Town, Carpentaria, of which I have already spoken.
>
> Air.- To the West, to the West.
>
> To the gulf, to the gulf, to Australia's fag-end,
> Where all kinds of misery walk hand in hand,
> Where a man is soon done, if he's willing to broil,
> And the strongest soon finds himself under the soil;
> Where the squatters are rapidly going to pot,
> And the men are all dying like sheep of the rot.
> When I'm tired of existence, my steps I will bend
> To that 'fair land of promise,' Australia's fag-end.

To the gulf, to the gulf, to that blissful retreat,
Where roguery stalks cooly abroad in the heat;
Where a cheque is a cheque, if you live till it's got,
But the chance is a hundred to one, that you'll not;
For, unless you can live in a swamp like a frog,
You may reckon on dying the death of a dog;
Then if you are foolish, your steps you will bend
To that fair land of promise, Australia's fag-end.

To the gulf, to the gulf, to the land of the flies,
Where each insect tormentor for mastery vies
Which shall plague you the most, in the terrible heat;
The gulf is most truly a blissful retreat.
Carpentaria! high wages have no charms for me
In an atmosphere pregnant with death 'on the spree.'
When I've no other refuge my steps I will bend,
To that gulf full of horrors, Australia's fag-end.

This song, though it exactly fitted the facts, and suited the taste of the working men, did not, as may be imagined, go down well with the squatters, many of whom had an interest in the new settlement; and by writing it I foolishly shut myself out from employment, and laid up for myself a considerable store of misery."

Not all bush songs were composed, or parodied, as deliberately as the above. In his Black Bull Chapbook No. 1., (Ferntree Gully:1954), Hugh Anderson shows that the very popular Dying Stockman ("Wrap me up XXXXX with my stockwhip and blanket") derives from an English folk-song, Rosin the Beau, by way of Major G.J.Whyte-Melville's military drinking-song, The Tarpaulin Jacket. A passage in Carrington's book (p. 104) suggests the way in which the latter song may have been 'naturalised' and adapted by bushmen. Carrington is again writing of the 'Gulf country'in the 'sixties:

"I shall always remember with amusement an incident that occurred to myself, in connection with this public-house. A message was sent . . . that there were two men who wished to speak to me. On going up, I found two of the shepherds, of whom I have spoken before, as having lived on the same station

with me. One was a Cambridge man, and the other the gallant officer who had served his country in the Crimea. They were both in an advanced stage of intoxication, and the first requirement was, of course, that I should drink at their expense . . . .

We got on very well for the first mile, P. (the lieutenant) only stopping occasionally to apostrophise the gum-trees, and the moon . . . . I thought that C. suddenly looked rather pale. I watched him; he rose to his feet, and with a look of horror I shall never forget, cried, 'What's that in the air?' . . . .

I relate this just as it occurred. He said in a weak voice, 'Give me brandy.' I opened the remaining bottle, in spite of P's remonstrances, and gave him some. 'Do you feel better now?' 'Oh, yes, much,' he said, 'but didn't you see the horns?' 'Horns, man, nonsense!' cried P., 'have another nobbler; here's the b-b-bottle, and I'll give you a song.' -

'When I'm dead, and laid out on the counter,
A voice you will hear from below,
Singing out for some brandy and water,
To -

What's the matter?' 'It's there, it's there again,' shreiked C., and relapsed into another fit."

Another well-educated bush bard of middle-class background was Alexander Forbes, brother of the famous war correspondent Archibald Forbes. (For a personal impression of the latter see Ada Cambridge, Thirty Years in Australia, Lond:1903, pp. 164-170). The brothers were brought up in a North Scottish manse and educated at the parish school and the University. Alexander became the author of a rare book of verses, Voices from the Bush, Rockhampton:1869. The style of many of these verses is such that one would expect them to have been taken up by bush singers in the same way as was Carrington's song, quoted above. For instance, here are the first two stanzas of The Sheep Station, to be sung to the air of "Young Man from the Country":

"Now friends if you'll attention pay,
And list to what I state;
I'm certain you will pity feel
For my unhappy fate.
For here I am in Queensland's bush,
An awful sight to see,
And a Mandarin from China
To keep company with me.

My humpy, from its looks was built
Soon after Noah's ark,
Roof, sides, and gable all composed
Of rotten sheets of bark.
On rainy days, the heavy wet
Comes pouring down quite free,
On the Mandarin from China,
But alas likewise on me."

The second stanza recalls irresistibly the lines from The Old Bark Hut:

"I've seen the rain come in this hut, just like a perfect flood,
Especially through that great big hole where once the 'table' stood;
There's not a blessed spot, me boys, where you could lay your nut,
But the rain is sure to find you in the old bark hut."

In the Mitchell Library' copy of Voices from the Bush is pasted a newspaper clipping about its author, written by his elder brother Archibald. The clipping reads in part:

"The younger, and by far the more brilliant brother remained at the University until 'sent down' for a madcap piece of youthful folly. In shame for this mishap he must needs run off to sea, and sailored all over the world till at length, some 20 years ago, he stranded somehow on the shore of Queensland. Ada Cambridge's book, loc. cit., implies that Archibald Forbes was in Australia c. 1883. Since then, but vague and piecemeal tidings of him reached his relatives - for ten years past none at all. It has happened now to the elder brother - to pay a visit to Queenslan and he naturally betook himself to search out the career of the errant son of his father. The story of that career came in scraps. Now the scapegrace was on a cattle station 'up north'; now shepherding on the

> Burnett; now 'reefing' on the Morinish goldfield, itself all but a memory ere now; again in sugar at Mackay; later roadmaking about Roma, and then another spell at shepherding at Mount Abundance; still later in the wash-pool about Toowoomba; and last of all in the graveyard of that place, after a long illness in its hospital. Archibald continues that everyone who had known his brother praised "the brilliant, reckless waif" and that he tried for long to come by a copy of his book of verse. But that trail was faint, until at length a Rockhampton man, who had known and loved him whose name among his fellows was 'Alick the Poet' brought to the brother the little green volume."

Dugald Ferguson in his Vicissitudes of Bush Life in Australia and New Zealand, Lond:1891, describes how an educated Gold Rush immigrant turned bush-bard. The young man, whose name is spelt variously as Lampriere or Lampiere, failed at the diggings, and in the early 1860's found himself on a Darling River station managed by one Benjamin Lilly, a very efficient but taciturn ex-convict. Specimens of Lampriere's verse, which delighted Lilly, are given on pages 57, 152 and 153 of the book. The following stanzas (from p. 57) show how thoroughly the 'broken-down swell' had taken on the colour of his surroundings:

"Be you traveller or overseer
Or working man who shall come,
Here's bread and meat, sit down and eat,
And have a feed and welcome.

If gentle, snobs, or men in mobs
Of twos & threes together,
Here's lots of tea, then dine with me,
And fill yourselves and slither."

E.B.Kennedy in his Black Police of Queensland etc., Lond:1902, also refers to the composition of parodies and ballads by educated bushmen. On pp. 65-68 he gives from memory a version of The Overlander, and on pp. 83-87 writes

of how a group of young squatters - "young bloods" - conducted a spree in a North Queensland township:

> "Then the 'river mob,' for as such were they known, formed ranks and marched me along to songs of their own composing; to the tune 'John Peel.' The words of one verse I remember:
>
> 'D'y ken how sherry and gin agree,
> With a dash of rum thirty-five O.P.;
> D'y ken how it is when ye mix all three
> That your eyes they are weak in the morning.'
>
> They had some fifteen verses of this song, and so we proceeded, headed by the majesty of the law."

Runaway Sailors and Bush Songs.

The song quoted at the end of Chapter VI is probably a good example of what is meant by 'communal composition.' In the form recorded by Paterson, it strikes one as being as truly indigenous and 'anonymous' as any folk-song in any country is likely to be. This is so; but because we are so much nearer in time to Australian bush songs than we are, say, to the Scottish border ballads, we can often find more clues to how the process of 'communal re-creation' must have worked. It is impossible to trace the actual derivation of With My Swag All on My Shoulder in detail, but easy to see that it is closely related to at least three other songs and that it is extraordinarily unlikely to have been composed by any one person. The three other songs are a fragment of an English tramp's ballad (quoted English Journal of Education, Vol. IX, 1851, pp. 35-36), an Irish-Australian ballad (collected by Dr. English from an old patient in the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, in 1954), and some lines from a published 'literary' poem, The Wallaby Track (E.J.Overbury, Bush Poems, Creswick: 1865). On the whole it seems likely that Overbury owed more to folk-tradition, at least in this particular poem, than the reverse. Below are printed, in chronological order, the fragment of an English tramps' song, the relevant stanza of Overbury's poem, and the Irish-Australian folk-song:

"I'm a roving journeyman,
And I rove from town to town;
Wherever I get a job of work,
I'm willing to set down.

With my kit upon my shoulders,
And my stick then in my hand;
It's down the country I will go,
A roving journeyman.

But when I came to Carlow,
The girls all jumped for joy;
Saying one unto the other,
Here comes a roving boy.

One treats me to a bottle,
And another to a dram . . ."

"With a ragged old swag on his shoulder,
And a billy or pot in his hand,
'Twould astonish the new-chum beholder
To see how he'll traverse the land.
From Billabing, Murray, or Loddon,
To the far Tatiara and back,
The mountains are well trodden
By the man on the Wallaby Track."

"My name is Dennis O'Reilly,
From Dublin town I came,
To sail this world all over,
I sailed the Australian main.
With my pack upon my shoulder,
And a blackthorn in my hand,
To travel the bushes of Australia
Like a trueborn Irishman.

When I arrived in Melbourne town
The girls all jumped with joy,
Saying one unto another,
'Here comes my Irish boy.'
With his pack upon his shoulder
And his blackthorn in his hand
To travel the bushes of Australia
Like a trueborn Irishman.

'Oh, daughter, dearest daughter,
What do you intend to do?
To fall in love with an Irishman,
A man you never knew?'
'Oh, mother, dearest mother,
I'll do the best I can,
I'll travel the bushes of Australia
With my trueborn Irishman.'

With my pack upon my shoulder
And my blackthorn in my hand,
I'll travel the bushes of Australia
Like a trueborn Irishman."

The ballad of the sailor, turned gold-digger, turned bushman is obviously related to the three sets of verses above and, at least through the last of them, to an English folk-song called Roving Jack. Versions of Roving Jack were printed in broadside form by Catnach and others, but the text which follows has so many of the qualities of the traditional folk-song of the countryside as to demonstrate the artificiality of the too rigid distinction often made between street and 'traditional' ballads. (From S. Baring Gould, H.F.Sheppard and F.W. Bussell, Songs of the West: Folk Songs of Devon and Cornwall etc., Lond:1905, p. 16:)

Roving Jack

"Young Jack he was a journeyman
That roved from town to town,
And when he'd done a job of work,
He lightly sat him down.
With his kit upon his shoulder, and
A grafting knife in hand,
He roved the country round about,
A merry journey-man.

And when he came to Exeter,
The maidens leaped for joy;
Said one and all, both short and tall,
Here comes a gallant boy.
The lady dropt her needle, and
The maid her frying-pan,
Each plainly told her mother, that
She loved the journey-man.

He had not been in Exeter,
The days were barely three,
Before the Mayor, his sweet daughter,
She loved him desperately;
She bid him to her mother's house,
She took him by the hand,
Said she, 'My dearest mother, see
I love the journey-man!'

Now out on thee, thou silly maid!
Such folly speak no more:
How cans't thou love a roving man,
Thou ne'er hast seen before?
'O mother sweet, I do entreat,
I love him all I can;
Around the country glad I'll rove
With this young journey-man.

He need no more to trudge afoot,
He'll travel coach and pair;
My wealth with me - or poverty
With him, content I'll share.'
Now fill the horn with barleycorn,
And flowing fill the can:
Here let us toast the Mayor's daughter
And the roving journey-man."

It is worth noting here that Thatcher, who missed little of significance in Goldfields life, devoted a whole song to Sailors on the Diggings. (Colonial Minstrel etc., Melb:1864, pp. 25-26). The first two stanzas read as follows:

Air - Dicky Birds.

"I've often wondered to myself
Why sailors take to digging,
Going down a hole's so different
To going up the rigging;
Up here the shellbacks muster strong,
And always have done so,
For you'll find a 'Sailor's Gully'
Wherever you may go.

Three years ago when ships arrived
Out here in Hobson's Bay,
Whenever they could get the chance,
They'd hook it clean away;
For the skipper's loud entreaties
They didn't care a fig,
And then at night they'd mizzle off
And take the captain's gig. . . . "

Bushranging Ballads

A great many bushranging ballads have survived, there being at least a dozen extant versions or fragments of the Ben Hall ballad cited in the text. Some exist only in snatches such as the couplet which is all that Mr. John Feely of the Melbourne Public Library can remember of a bushranging song:

"Oh my name is Possum Jack
And I come from farther back . . . ."

The only other reference to this bushranger's existence I have been able to find is given in James Demarr, Adventures in Australia Fifty Years Ago etc., 1839-1844. Writing of a journey between Goulburn and Queanbeyan (N.S.W at this period, Demarr says:

> "We had been warned to look out for Bushrangers, as there were known to be sixteen, armed and mounted, headed by 'Possum Jack'. And owing to these reports, we expected nothing else than to see 'Possum Jack' and his men make an attempt on our dray, but we saw nothing of them." (p. 48.)

Apart from those in Paterson's Old Bush Songs, the most readily available selections of bushranging ballads are to be found in John Meredith, Six Authentic Songs from the Kelly Country, Syd:1955, and Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing, Australian Bush Ballads, Syd:1955, pp. 3-59. The latter selection, however, makes no distinction between folk-songs and purely literary productions.

Two more Ben Hall Ballads, not available in print, will be given here. The first is an interesting example of an Irish folk-song at the first stage of undergoing an Australian 'naturalisation' process. The second seems to have no close connections among British folk-ballads but to be a purely indigenous song.

In 1953 Mrs. J.V.Byrnes sang to me the following

version of There's Whiskey in the Jar, which she had learnt in the 1890's from a singer named Tom Hall in the Orange district of New South Wales:

"As I was a-crossin' the Abercrombie Mountains,
I met Sir Frederick Pottinger, and his money he was countin'.
I first drew me blunderbuss and then I drew me sabre
Sayin' 'Stand and deliver, O! for I'm your bold decayver.'

Chorus: With my mush-a-ring-a-dah,
Ri-tooral-addy-ah,
There's whiskey in the jar!

I robbed him of his money; it was a pretty penny,
I robbed him of it all and I took it home to Molly;
I took it home to Molly and I thought she'd ne'er deceive me,
Oh! the divil's in the wimmin for they never can be aisy.

. . . . .
She fired off my pistols and damaged them with water -
Oh! the divil's in the wimmin for rearin' such a daughter."

Sir Frederick Pottinger, Police Inspector in charge of the Lachlan Goldfields District from 1863 to 1865, often crossed the Abercrombie Mountains in search of Ben Hall; but apart from these changes of name there is no significant variation in the above from the following Irish folk-song (Colm O Lochlainn, Irish Street Ballads etc., Dublin:1939, pp. 24-25):

"As I was going over the far-fam'd Kerry mountain
I met with Captain Farrell and his money he was counting
I first produced my pistol and I then produced my rapier
Sayin' 'Stand and deliver for you are my bold deceiver.

Chorus: O, whack fol the diddle, O, whack fol the diddle, O,
There's whisky in the jar,
Whack fol the diddle O, whack fol the diddle, O,
There's whisky in the jar!

He counted out his money and it made a pretty penny,
I put it in my pocket and I gave it to my Jenny.
She sighed and she swore that she never would betray me
But the devil take the women for they never can be easy.

I went into my chamber all for to take a slumber,
I dreamt of gold and jewels forsooth it was not wonder
But Jenny drew my charges and she filled them up with water
An' she sent for Captain Farrell, to be ready for the slaughter.

And 'twas early in the morning before I rose to travel
Up comes a band of footmen and likewise Captain Farrell;
I then produced my pistol, for she stole away my rapie
But I couldn't shoot the water so a prisoner I was taken.

And if anyone can aid me 'tis my brother in the army,
If I could learn his station, in Cork or in Killarney.
And if he'd come and join me we'd go roving in Killarney
I'll engage he'd treat me fairer than my darling young Jenny."

The following ballad was sung to John Meredith on December 11th. 1954, by Mrs. Sloane of Lithgow who learned it from her mother:

"Come all you young Australians, and everyone besides,
I sing to you a ditty that will fill you with surprise
Concerning of a ranger bold, whose name it was Ben Hall,
But cruelly murdered was this day, which proved his downfall.

An outcast from society, he was forced to take the road
All through his false and treacherous wife, who sold off his abode.
He was hunted like a native dog from bush to hill and dale,
Till he turned upon his enemies and they could not find his trail.

All out with his companions, men's blood he scorned
to shed,
He oft times stayed their lifted hands, with vengeance
on their heads;
No petty, mean or pilfering act he ever stooped to do,
But robbed the rich and hearty man, and scorned to
rob the poor.

One day as he in ambush lay all on the Lachlan Plain
When thinking everything secure, to ease himself he lay,
When to his consternation and to his great surprise,
Without one moment's warning, a bullet past him fly.

And it was soon succeeded by a volley sharp and loud,
With twelve revolving rifles all pointed at his head;
'Where are you Gilbert, where are you Dunn?' he loudly
did call -
It was all in vain; they were not there to witness
his downfall.

They riddled all his body as if they were afraid,
But in his sying moment he breathed curses on their
head;
That cowardly-hearted Condel, the sergeant of the police
He crept and fired with famous glee till death did
him release.

Although he had a lion's heart, more braver than the
brave,
Those cowards shot him like a dog; no word of
challenge gave.
Though many friends had poor Ben Hall, his enemies were
few,
Like the emblem of his native land, his days were
numbered two [sic].

It's through Australia's sunny clime Ben Hall will
range no more,
His name is spread from near and far to every distant
shore.
From generations after this parents will to their
children call
And relate to them the daring deeds committed by Ben
Hall."

British Street Ballads on Policemen

The two stanzas and chorus of the London street-ballad quoted in Chapter VII come from a pre-1850 broadside entitled I Should Like to be a Policeman. Stanzas 1,2, 5 and 6 read thus:

"Some folks may talk about a trade,
And the joys that from it spring, Sirs,
And after you my words have weighed,
You'll say it's no such thing, Sirs.
Though at me you may jeer and laugh,
My joys think to decrease, man,
But I mean to say, (and I do not chaff,)
I should like to be a policeman.

Of the boys, I'd be the terror, mind,
The fruit stalls, too, I'd sell 'em,
And disturbances of every kind,
I with my staff would quell 'em,
A 'charge' would be as good as pelf,
My pleasures 'twould increase, man,
For I'd make the 'charges' up myself,
When I'm a new policeman.

. . . .

The cracksmen too, should tip to me,
Or else I would soon lag 'em,
But if they did, I should not see,
That is I should not 'stag' 'em.
And, if amusement I should lack,
Tho' I'm one that likes the peace, man,
A pate or two I'd surely crack,
I should like to be a policeman.

The prospect does me much delight,
I mount on wings of joy, Sir,
It does to wealth and fame invite,
And pleasure without alloy, Sir,
When I'm established in the force,
I'll have a bob a piece, man,
From lushy swells, or I'll lock 'em up,
I should like to be a policeman.

The following British street-ballad of the same period is quoted from the version given in W. Henderson, Victorian Street Ballads, Lond:1937, pp. 38-39. Entitled The Irish New Policeman, it is headed by a wood-cut representing two constables frog-marching a victi to gaol while they beat him about the head and shoulders with batons. The wood-cut bears the legend:

> "I say, Bill, you've started the claret, I see!" "Yes, I've just given him a topper for luck; and he'll be quiet for the night, I reckon. Wot's the odds, as long as he's happy?"

Then follows the text:

"Your pardin, gents and ladies all -
Listen awhile to me and my blarney -
Straight from Dublin town I came:
Faith! my name is Michael Carney.
Trade was scarce and luck was bad;
Humblings, grumblings, ne'er did cease, man,
Till straight to town I came, egad,
And soon was made a new policeman.

. . . .

There isn't a yard nor a garden wall,
About the town, but I can scale it;
And if I find anything at all,
Why, shouldn't I be a fool not to take it?
Next day there is a hue and cry,
Some things 's stolen, but to be brief, man,
Oh, by the oky, who but I
Go out to catch the thief, man?

Suppose, in walking out at night,
In every hole and corner creeping,
Something I spy by the pale moonlight,
Och! by my soul, there's a gentleman sleeping,
His pockets I grope, his money I take,
Then with my stick in his ribs I am jobbing him,
And if perchance the fool should wake,
I tell him I think a thief was robbing him.

If there's no row in the whole street,
  Don't I myself know how to raise one?
I knocks the first man down I meet
  And kicks up a shindy, fit to craze one;
Then he resists, and I've a job -
  Lock him up and swear he's riotly,
Next day the soundrel's fined ten bob,
  Because myself must not murder him quietly.

I'm known to all the prigs in town -
  To learned thieves well known my face is,
The frail ones, too, my favours own,
  And charge me naught for sweet embraces,
And if they're going a house to rob,
  Don't I watch (as is my duty) ?
But never splits about the job,
  For don't myself get half the booty?"

These ballads certainly suggest that policemen were not much more popular among working people in Britain a hundred years ago than they were in Australia. The attitude is one compounded of fear, hatred and contempt, with a dash of sub-conscious envy and a generous measure of humour. Lack of the last-mentioned quality is the most striking difference in the Australian ballads dealing with policemen. This lack is the more significant since, as Douglas Stewart notes (Australian Bush Ballads, Syd: 1955, p. ix), a robust but sardonic humour is one of the prime distinguishing characteristics of Australian bush ballads generally. But in bushranging ballads policemen are almost always regarded with a settled and completely serious hatred. Light verse in the Bulletin and some other journals reflects an attitude to the police much nearer to that of the English street ballads quoted above. For instance the Bulletin of 7/1/1882 (p. 8) printed the following short report:

"Bob the Bobby

"At the Central Police Court yesterday before Messrs. Alexander and Bull, Robert Heville, a member of the city police force, was convicted of a violent assault

upon a young man namee James Struck early on Christmas morning. . . . The Bench fined him one guinea with professional costs and costs of court."

- Telegraph.

Bob Heville is a constable
And in the city force.
Both 'active' and 'intelligent'
'Respected', too, av coorse.

Persuasive powers he does possess
You'd better bet his nibs,
So when a man will not 'move on',
He boots him in the ribs.

For this gay Bob was fined a pound,
You'll see it up there quoted;
So next week it is ten to one
That Bob will be promoted."

Jack Donahoe and the Wild Colonial Boy

These ballads survive in scores - or if fragments be counted - in hundreds of versions. To attempt any kind of detailed reconstruction of the relationships between them would require a long monograph. Good representative versions of each song have been quoted in Chapter VII. Briefly it may be said that practically all surviving versions seem clearly to be variants of either Jack Donahoe or the Wild Colonial Boy. The two most interesting exceptions will be given here. Each seems to show Donahoe approximately half way along the Beechworth road to anonymity, although one cannot be certain that the following texts are not simply later, mixed versions of what were in fact originally two separate songs. M.H.Ellis, as a child, learnt this version from an old ex-convict in 1903:

"There was a wild colonial boy, Jack Donahoe by name,
Of poor but honest parents he was born in Castlemaine.
He was his father's dearest hope, his mother's pride and joy.
O, fondly did his parents love the Wild Colonial Boy.

Chorus: So ride with me, my hearties, we'll cross the mountains high,
Together we will plunder, together we will die.
We'll wander through the valleys and gallop o'er the plains,
For we scorn to live in slavery, bound down with iron chains.

He was scarcely sixteen years of age when he left his father's home,
A convict to Australia, across the seas to roam.
They put him in the Iron Gang in the Government employ,
But ne'er an iron on earth could hold the Wild Colonial Boy.

And when they sentenced him to hang to end his wild career,
With a loud shout of defiance bold Donahoe broke clear.
He robbed the wealthy silvertails, their stock he did destroy,
But no trooper in the land could catch the Wild Colonial Boy.

Then one day when he was cruising near the broad Nepean's side,
From out the thick Bringelly bush the horse police did ride.
'Die or resign, Jack Donahoe!' they shouted in their joy.
'I'll fight this night with all my might!'cried the Wild Colonial Boy.

Thus he fought six rounds with the horse police before the fatal ball,
Which pierced his heart and made him start, caused Donahoe to fall.
And then he closed his mournful eyes, his pistol an empty toy,
Crying, 'Parents dear, O say a prayer for the Wild Colonial Boy.'"

The following version, of much more doubtful authenticity, comes from Frank Clune's Wild Colonial Boys, Syd:1948, pp. 121-123, where the song is put into the mouth of the youthful Frank Gardiner, the bushranger:

"He was a Wild Colonial Boy,
Jack Donahoo by name,
Of poor but honest parents
Brung up in Castlemaine.
He was his father's only hope,
His mother's only joy,
And dearly did his parents love
That Wild Colonial Boy.

Chorus: So come, all me hearties,
We'll roam the mountains high;
Together we will plunder,
Together we will die.
We'll wander in the valleys,
And gallop o'er the plains,
We'll scorn to live in slavery
Bound down with iron chains.

He was scarcely sixteen years of age
When he left his father's home,
And in Australia's sunny clime
A bushranger did roam.
He robbed the wealthy squatters,
Their stock he did destroy;
A terror to Australia
Was the Wild Colonial Boy.

He cleared out from the iron gang
To start his wild career;
With a heart that knew no danger,
No foeman did he fear.
He stuck up travellers on the roads,
The police he did annoy;
They always came too late to catch
The Wild Colonial Boy.

One day when he was camping
Upon the mountain side,
A-listening to the jackass laugh,
The troopers up did ride.
'Surrenedr now, Jack Donahoo!'
They shouted in their joy.
'I'll fight,but not surrender!'
Said the Wild Colonial Boy.

He fired at a trooper
And brought him to the ground;
But then another trooper
Gave him a mortal wound.
Again he snapped his pistol
But it was a useless toy;
And so at last they shot him dead -
The Wild Colonial Boy."

In the prefatory matter to his Wild Colonial Boys (p. vii), Clune thanks, among others, "Mrs. Fred Wells, of Marrickville (formerly of Junee), a daughter of John Mc.Guire, for access to the MS of her father's unpublished 'True Reliable Narrative'." This John Mc.Guire was a brother-in-law of Ben Hall the bushranger, and the source o Early Colonial Days: the Biography of a Reliable Old Native etc., "written by W.H.Pinkstone after many interview and fireside chats," and published serially in the

Cootamundra Herald beginning on 9/3/1907. In conversation with me Mr. Clune said that the original MS contained a good deal of matter, including the text of thi and other ballads used in his book, which was omitted from the version published in the newspaper. Mr. Clune also said that he had a typescript copy of the MS, but he refused to let me see it and intimated that he did not intend ever to make it publicly available. Early in 1955, with the aid of electoral rolls, I searched Marrickville and surrounding Sydney suburbs for this Mrs. Fred Wells, but in vain.

Clune's,or Mc.Guire's, version (Wild Colonial Boys, pp. 220-221) of the very interesting Irish-Australian convict ballad quoted in Chapter IV of this thesis is as follows:

"Old Ireland lies groaning -
A hand at her throat,
By coward betrayed
And by foreigners bought.
Forget not the lessons
Our fathers have taught!
Though our land's full of danger
And held by a stranger -
Be brave and be true!

We'll take to the hills
Like the bandits of old,
When Rome was first founded
By warriors bold,
Who knew how to plunder
The rich of their gold:
A life full of danger,
With Jack the Bushranger -
The Bold Donahoo.

We've left dear old Ireland's
Hospitable shores -
The land of the Emmets,
The Tones and the Moores.
Sweet Liberty o'er us
Her scalding tear pours.
She points to the Manger,
Where Christ was a stranger -
And perished for you.

You may hurl us to crime
  And brand us with shame;
But you never will catch us,
  Our spirit to tame;
For we'll fight to the last
  In old Ireland's sweet name;
And we are bushrangers
Who care not for dangers -
    With Bold Donahoo!"

The Dying Stockman

Unlike the verses quoted in Chapter VIII, My Religion, and the old 'whaler's' lines, The Dying Stockman was immensely popular among folk-singers; partly, perhaps, because it achieves an utterance nearer to genuine poetry than is usual among Australian ballads. As it also carries religious implications, it may be quoted here in full. The following is the text printed by A.B.Paterson (Old Bush Songs, Syd:1930 edn., pp. 107-108):

"(Air: 'The Old Stable Jacket.')

A strapping young stockman lay dying,
His saddle supporting his head;
His two mates around him were crying,
As he rose on his pillow and said:

Chorus: 'Wrap me up with my stockwhip and blanket,
And bury me deep down below,
Where the dingoes and crows can't molest me,
In the shade where the coolibahs grow.

'Oh! had I the flight of the bronzewing,
Far o'er the plains would I fly,
Straight to the land of my childhood,
And there would I lay down and die.

'Then cut down a couple of saplings,
Place one at my head and my toe,
Carve on them cross, stockwhip, and saddle,
To show there's a stockman below.

'Hark! there's the wail of a dingo,
Watchful and weird - I must go,
For it tolls the death-knell of the stockman
From the gloom of the scrub down below.

'There's tea in the battered old billy;
Place the pannikins out in a row,
And we'll drink to the next merry meeting,
In the place where all good fellows go.

'And oft in the shades of the twilight,
When the soft winds are whispering low,
And the darkening shadows are falling,
Sometimes think of the stockman below.'"

Apart from the single word "cross," in the line "Carve on them cross, stockwhip and saddle," there is no sign of a specifically Christian outlook in this ballad. Primarily, death is accepted naturalistically as an everlasting rest from the relinquished burdens and joys of life; but there is a hint too of a future existence in a lower world of shades which, however, is conceived of as only a pale reflection of the earthly life with which the singers were familiar. The same attitude to death is embodied in The Stockman's Last Bed, another extremely popular ballad on the same theme which is quoted near the end of Chapter VIII. In this respect both songs remind one of much pre-Christian,Old Englis poetry. It is possible,too,that the word "cross" in The Dying Stockman is an editorial interpolation. Its presence makes the line in which it occurs metrically awkward, and it was omitted in singing by Messrs. Lee and Cashmere and Mrs. Byrnes. Mr. Cashmere sang, "Carve on them saddle and bridle, and replied to my question about the "cross" that he had never heard the word in any version of the song.

It is interesting to notice too that the Dying Stockman's attitude to death differs from that embodied in ancestral British versions of the ballad. In his Black Bull Chapbook No. 1, Hugh Anderson gives texts of The Dying Stockman's two most important progenitors, Wrap Me up in My Tarpaulin Jacket and Rosin the Beau. The first was a popular song writ en by Major G.J.Whyte-Melville (1821-1878), the author of a long list of sporting novels; but Whyte-Melville' s song about a dying Lancer was at least inspired by Rosin the Beau, and perhaps by other English folk-songs or street-ballads. The following lines from a nineteenth century

broadside about a dying sailor (W. Henderson, Victorian Street Ballads, Lond:1937, p. 56) may or may not have been current before Whyte-Melville's song:

"Let there be six sailors to carry me,
Let them be damnable drunk,
And as they are going to bury me,
Let them fall down with my trunk.
Let there be no sighing or sobbing,
But one single favour I crave,
Take me up in a tarpauling jacket,
And fiddle and dance to my grave."

The equivalent lines in one version of Rosin the Beau (Alfred Williams, Folk-Songs of the Upper Thames, Lond:1923, p. 93) are:

"Then get a full dozen stout fellows,
And stand them all round in a row,
And drink out of half-gallon bottles
To the name of old Rosin the Beau.

Then get half a dozen young fellows
And let them all staggering go,
And dig a great hole in the meadow,
And in it toss Rosin the Beau."

In Whyte-Melville's song (Scottish Students' Song Book, Glasgow:1892 3rd. edn.) the equivalent lines are:

"And get you six brandies and sodas,
And set them all out in a row, a row,
And get you six jolly good fellows,
To drink to this buffer below.

Chorus: Wrap me up in my tarpaulin jacket,
And say a poor buffer he's low, he's low,
And six stalwart Lancers shall carry me, carry me,
With steps, solemn, mournful, and slow."

It will be seen that,in the Australian version of the ballad, the treatment of the subject is no less secular but, oddly enough, considerably less vulgar in tone.

Sam Holt

The following version of Ben Bolt was printed in Tibb's Melbourne Vocalist etc., Melb:1854, p. 2:

"Oh! don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?
Sweet Alice whose hair was so brown -
Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile,
And trembled with fear at your frown.
In the old churchyard in the valley, Ben Bolt -
In a corner obscure and alone,
They have fitted a slab of granite so gray [sic] ,
And sweet Alice lies under the stone.

Oh! don't you remember the tree, Ben Bolt,
That stood near the foot of the hill,
Where oft we have laid in the noonday shade,
And listened to Appleton's mill.
The mill-wheel has gone to decay, Ben Bolt,
And the rafters have tumbled in -
And the quiet that hangs o'er the scene as you gaze
Has followed the olden din.

Oh! don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
And the master so cruel and grim;
And the shady nook, by the running brook,
Where, as schoolboys, we all used to swim?
The grass grows o'er the master's grave, Ben Bolt -
And the running little brook is now dry;
And of all the boys who were schoolmates then,
There are only you and I.

There's a change in the things we love, Ben Bolt
There's a change from the old to the new -
But I feel at the innermost core of my heart,
That there is no change in you.
Ten years - yes, twenty - have passed, Ben Bolt,
Since first we were friends, yet I hail
Thy presence a blessing, and thy friendship a truth,
Ben Bolt of the salt sea gale."

The song was immensely popular throughout the English-speaking world. In the 1860's a small Queensland coastal schooner was named the Benbolt. (See Thomas Major, Leaves from a Squatter's Note Book etc., Lond:1900, p. 61 ff..)

The song gave rise to a very great number of parodies. One, printed in the same song-book, Tibb's Melbourne Vocalist (p. 34), owes much to the theme of Billy Barlow in Australia:

"Oh! don't I remember my dear native land?
The land that gave me my birth -
St. James and St. Giles, Spitalfields and New Cut;
The rummiest places on earth.
How I weep when I think of the days that are past,
And the girls I have left there to mourn,
That I used to come out with at Julien's bal masque,
Flora Gardens, Vauxhall and Cremorne.

And don't I remember the 'Darby', my boys -
How I used to come out with my moke,
With boots, spurs, and whip, of fashion quite the tip,
And a neat Joinville tie round my throat.
To the opera each night I would haste with delight,
Patronise every coffee-shop and stall;
To the Cyder Cellars pop, take my kidney and chop,
Then wind up the night with Sam Hall.

And don't I remember old Battersea Fields,
And the sports of thise fields used to share? [sic]
The Red House to boot, where the folks go to shoot,
And for two-pence by steam can go there?
But how changed are the things in this new world of ours -
And changed altogether the sceme;
And how changed is my luck, to come here to draw a truck,
How very unfortunate I've been? [sic]

There's a change in the things since last I gazed -
Though very little change I have got;
Twenty blank holes I have sunk, which nearly drove me ~~a~~ crazed, [sic]
So my hopes of digging gold has gone to pot.
Oh! could I again but meet with a mate,
Or a kind friend who had got a good sum;
Just to open my mind to, and tell him the state
of a once go-ahead New Chum."

Another colonial parody of Ben Bolt appeared in Melbourne Punch of 1855, Vol. I, p. 13. This version seems to have passed into the repertoire of folk-singers, for

'anonymous'snatches of it are quoted by Nehemiah Bartley, Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences, Brisbane:1896, p. 35; and by Charles Macalister, Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South, Goulburn:1907, p. 232. The former fragment reads:

"Oh! don't you remember old Melbourne, Ben Bolt,
When gold nuggets first were found out?
When mid five feet of mud on the wharves and the streets
And all night 'stickers-up' roamed about?
Ah! those were the days, you just bet, Ben Bolt,
When dollars could quickly be made;
You might buy what you liked in both market and store,
For you 'couldn't go wrong' in a trade."

C.R.Thatcher seems to have been the first parodist to change the actual name "Ben Bolt." His goldfields song, Jack Jolt (from the diorama script, Thatcher MSS, P.L.V.), reads:

"Oh don't you remember the gully Jack Jolt
Where they made such a desperate pounce
Where both you and I dug for many a day
And knocked out ounce after ounce
The gully is quite worked out Jack Jolt
There's no room to put down a hole
And of all the hundreds who dug there once
You'll hardly now see a soul.

Oh don't you remember quite well Jack Jolt
The new chums that worked by our side
To see how the pick took the skin off their hands
I laughed till I thought I should have died
They bottomed it all but a foot Jack Jolt
And then left the claim in despair
And many a snug little pound weight of gold
I reckon we got out of there.

Oh don't you remember the grog-shop Jack Jolt
Where they used to cut hair and shampoo
Where many a time you and I have gone in
And lushed until all was blue
They've barbarously served the barber's shop Jack Jolt
For the roof now is all knocked in
And the quiet that hangs on the scene as you gaze
Has followed the brandy and gin.

Don't you remember the rush Jack Jolt
  Where we went to in Kangaroo Flat [sic]
It was only a storekeeper's dodge after all
  But of course we weren't up to that
We couldn't even raise the colour Jack Jolt
  Not a single speck could we see
And of all the coves that were sucked in then
  There were hundreds besides you and me."

G.H.Gibson's thoroughly acclimatised version of the ballad, Sam Holt, has been quoted in full at the end of Chapter VIII. That it passed immediately into folk-currency is suggested by Henry Lawson's essay, Songs They Used to Sing (Prose Works, 2 vols., Syd:1935, Vol. I, pp. 201-212). At the age of fourteen in 1882, about a year after the publication of Sam Holt in the Bulletin, Lawson was brought to Sydney by his parents; yet the lines quoted in his essay, which purports to be based on childhood memories of bush 'sing-songs', differ very considerably from those of Gibson's 'original'. The first line of the followir passage from the essay may indicate, however, that Lawson learnt a folk version of this particular ballad in later years

" 'Sam Holt' was a great favourite with Jimmy Nowlett in after years.

Oh, do you remember Black Alice, Sam Holt?
  Black Alice so dirty and dark -
Who'd a nose on her face - I forget how it goes -
  And teeth like a Moreton Bay shark.

Sam Holt must have been very hard up for tucker as well as beauty then, for

Do you remember the 'possums and grubs
She baked for you down by the creek?

Sam Holt was, apparently, a hardened Flash Jack.

You were not quite the cleanly potato, Sam Holt.

Reference is made to his 'manner of holding a flush,' and he is asked to remember several things which he, no doubt, would rather forget, including

. . . the hiding you got from the boys.

The song is decidedly personal.
But Sam Holt makes a pile and goes home, leaving many a better and worse man to pad the hoof out back. And - Jim Nowlett sang this with so much feeling as to make it appear a personal affair between him and the absent Holt -

And, don't you remember the fiver, Sam Holt,
You borrowed so careless and free?
I reckon I'll whistle a good many tunes

(with increasing feeling)
Ere you think of that fiver and me.

For the chances will be that Sam Holt's old mate

Will be humping his drum on the Hughenden Road
To the end of the chapter of fate."

Versions of Sam Holt were also recorded in Paterson's Old Bush Songs, 1905, and in Will Lawson's Australian Bush Songs and Ballads, 1944. Every surviving folk-singer I have met remembers at least fragments of the ballad, and J.H.Lee and J. Cashmere remembered fragments of another parody which may either have preceded Sam Holt, or derived from it:

"Oh don't you remember old man Ben Bolt,
Old man at the jumping sand-hill,
Fought Paddy the Priest to a finish Ben Bolt,
Then challenged the Boss at Till Till.

. . . . . .

She sleeps in a rough suit of colonial pine,
She is sleeping the sleep of the just,
And Paddy the priest, in colonial wine,
Is sleeping it off in the dust."

The Great Australian Adjective

The following are W.T.Goodge's original verses from his Hits! Skits! and Jingles!, Syd:1899. They were republished in the first and succeeding editions of the Bulletin Reciter:

"The sunburnt ------ stockman stood
And, in a dismal ------ mood,
Apostrophised his ------ cuddy;
'The ------ nag's no ------ good,
He couldn't earn his ------ food -
A regular ------ brumby,
------!'

He jumped across the ------ horse
And cantered off, of ------ course!
The roads were bad and ------ muddy;
Said he, 'Well, spare me ------ days
The ------ Government's ------ ways
Are screamin' ------ funny,
------!'

He rode up hill, down ------ dale,
The wind it blew a ------ gale,
The creek was high and ------ floody.
Said he: 'The ------ horse must swim,
The same for ------ me and him,
Is somethin' ------ sickenin',
------!'

He plunged into the ------ creek,
The ------ horse was ------ weak,
The stockman's face a ------ study!
And though the ------ horse was drowned
The ------ rider reached the ground
Ejaculating: '------?'
'------!'"

The following version was current in the mid-1930's at the University of Adelaide:

"A sunburnt bloody stockman stood,
And in a dismal bloody mood,
Apostrophised his bloody horse,
'This bloody moke's no bloody good,

He doesn't earn his bloody food.
Bloody! Bloody! Bloody!

He jumped upon his bloody horse
And galloped off of bloody course,
The road was wet and bloody muddy,
Bloody! Bloody! Bloody!

He came up to a bloody creek:
The bloody horse was bloody weak.
He said, 'This moke must sink or swim -
The same for me as bloody him.
But e'er he reached the bloody bank,
The bloody horse beneath him sank,
The stockman's face a bloody study,
Ejaculating
'Bloody! Bloody! Bloody!'"

During World War II the following parody had wide currency among the troops in the Darwin area and elsewhere:

"This bloody town's a bloody cuss,
No bloody tram, no bloody bus,
And no one cares for bloody us.
Bloody, bloody, bloody!

The bloody roads are bloody bad,
The bloody folks are bloody mad,
They even say - 'You bloody cad!'
Bloody, bloody, bloody!

All bloody clouds, all bloody rains,
No bloody kerbs, no bloody drains,
The council has no bloody brains,
Bloody, bloody, bloody!

And everything's so bloody dear,
A bloody bob for bloody beer,
And is it good? No bloody fear,
Bloody, bloody, bloody!

The bloody flicks are bloody old,
All bloody seats are bloody sold,
You can't get in for bloody gold,
Bloody, bloody, bloody!

The bloody dances make me smile,
The bloody bands are bloody vile,
They only cramp your bloody style,
Bloody, bloody, bloody!

No bloody sports, no bloody games,
No bloody fun with bloody dames,
Won't even give their bloody names,
Bloody, bloody, bloody!

Best bloody place is bloody bed,
With bloody ice on your bloody head,
And then they think you're bloody dead,
Bloody, bloody, bloody!"

Ballads on the Organisation of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union.

The text of these four ballads from Tibb's Popular Song Book will be given here in full for a number of reasons. Unlike most Australian folk-ballads they tell a story of specific historical events, and since the texts are certainly almost contemporaneous with the events described, it is reasonable, while we lack evidence to the contrary, to suppose that they give a fairly factual picture of how the trade union was organised in the far west. One of them refers to a letter sent to a Bourke newspaper. According to Moore's Almanac, Syd:1886, p. 17, the two newspapers published in Bourke at the time were the Central Australian and Bourke Telegraph and the Watchman; but the Mitchell Library has no files of either paper for the 1880's.

These ballads also suggest the rather surprising extent to which ballad-singing,and ballad-making, was still a vital force in the back country in 1886. Finally the texts are little known and not widely accessible. They are here printed verbatim as they appear in the song-book:

"Squatters and the Reduction

Air - Jog Along

Some squatters have commenced to shear, while some are in a fix,
They thought to do it nicely with their seventeen-and-six,
They would not pay the pound, so they got stuck in the mud,
Instead of being now cut out, they're surrounded by the flood.
'There's been no work adoing, Now's our time to pull them down,
And we'll starve them to submission,' said your great Kallara Brown.

Chorus:
So you Merriula haglers, It's not the likes of you
That joined the Dunlop shearers, and the men on the Paroo.

"Now the fight commenced at Dunlop, then the Paroo in the bush,
The boys, too, of Yankannia they joined in the manly push.
It was out at Nocoleche shed, the latter end of June,
When Gamson came to call the roll (You might know the little coon).
When everything was quiet, and you could not hear a sound,
He told us in a crying style he could not pay the pound.
We did not hoot, but listened, for we had not much to say,
But gave him our terms in writing, boys, and then we walked away.
He then took a fortnight's practice in some very funny tricks,
And then he got two snaggers for seventeen-and-six;
But they knew to make a start, boys, that too dear they'd have to pay,
So they saddled up their Neddys, and like loafers sneaked away.

Says Gamson, 'You've plenty of money, for I see it flying round,
So we'll sign last year's agreement, for I'll have to pay the pound.'
Says I, 'Old boy, don't gallop, when you start a waiting race,
If you sack a man, a pound you'll pay,' I told him to his face.
Oh, didn't he look crooked, and sarcastically did shout
To Irving, the young storekeeper, to scratch the damned thing out.
Said he, 'If I had gained the day I'd then cheer loud and long,'
But we showed that we were merciful, For we knew that we were strong.
I then signed his agreement, and in action put my pen,
I wrote to the Burke paper, to inform my fellow men.
For I knew the news was welcome to those living far away,
When I told of Nocoleche boys, and how we gained the day.

In the crowd someone must do it, - to speak for those shearing knights, -
I'm black-balled at Nocoleche 'cause I spoke up for our rights.
But don't think his shed's a fortune, it is nothing of the kind,
One man can always live without one squatter you will find.
Other sheds start early, if I'm in the living ruck,
You can bet your bottom dollar the old chap will get a cut.
I thought the price was settled and everything bid well,
But I'd scarcely rode three days, my boys, when - what an awful sell -

"I found a lot of snaggers, not a shearer in the mob,
At Mumba signed for seventeen with a bonus of three bob.
There was room for over twenty, but of course I didn't stop,
I that day received a letter from our friends up at Dunlop.

They told me of old Jimmy, how he said it was but fear,
If it wasn't for the river men, the cockneys they would she:
He brought the police from Cobar, but they did not care a pin,
They stood out like men for seven weeks, and beat old Dunlop Jim.
They had but scarcely started when the rain it came about,
And like the Nocoleche boys, they soon were flooded out.
Some made toward the Lachlan, in search of better luck,
And some went out to Paddington, and M'Pherson straitened up.
They put him through his facings, and sent him running roun
Crying out for shearers, and 'I'll pay them all a pound.'
Now wherever you go shearing, let this always be your crack
I never shore at Paddington, I wouldn't shear for Mac.

There is one thing left to settle, tho' I've signed it once or twice,
Don't put your pen to paper for that rotten second price;
Unless a man's dissatisfied, and wants to stride his Micks,
I say it's right to pay him then with seventeen-and-six.
I would do both sides justice, I ask for nothing more,
But don't rob me of my labour,when I've got two thousand shore.
Let your actions all be honest, and proud the truth to tell
I was treated there with kindness, and so speak the Walkers well;
I wouldn't shear at Paddington, I'd rather see him stuck,
But I struggled thro' Nekarboo, boys, and saw the cobbler cut.
I'll tell of some good squatters whom I've long kept in the dark,
But keep a strain on your bridle rein, and steer clear of Baden Park.

I left the Murrumbidgee, I could not stand M'gaw,
While Brotch of Mutagoona, he's the best I ever saw;
While Scott, too, of Rellaly, you'll find very hard to best;
But good old Tully of Murrungle to shear for was a treat,
If you go to Girilambone you might pull through with Loise;
But if you want a thorough doing, why just try the Overflow.
Now I wish you young coves' fortune as the years go rolling on,
You may think about the old chap when some splaw bawls out a song.

"For I've shore upon Manara, and in Queensland far out back,
But I never shore at Paddington, I could not shear for Mac
So cheer up my Lachlan ringers, as you travel the Maroo,
Stand out like Dunlop shearers, and the men on the Paroo.

"Review of the Year

Air - Pulling Against the Stream

"This year's been one continuous trouble, squatters fighting hand in hand,
Everything been in a muddle, floods extending through the land.
He that fought, and fought the hardest,he that fought to pave the way,
He's the one that's been the farthest out of pocket in the fray.

He for days, aye, weeks together, through the country far and wide,
With a band they could not sever, Breaking down the squatters pride.
He's the foremost in the battle, he's the trainer in the fight,
Beating the shearers' drum to muster, he's the spokesman in the strike.

Some do well, while others suffer, that's been so throughout the land.
Don't you hear the Union Bugle, on equal footing let all stand.
To forgive you must be forgiving, so Merriula here's my hand,
No more from sheds you'll be forbidden, no more you'll join the rebel band.

Ere this, each man has seen his folly, everyone repents the day,
As he meets some Dunlop victor like a coward sneaks away.
Let there be no more division, let no deserter stand,
Come and sound the Union trumpet, come and join the Union band.

"Won't you join us in the battle, join the men that nobly stood
For their rights with yours included, fighting for the country's good.
The squatter rich would eat your damper, fight you for your bit of pay,
(His picker up was Jack the Banker,) threw up the sponge and lost the day."

"The Squatter's Defeat

Air - Shan Van Vaght.

"If you give me but an hearing,
I'll tell you of the shearing,
The one we just got over,
Eighteen hundred eighty six.
The time of which I'm singing
Is about of the beginning,
How the squatters blowed they'd cut the price
To seventeen and six.

They run about the nation,
Advertising every station,
Expressing their intentions
Not creditable to own,
Telling the coves with money,
You that's none don't come, my honey,
Says the cocky then to plough a bit,
I think I'll stop at home.

The squatter as he's crying,
My wool they are not buying
At a price to pay the interest
Of ten per cent I'll show,
That's what I've been receiving,
So it's no use my deceiving,
The rich won't pay the piper,
So the poor man must you know.

The shearer has his version,
And with truth make the assertion,
Our hardships they are many
That we meet with going round.
You would starve us devil doubt you,
But we've lived before without you,
Take my tip a blow we'll never cut
Per hundred less a pound.

"So you see Mac with your skiting,
The shearers they went striking,
Your neighbours they all laughed to hear
The men's victorious shout.
For weeks you might been shearing
With a second price appearing,
But now you've got to pay the pound
Per hundred in and out."

"Australia's Happy Land

Air - Ehren on the Rhine.

"The shearing's nearly over, but with many, much I fear,
The price they tried to cut down has cost them very dear.
So give your kind attention, and I'll tell you in my song
Of squatters and those shearer boys, the way they jog along.
The life is one of luxury, it's truly something grand
To be a roving shearer in Australia's happy land.

In February, eighty six, I left Burke with a sigh,
I saddled up my 'neddy's', and bade the girls good-bye.
My friends and I together, for Nocoleche bound,
To meet those Paroo squatters, and fight them for the pound.
They used the 'Town and Country' to break up our gallant band,
But we sent the cry of victory through Australia's happy land.

It's now some sixteen years ago, I had a friendly glass,
The 'City Arms' being patronised by the hard-working class.
I say its years are past and gone, yet proud am I to see,
That vendor of cheap Carlton, Lord of Tinapagee, -
Audacious the expressions does his ignorance think grand,
'I'll starve to submission in Australia's happy land.'

The fight ended, - then to shearing, but soon we had to stop, -
The flood it spread like lightning from Wanarring to Dunlop
You might think they'd lend a 'neddy' for to run your horses in,
But on Noc. there's no assistance, you may sink or you may swim.
With your bridle strap around you, it was truly something grand,
To swim through the flood-waters of Australia's happy land.

"Our horses got, we started, the country all a lake,
It was hard to find a dry spot to cook your 'Johnny Cake.'
With clothes wet through and blankets, to sleep in quite a treat,
I really can't imagine how a man could have the cheek -
Did Trollope have to foot it through the Paroo's heavy sand,
With his one continuous picnic in Australia's happy land.

To bring down the price of shearing, did you skite you had the knack,
Grass seeds are bad round Paddington, 'What! not out yet, Mac?'
It wants but a beginning, to sign I know they'll dart,
With crawlers two and a Jackaroo, you made a noble start.
Did men come out from Dunlop, did they make you understand,
Did you really say a pound you'd pay in Australia's happy land?

The price of wool is very low, the rents are very high,
'Another rub our runs to scrub,' that's been the squatter's cry.
But come and join our Union, adopt no crying plan,
Publish each clause, your Union's laws, so break them if you can.
Rally to the Union, boys, Oh! don't give up your stand,
To vice-creating pig-tails in Australia's happy land.

Live on Kanaka Queensland, and boast your slavery tales,
Let us breathe the air of freedom at least in New South Wales.
Oh! let us boast a Union in every country town,
Capital then will have to cease to pull the workmen down.
Come roll up to the Union, let not <u>one</u> vacant stand,
You then can say, I'll have fair play, in Australia's happy land.

Once more, boys, join the Union, stand out you'll sure repent,
No squatter in Australia dare to face a Union's strength.
Victoria boosts her Union, South Aus' can do the same,
No need to come, but send the sum - five shillings - and your name.
Three colonies together, all walking hand in hand,
You then can cry in voices high - Australia's happy land.'

Bush Songs and Adam Lindsay Gordon

It is certainly not clear that Gordon's Sick Stockrider is directly derived from any pre-existing bush song, but there are enough plausible connections to make a detailed examination of the question worth while. What follows are merely some tentative notes which might furnish a starting-point for such a careful study.

The Stockman's Last Bed, a late version of which was quoted near the end of Chapter VIII in this thesis, was certainly one of the most widely-known and sung of all bush ballads. Versions of it were printed in the Queenslanders' New Colonial Camp Fire Song Book, Syd:1865; in the Bulletin of 23/6/1888, 10/10/1885, 31/10/1885; in the Stockwhip of 8/1/1875; in the Native Companion Songster, Brisbane:1889; in D.B.W.Sladen's Century of Australian Song, Lond:1888; in "Giles Seagram's" Jack Halliday, Stockman, Adel:1905; in Paterson's,Will Lawson's and Vance Palmer's modern collections; and in many other places. All surviving folk-singers seem to remember versions, or at least fragments of the song.

The earliest version to survive in print is that in the Queenslanders' New Colonial Camp Fire Song Book, which was published on 25th. November, 1865. It reads as follows:

"The Stockman's Last Bed"

Air - "The Boatswain's Last Whistle." As sung by the 'Pioneer Minstrels.'

Be ye stockman, or not - to my story give ear -
Poor Jack's breathed his last - and you no more shall hear
The crack of his whip, nor his jingling quart pot,
His clear 'go ahead', nor his nag's lively trot,
For they've laid him where wattles,
There [sic] sweet fragrance shed.

Chorus: And tall gum trees shadow, and tall gum trees shadow,
And tall gum trees shadow the stockman's last bed.

While drafting one day, he was horned by a cow,
Alas! cried poor Jack its all up with me now,
Ne'er more shall I, my saddle regain,
Nor bound like a wallaby over the plain.
For they'll lay me where wattles etc..

My whip will be silent, my dogs, they will mourn,
My steed's look in vain, for their master's return;
No friends to deplore me, unheeded I die -
Save Australia's dark sons - none will know where I die.
For they'll lay me where wattles etc..

Oh! stockman if ever - on some future day,
When after a wild mob you happen to stray;
Alone and forgotten where Jack's bones are laid,
Far, far from the home, where in childhood he played.
Tread lightly where wattles etc.."

The title-page of the song-book reads in full:

"First Number / Price 2 s. / The / Queenslanders' / New Colonial / Camp Fire Song Book, / containing popular songs of the day & new songs / never before printed / by / an Old Explorer / (or any other man). / November 25th. 1865 / [Table of Contents] / F. Cunninghame, General Printers, 184, Pitt Street."

This rather suggests that, in spite of the fact that the song was sung "by the Pioneer Minstrels", it may have been an old bush ballad which was borrowed or adapted by this troupe of entertainers. In any case, like the Overlander and some other songs in the book, it rapidly became a thoroughly genuine folk-ballad, which twenty years later was attributed by some to Gordon. In the Bulletin of 10/10/1885 (p. 6), a correspondent wrote:

"Poor Adam Lindsay Gordon has gone to a place where the Melbourne Herald has no circulation, otherwise he might have groaned over a letter written to that journal last week. The writer expressed himself as anxious to get a song called 'The Stockman's Last Bed.' Said he: 'The words are Gordon's and the music I cannot say whose. . ."

This letter provoked another from "A.O.", published in the Bulletin three weeks later (31/10/1885). "A.O." stated flatly that the verses had been written "by George Moran, a Northern Territory bushman, in 1863." He further claimed to have known Gordon personally, and therefore to be quite certain that the latter could not have written the ballad. If "A.O's" claims are correct, his letter carries the implication that his friend Gordon was very possibly familiar with the verses, as "A.O" was. Another letter to the Bulletin (23/6/1888), signed Vinca, Townsville, states that the writer learned the song from a young woman, who had learnt it from a station cook, who claimed that it had been composed by a mate of his.

At least we can be certain that the Stockman's Last Bed was in existence in 1865 five years before Gordon's death, and before his Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes, which contained the Sick Stockrider, was published. This, Gordon's best-known poem, deals with the same theme as does the ballad, though at much greater length and in a much more sophisticated manner. The last four lines of the last stanza of Gordon's poem are strikingly reminiscent of the conclusion of The Stockman's Last Bed. They read:

"Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
With never stone or rail to fence my bed;
Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
I may chance to hear them romping overhead."

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This thesis covers such a long period of time, and the ramifications of the subject are so extensive, that it would be futile to attempt the compilation of an exhaustive bibliography. For the same reasons, even a select bibliography would, necessarily, have to be compiled in an unusually arbitrary way. It has therefore seemed best simply to list books and documents from which quotations have been taken, or to which reference has been made, in the text.

These sources have been divided as follows:

I. Contemporary Sources
   - (a) Official and Semi-Official Documents.
   - (b) Newspapers and Journals.
   - (c) Manuscript Material.
   - (d) Books and Pamphlets.

II. Reference and Interpretative Works
   - (a) Articles, Theses etc..
   - (b) Books.

III. Sources of, and Works on, Ballads

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