MOYARRA

An Australian Legend

IN TWO CANTOS.

BY

YITTADAIRN,

i.e. G W Rusden

Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.

SOLD

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DRAWN FROM LIFE BY SIR THOMAS L. MITCHELL.

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ERRATA.

Page 30, line 14, *after* "this" *insert* "ill."

MOYARRA, by "YITTADAIRN.

Sir Frederick Barlee (who was Colonial Secretary of Western Australia for about twenty years) wrote to the Author of "Moyarra" —5th April, 1873—

"I write one line to thank you for the pleasure you afforded me in the perusal of 'Moyarra.' I really enjoyed it, and read it several times; and to those who know anything of the character of the Australian aboriginal, there is nothing overdrawn or far-fetched. . .

F. P. Barlee."

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MOYARRA

Experimini
In utramque partem ingenium quid possit meum.
Si nunquam avare pretium statui arti meæ
Et eum esse quæstum in animum induxi maximum
Quam maxime servire vestris commodis;
Exemplum statuite in me, ut adolescentuli
Vobis placere studeant potius quam sibi.

WRITTEN with the foregoing heading, more than half a century ago, and intended for publication in England at that time, the following Legend is now printed in order that the writer may present copies to friends.

Few changes are needed in the prefatory words which were prepared for it in the early half of the nineteenth century. Most of them are as applicable now as they were then; and, written under impressions fresh and youthful, they may still fitly introduce my rhymes.

"No one has, so far as I know, attempted to depict the simple lives of that race which is now

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so fast melting away before the ardour of the white man's progress in the Australian bush :—soon none of the natural heirs of the soil will remain ; and, even now, their primitive life is comparatively unknown to the majority of their invaders.

" I would fain do honour to those artless qualities which have often been my sole social amusement when, week after week, I have sojourned in the bush, with no other companion than my faithful Australian, my dog, and my horse ; and I bear willing testimony to the fidelity and cheerfulness which have sometimes made me think my sable companion a pattern worthy of imitation by many of his white and contemptuous supplanters.

" Gratitude, therefore, is one motive which induces me to publish ; and if I fail to give pleasure to my countrymen they may yet perhaps, for the sake of the motive, excuse the awkwardness of the deed.

" For the truthful air of the poem I ought easily to be able to vouch ; it was written (or rather composed and jotted down subsequently at intervals) when I was in daily communication with the unfortunate race of which it treats ; and I now present it as originally written rather than interfere with it in a manner which might prejudice its faithfulness as a representation."

MOYARRA

I.

In that far isle which, long unknown,
Confesses now Britannia's throne,
The sun who flings his genial ray
O'er every clime from day to day,
Beheld one born to that dark race
Who hail the woods their dwelling place.

The opening buds upon the trees
Were gently waving in the breeze ;
The flowerets round, of every hue,
Bent with full drops of morning dew ;
The feathered choir to greet the day
Poured forth their merry roundelay ;
The robin with his blood-red hue,
The warbler of cerulean blue,

And all the variegated kind
That haunt the grove or ride the wind,
All—all conspired with tuneful lays
To hymn their great Creator's praise ;
Nature, and nature's voice were glad—
While man—doomed man—alone was sad.

But it is past,—one pilgrim more
Shall wear the chain his fathers wore :
He, too, affection's bonds shall nourish,
While yet, alas ! their cause may flourish ;—
And, when those links are rent in twain,
He, too, shall find the broken chain,
Which once had cheered his happier day,
Corrode his inmost heart away.

And is this all ? And do we cherish
The flower that must to-morrow perish ?
And is our earthly term so brief
Of bliss, so permanent of grief ?
Affections blighted and decaying,
Hope once how bright ! but still delaying ;
Where'er our wanderings, shall show
This life a pilgrimage of woe.

II.

Moyarra lived a reckless child
And deemed, albeit a savage, wild :
His mimic spear was early sped
Far o'er each wondering comrade's head :
The eucalyptus on the hill
Was silent challenge to his skill :—
Did torrents deck the mountain's side,
Moyarra stemmed the foaming tide :—
If spies went forth to circumvent
The neighbouring tribes on plunder bent,
Moyarra clasped his hands in prayer
That he, though young, th' exploit might share.

III.

Long years have passed ; those rites[1] are done
Which, handed down from sire to son,
Still from that wandering people claim
Obeisance to religion's name :
Their temple is the earth, air, sky,
And through the gorgeous canopy
The moon, their priestess, wades in light—
While round her path, in order bright,

The stars, her ministers, array
Their gleaming ranks until the day,
Returning, chase their fires away.
Around, in frowning grandeur, stand
The forest patriarchs of the land ;
In sullen sanction of the hour
They wave beneath the West wind's power,
Till the whole grove, with yielding grace,
Murmurs around the sacred place.
Moyarra felt his being thrill
Within him, as by magic spell ;
Like lightning, through his sanguine frame
As the electric transport came,
In fuller tide his life-blood ran ;
He knew—he felt himself, a man.
Then, by those lights which o'er him sparkled,
And by the woods which round him darkled,
By the blue arch extended o'er him,
And by the sacred rites before him,
He vowed to that dear mother earth
Which gave his ancestry their birth
To wage, till life's extremest close,
Unyielding warfare 'gainst her foes.
His conscious step, his haughty bearing

Bespoke a spirit proud and daring ;
The flashing of his eye confessed
The courage mantling in his breast.
The hoary warriors round him smiled
Approval of his fervour wild ;
Recounting deeds themselves had done
Ere yet their bloom of youth had flown.

IV.

Rise, Mytah ! the graceful, and list to thy lover ;
The day is declining, my toils are all over ;
Fresh spoils from the stream and the forest I bring,
And flowers wet with dew of the fragrance of Spring.

As the young blade of grass to the swift kangaroo
So dear to me, Mytah, one kind glance from you :
As the flowers love the dew-drops which nightly they sip,
In thy smiles I would revel, and feast on thy lip.

Then haste thee thy faithful Moyarra to cheer
With the sound of that voice which is sweet to mine ear ;

And the name of my Mytah shall ever remain
The home of my thoughts, and the theme of my strain.

Ere the song had ceased the maiden's breast
Was throbbing with tumultuous passion,
And at its close she gently rose
And glided to her lover's station.
The hurried air of wild despair
That o'er her face a tremor threw,
The glossy orb that would absorb
Ere *he* the falling tear might view—
In eloquent language have conveyed
A tale of anguish and of dread:
And when she oped her lips to name
The grief which thus had racked her frame,
The impatient lover madly hung
Upon the accents of her tongue;—
Convulsive clenched within his hand
More firmly his unfailing brand,
As though the foe were now in sight
On whom to wreak his wrath in fight.

V.

"Moyarra, I have trembled here
In agony of doubt and fear—
Mistrusting e'en thy constant heart;
Hear but the cause—thou wilt not start.
Thou know'st Muntookan (of the race
For whom the hills are dwelling-place);
Before our gathered tribe, this morn,—
E'en now I shudder:—he hath sworn
That, ere to-morrow's speeding rays
Are quenched in darkness, he will seize
Thine own loved Mytah for his bride."[2]
"Perish the thought!" Moyarra cried—
"Nay, hear my tale," she gently said;
"But late the tribe have onward strayed;—
E'en now, perchance, they seek for me,—
Oh! bliss! that I have met with thee!
I knew, I feared thy soul of flame
If sudden to the camp you came;—
I thought my o'er-strung heart would break"—
"Nay, weep not, Mytah! this is weak:
Am *I* not here thy cause to try
With him who thus hath dimmed thine eye?

Am I not here thy foes to chase
As thus the tear from thy dear face?
Methinks the caitiff I could bless
Who drove thee thus to my caress;
Who quelled for me those vain alarms
Which held thee from my longing arms."

The dark blood mantling in her face,
The maiden flew to his embrace;
Her head upon his breast reclining,
Her swimming eyes the while declining,
She lent his tale a willing ear,
And sighed, assenting to his prayer.

The night-enamoured cuckoo's call [3]
Aroused them from their pleasing thrall,—
One raptured glance around he took,
Then silence thus Moyarra broke:—

"Such was the night, and such the hour
My country to defend I swore;
That oath I've sacred kept, and now
I pledge me to a tenderer vow.
By those all-hallowed rites I swear,
Whose mysteries not thyself may'st share,
While yet within these throbbing veins
One feeble pulse of life remains,

Thee as my dearer self to cherish,
For thee to live, with thee to perish.
But haste thee ;—ere to-morrow's sun
My native valley must be won :
Once there, all danger we'll defy
To dim our hopes, or cloud our joy."
He said, and o'er the maiden threw
A furry robe which half concealed
Her graceful form, and half revealed
Its moulding and proportions due.
The mantle which a gift he brought
From wild beasts' skins himself had wrought.
The glimmering moonbeams faintly showed
Where lay the dreary, winding road ;
But still his way through brake and fen
He followed on with watchful ken.
With faltering step, and anxious mind
Dark Mytah traced his steps behind.

VI.

" Brethren ! full long the sun hath set,—
That brain-sick girl appears not yet.
If more she dallies thus—— ; howe'er,

The exerted voice she yet may hear."
The savage called, and a wilder cry
Ne'er thrilled upon Tartarean gloom,
Wrung from a soul in agony :—
You'd deem a voice from out the tomb
Alone could wake that echo shrill
Responsive from the neighbouring hill.

No voice replied. In baffled pride
Muntookan laid him by the side
Of the embers dim, which fitful showed
The swarthy forms around that glowed.

The gaunt white stems of the trees around
Moaned in the breeze with solemn sound :
The hoarse frog croaked in dismal tune
From the weedy shore of the near lagoon ;
The mournful note of the cuckoo seemed
To wail a crime yet unredeemed,
As nightly here, exiled from home
The ghost of the spring bird wept its doom :
The hungered dog in the distant dell
Discordant howled with painful yell.

But darker than surrounding shade,
Than the gloomy sounds by night conveyed,
The mingled tide of wrath and pride

That raged within Muntookan's breast;
"So lightly prized! my love despised!
And who to me preferred? 'Twere best
He shun my path. The rifle bird [4]
To whom the serpent glides unheard,
Not surer rues the fatal spring
When vainly flaps its struggling wing
Than he shall rue the luckless hour
He trifled with Muntookan's power.
If curse availeth, mine shall cling
Worse than the soul's imagining.
Ye powers who rule the midnight air,[5]
Fell spirits! Hear, and grant my prayer!
His be the seared and lifeless heart
Just skilled to view its joys depart,
But sunk in hopelessness to save
Its dearest blossom from the grave;
Till nerveless, sapless as the oak
Scathed by the livid lightning stroke,
Fostering the canker which destroys,
His heart's core wither ere he dies." *

* When a man sunk into atrophy which the tribe could not account for, it was customary to attribute his destruction to the evil influence exerted against him by the magical arts of a wise man in a hostile tribe.

VII.

Ere yet the day's returning beam
Had crimson-tinged the distant hill,
Or, glancing on the bubbling stream
Lent joyous lustre to its rill,
The chieftain rose, and gloomy strode
Through twilight grey his lonely road.
Morn came; around their watch-fires mustered
The warrior chiefs: the children clustered
In playful groups; in mimic war
To combat some their brethren dare;
Quick wielded by the dexterous hand,
The club a fresh-peeled myrtle wand;
The well-poised reed a spear supplies,
While high, in rapid circles, flies
The crescent toy whose airy flight [6]
Full oft attracts the wanderer's sight.
Rapt in the counsels of the band
One fondly clasps his father's hand,
Each intimation of his will
Quick to receive and to fulfil.

VIII.

The sun had set ; but, tremulously,
His rays yet gilt the western sky ;
The stars with milder radiance shone
Beset with lustre not their own,
And faintly gleaming seemed to mourn
The light of which their spheres were shorn.
But in the east the azure sky
Wore purple of the deepest dye,
Save where the silver queen of night
Soothed its blue shade to tender light.
The stars in bright succession sprung
To light and life, and from them flung
That gentle influence which instils
Its power upon the soul, and fills
(Ah ! sad but pleasing melancholy)
The heart with musings high and holy.
Yes ! this the hour in mercy given
To wean the world-worn heart to heaven ;
In aspiration rapt sublime
We commune with all space, all time ;
In unison with the infinite whole

The heart accords to nature's soul
Of which it beats a fervent pulse
That time nor danger can convulse.
And if there be a dull alloy
To dim the gushing of our joy
It is that we must turn again
To smile, to weep, to herd with men
Who, swayed by passions which they share
With brutes by nature, day by day,
Contented, hug their bonds of clay ;
Their sordid chains still let them wear ;
Be ours the bliss ; their punishment
Companion with their crime is sent ;
To see, and not to feel such joy
May well avenge their apathy.
Ideal dreams of days gone by
Illume our night of lethargy,
And quelling dull mortality
Float o'er the enraptured brain,
When those bright spirits ranked on high
Whose beaming effluence gems the sky
A mortal penance doomed to try
Adorned this world of pain :
The fame to which they dared aspire

Shines through all time a beacon-fire
To light the enterprising few
To their celestial portion true
Which, in the dreariest hour can build
Hope, all ephemeral ills to gild.

Do patriots' laurels earn our praise?
Through the far mist of ancient days
Gleams a long line of Greece's martyrs
Who perished to defend her charters,
Their epitaph their country's groans—
Their fame a world's approving tones.

Doth wisdom claim our reverence? Ages
Yet mourn the loss of ancient sages,
And wisdom's goddess, drooping, flies
To plume her pinion in the skies.

Bend we at Poesy's sacred shrine?
Oh! thou, Mæonides divine,
Before whose throne the boldest falters
Ere he approach the Muses' altars,
Shed but one feather of that pinion
Which gaining thy sublime dominion
Gave thee to soar the upper air
And dwell in instellation there;
Oh! for the faintest colour given

To tint thy page with hues of heaven!
Ah! no! for thee reserved alone
Thy fire, and unapproached thy throne;
Thus Nature vows thy rights to guard,
Her earliest—her Grecian bard.

IX.

In frequent bands, the tribe, returning,
Bore home the produce of their toil,
And o'er their watch-fires brightly burning
Prepared for food the welcome spoil:
Then, gathering to the wild repast
The joke and mirthful taunt flew fast;
Not there the courtly, wreathed smile [7]
With eye that dubious gleams the while,
And features tutored to beguile,
The mirth that nature felt, restrained:
Flashed many a dark and glittering eye,
Dusk faces were dissolved in joy,
And yielding to its subtlety
Wantoned in gladness unrestrained.

X.

The moon's chaste orb shone clear and cold ;
Each emerald blade in the grassy glade
Sparkled with gems of nature's mould ;
The fitful shade by light clouds made
Checking the smile the moon sent down,
And lending the scene a transient frown,
Gave to the eye the only token
That night's mild charm might e'er be broken,
And looking aye tranquillity
Partook of mutability.
With wary glance and noiseless tread
A swart form from the tall trees glided,
A moment paused—as if in dread,
Then to the nearest watch-fire strided :
It was Muntookan : brief reply
Explained the seeming mystery.
"The fugitive Mytah" he had "traced
From brake to fen, from waste to waste."
"Did Mytah wander then alone ?"
"Alone ! No—there was with her one ;—
Vengeance I vowed when on his path,

And dearly he shall bide my wrath,"
"Who? who?" "Moyarra. Both I tracked;[8]
But 'tis enough; I know the fact;
And for the rest, my deeds shall prove
That hate most deadly sprung from love."
He ceased, and by the fire reclined,
Sought in sweet sleep to soothe his mind.
The silent chiefs around withdrew
Their several pleasures to renew.
Not theirs the prompt officious zeal
To probe the wound it cannot heal,
Question on question hurrying
To fan the flame that grows within:
By nature prompted they restrain
From tasking Sorrow to explain,
And leave to Time those wounds to soothe
Inflicted by Care's arrowy tooth.

XI.

Unconscious of a joy denied,
And at the wish each want supplied,
Dark Mytah with her lover passed
Hours which were all too sweet to last.

Those gentle feelings which alone
Are found where Love upbuilds his throne,—
Which can to trifles light impart
Grace unattained by measured art,
And fill the soul with delicate sense
Of bliss, pervading and intense,—
Each moment ruled with grateful sway
Hearts which but throbbed such power to obey.
Yes! if unnamed desires to guess,
To soothe the weary in distress,
Each fancied evil to beguile
With cheerful song or playful smile;
Expected joys to antedate,
To treasure brightest hours of fate,
And ever with remembrance dear
Suppress the sigh or starting tear;—
Yes! if such life be love—'twas proved
By Mytah and the one she loved.[9]
Aye! ye may smile whom fickle chance
Endows with wealth and arrogance;
Who deem that true love doth disdain
To quit refinement's courtly train,
But know! Love triumphs more in such
Harmonious response to his touch

Where hearts with mutual fervour beat,
Where lips with unchecked fondness meet,
Than when to transient rules of art
Fashion would mould the struggling heart.

XII.

Nor wanted they the joy of amity.
Koreungat claimed that social tie.
Koreungat and Moyarra grew
Alike in strength and friendship too;
And now, together to the field
They sallied forth with spear and shield:
Together to the river went
To rob the watery element;
And when, encumbered with their prey,
Homeward, at eve, they bent their way,
The tones of Mytah's voice were heard
Caroling like a summer bird,
As forth she bounded o'er the plain
And blithely hailed them home again.

Then would she urge the friends to tell
How, or by whom, their victim fell;
And with quick jibe and mock contempt

Taunt him who failed in his attempt.
Full often from the neighbouring stream
She caught unhoped repast for them;
Then, spreading out her little hoard,
Waited the coming of her lord,
And joyed to see the fond surprise
That glistened in his wondering eyes.

XIII.

"Koreungat! seest thou not? that light
That ever wont to shine so bright—
Sure, no mischance"——upon his tongue
With faltering tone the accents hung.
Hapless Moyarra! 'tis too true;
The fire that nightly beamed for you,
Trimmed by the fostering hand of love,
No longer glimmers through the grove;
The hands that nursed it, clasped in woe,
Plead vainly to the insulting foe;
The eyes that ached for thy return
Beneath the victor's thraldom mourn;
The heart in which thou wert enshrined,
Which in thine absence ever pined,

Shrinks, languishing as a blighted flower
Beneath the taint of lawless power.
He staggers on, his vision swims,
Fail in their task his struggling limbs;
But on, with desperate energy
He reels, the unwelcome truth to see:
He nears the spot of past delight,
Hence doubly charged with woe to-night;
One glance sufficed the tale to own—
The idol of his heart was gone,
And *he* dejected—and alone.
He spoke not, but his lips compressed,—
The throb convulsive of his breast—
The expanded nostril—gathered brow
Shading the glittering orb below,
Whose fiery and insatiate glow
Seemed avaricious of a foe—
His nervous hand's impatient grasp
His weapon seeming now to clasp—
All told, though now controlled his ire
Within it raged with fiercer fire.
Meanwhile, at distance from his friend,
(Not friendship now a balm could lend)
Koreungat, gloomy, turned to know

The guilty author of his woe.
The trembling women who had been
Powerless condemned to view the scene,
Yet awed by memory of their fears
With converse mingled frequent tears.
Two gloomy warriors from the wood
To Mytah, fierce and sudden, strode ;
Dismayed, Muntookan's form she viewed
And fled, but swiftly they pursued :
The rest, as clouds by winds are shattered,
As kangaroos by dogs are scattered,
For safety tried each well-known path
Intent to shun the spoiler's wrath ;
And, fearful of Muntookan's force,
None knew, none guessed his homeward course.

XIV.

Ere yet the tale was at an end
Koreungat stood beside his friend ;—
"Moyarra ! this a time for grief !
While Mytah's woes demand relief ?
Know'st thou Muntookan for the foe
Who claims thy bride and dooms thy woe ?

She's lost! 'tis now thy task to prove
Moyarra worthy of her love."

"Full well I know my future life
A stern, I hope successful strife:
Yes! o'er the vengeance of my soul
The foe, at least, has no control;—
My ruined hopes, my blighted heart
I owe to his malignant art.
The single passion left mature
Shall wreak on him a reckoning sure:
But 'midst the pangs my heart that tear
One reigns and will not comfort hear;
I—fondly proud—in folly bold,
I—I should have this ill foretold."

"Nay, nay, Moyarra, say not so,
Too well his vantage took the foe!
What nightly watch, what course by day
Shall screen from us his backward way,
Were he protected by the barrier
Of each his tribe's most chosen warrior
Thy wrath would for the recreant doom
That vengeance which shall surely come:
What marvel that Muntookan too"—

"Enough, enough, all this I know,

But when I think upon my bride
But this morn clinging to my side
And now—alas! in such reverse
When e'en her memory is a curse!—
Who could, with calm dispassionate view,
Say, thus and thus I ought to do?
Go! prate to others of relief
Who ne'er have known like mine a grief.
You never lost a Mytah! No!
You never knew like mine a woe.
How canst thou my bereavement tell?
His triumph—ha! thou speakest well;—
I see, I see her at his side;—
Henceforward Vengeance is my bride."

XV.

Assembling at Moyarra's call
The dusky chiefs around him throng;
Waiting his speech, in silence all
As at the close of funeral song.
"Brothers! have any heard strange sound,
Or seen strange footsteps on the ground?"
Each viewed askance his neighbour's face,

As eager there some hope to trace;
Each eye, with self-accusing glance
Reproached its master's negligence:
Not e'en the oldest chieftains spoke
But mournfully their grey hairs shook,
Reluctant then to trust the voice
With words that could not bid rejoice.
While all in doubt and sorrow hung
The youthful Warrawe 'mongst them sprung
(His tale reserved till reverenced age[10]
Disclaimed its prior privilege).
"Three travellers' tracks I viewed to-day;
It seemed they journeyed hence; the way
I well remember to the spot."
Further narration needed not.
Moyarra seized a burning brand—
Koreungat, Warrawe, all his band,
(Though many a proffered arm was there,
And many a heart beat high to share
The adventure, if perchance their aid
Might minister to Moyarra's need).
They reached the spot and quickly made
Their fire beneath the tall trees' shade:
But while his comrades sunk to rest,

Moyarra could not calm his breast.
Ye who have seen a cultured mind
Range wild, by no restraint confined,
And at each thwarting of its will
In recklessness plunge deeper still;
Think, then, what passions rent the heart
Of one not schooled by rules of art.
A child of impulse, he had been
Till now, spectator in life's scene,
And thus to play such bitter part
Wrung sighs of anguish from his heart.
He sunk to sleep, but 'twas to reap
Fresh torture from a feverish dream.
His bark was gliding down life's stream,
Rocked gently by the ambient tide;
A guardian angel by his side
Seemed round an atmosphere to shed
Hallowing the scenes through which they sped;
For them the varied shores of life
With aye-enduring bliss seemed rife;
Each hour owned hues too bright to last
Yet each was rival of the past.
Alas! he little knew the wave
Whose gentle dalliance rose to lave

His bark with undulating motion
In joyous mask beguiled the task
Which bore him to the restless ocean ;
Where, shuddering at the billows' roar
Vainly he seeks the varied shore.
His faithful spirit from his sight
Fades, wrapt in shades of dubious night :
He asks in vain the heaven o'erarched,
A sulphurous glare its hues hath parched ;
And vapours dim are gathering fast :
The cloud-winged thunderstorm unfurls
Its gloomy pinions to the blast ;
Each lurid mass at random hurls
The lightning's intermittent light
Whose ghastly vision quails the sight.
His bark reels through the trackless foam
Staggering beneath the wild waves' shock :
Is there no hope to avert his doom ?
No way to shun th' impending stroke ?
The vengeful demon of the storm
Seemed now endowed with palpable form :
Like an eagle he swooped from his airy height,
The blood of his victim ran cold at the sight :
He shrunk from the breath of the sable plume

Which o'er him was hovering instinct with
gloom.
Like ice was the chill of the deadly dews
That infected his brain with a poisonous juice,
Rendering it feeble and languishing :
He felt the cold torpor of death's touch cling
To his quivering flesh, as each fixed clammy
limb
Was numbed by the spell of that spectre dim.
The throb of his pulse waxes faint in his
heart—
Shall it cease ? With a sudden and desperate
start
The chains of his slumber he rends asunder :—
Was that lightning a vision, illusion that thunder ?

Calm, overhead, the clear blue sky
Replete with thousand isles of light
Met the wild wonder of his eye
And soothed the fever of his sight.
Lulled in repose, all nature lay
Resigned to night's benignant sway.
But the beaded drops of terror hung,
On his hot temples ; still among

His throbbing veins the curdled blood
Struggled to gain its equable flood.
His scattered senses he recalls—
Alas! that inward gaze appals!
Though bright above the stars may shine,
Dark still is all his breast within:
He woke to find the phantom of his brain
Too true an emblem of his real pain.

XVI.

While yet the day's reviving light
Contended with the shades of night,
Winding its radiance with the twilight grey,
The friends resumed their tedious way;
With patient gaze from print to print
Following the foeman as he went.
Where, soft, the earth's retentive breast
Preserved the footfall as impressed,
Elate with hope, they bounded on:
Mid rocks, with scanty moss o'ergrown,
Erewhile they journeyed, and they cursed
The soil whose barren bosom nursed
No fragile herb whose wounded stem [11]

Might claim a mutual wrong with them.
Like greyhounds panting in the leash
They linger, till, obtained their wish,
The obdurate obstacle they pass
And wind the trail o'er the prostrate grass.
Ha! whither now? With heads erected
Headlong they rush,—the track neglected:
And see! on yonder gentle slope,
Where the forest weaves its verdant cope,
What smoke curls faint its ashy wreath
Swayed by the morning's gentle breath?
They reach the spot:—but vain that glance,
Vain that keen eye of vigilance:
Around that too delusive fire
No victims wait to glut their ire.

Blest be the forest's friendly guard
Waving wide shelter o'er the sward:
Here, still the glistening dewdrop slept,—
There, rudely by the foeman swept,
A darker hue the green turf showed,
And marked the way the spoiler trod;
See! prostrate from his recent tread
Each blade yet strives to rear its head.

The omen, seen with keen delight,
Inspires new vigour for the fight.
As, on some mountain's shaggy crest
A rock, for ages fixed to rest,
(Which there, a silent moral, long hath stood
Firm 'mid the changeful honours of the wood)
Now, loosened from its pinnacle,
With horrid rumour fills each dell ;—
Slow creeping first, with sluggish course,
Each bound augments its hurrying force ;
And now, alternate, hurled on high,
It seeks communion with the sky ;
Now plunging downward, ploughs the earth,
Goring the womb that gave it birth ;
Limbs, scattered wide, its track adorn
Strewn 'neath their parents' stems forlorn.
Sad relics ! witness bearing long
Themselves how weak, their foe how strong,
Who rolls, remorseless, on his way
While frighted echo shrieks dismay—
So, now, the friends impetuous still,
Rebuffed, not daunted in their will,
Rush on, their vengeance to fulfil.

XVII.

On! on!—behold the foe! their speed
Shames all past efforts;—every nerve
To straining, ministers to their need
When most its sacrifice may serve.
Rapid, they gain: the conscious foe
Now, first, his danger starts to know:
With fiercer gesture, feller tone,
His trembling prey he urges on:—
She, witless of the succour nigh
Tasks her reluctant strength to fly:
Now, now, Moyarra! let your need
Add wings to favour yet your speed.
Yet, look back, Mytah! as a flower
Beneath the pitiless thunderstorm
Droops, laden with the dropping shower,
So yielded Mytah's fainting form:—
Her fate how different! from her fall
No gentle breath can bid her rise:—
Life's sunshine never can recall
The light of life to her dark eyes.
Muntookan paused—and backward cast
One glance—a moment, and 'tis passed—

Yet, in that glance, a quenchless hate,
Lost but with life, was concentrate,
Glaring as, Gorgon-like, endowed
To freeze the reckless gazer's blood.
He laughed—a laugh that fiends might use,
Deriding man's ephemeral views:
One hand he wreathed in Mytah's hair;—
Whirled then the tomahawk in air;—
It glittered—sunk:—a thrilling shriek
Its mission served too well to speak:
With grim delight the savage drew
His weapon wet with gory dew—
Waved it, exulting, o'er his head,
Then through the wood's wide shelter fled.

Moyarra saw not; for his eye
When flashed the fateful axe on high
Convulsive closed in dizzy trance:—
Vain hope! to dwell in ignorance:
That thrilling cry the air that rent
To his prophetic heart hath sent
The curst conviction that his fate
Is sealed, and he now desolate.

XVIII.

In hours with bitterest anguish fraught
Hope courts each vision fancy-wrought;
Each aid, though fragile as the reed
That mocks the drowning suppliant's need.
Though Reason's monitory call
May warn us from delusion's thrall,
Hope, like the rainbow's lovely form,
Waves its bright hues to mock the storm,
Luring from earth our dull regard
  Like Icarus on high to soar;
Alas! like his, too, our reward:
  The pleasant paths of earth no more
To trace; in the ocean of despair
Wailing the loss of visions fair
Whose fairy scenes, that charmed the sight,
Rose but to whelm in deeper night
The trusting heart that fain would think
They wooed it from destruction's brink.
  Alas! when sorrow's bitter cup
The hand of fate hath lifted up,
What mortal hand hath power to fling
  The pestilent potion to the wind?

From Nature's stores can wisdom wring
An antidote to soothe the mind ?
No ! as the deadly adder's fang
On corporal sense inflicts a pang
Whose rankling venom subtly glides,
Empoisoning life's crimson tides ;
So, when of sorrow's bitter draught
The shuddering heart hath, loathing, quaffed,
Sinks each enervate faculty
As paralyzed beneath a spell
Concentrate of malignity,
Potent as if on earth th' archfiend
Thus wrung a fealty from mankind—
Triumphant in the petty hell
That rends each victim's proper mind,

XIX.

"The foe 'twere folly to pursue
His native hills are now in view ;
And Mytah stretched upon the plain
Bedews the earth with crimson stain."
To her Moyarra madly sped ;
With faltering hand he raised her head :

"Mytah! my Mytah!"—languidly
Quivered the dark fringe of her eye;
Heaved her shut lips with tremulous motion
'Neath gentle winds as stirs the ocean.
In vain—her eyes no lustrous glances dart,
No tuneful notes her trembling lips impart;
But for those panting sobs for breath
You'd deem her frame resolved in death.
Such scene was not for words; nor now
Grief's dalliance did the time allow;
The shallow streamlet's scattered spray
Each pebble marks that checks its way;
The unruffled river's surface hides
The rocks o'er which its mightier current glides.
In silent grief the warriors bare
The unconscious object of their care;
Fearful to harm, with reckless touch,
That form already scathed too much.
Who ever knew of love the pain,
Till grief had bound him in its chain?
Oh! 'tis grief alone that proves
The heart that deeply, truly loves.
In the fresh dawn of life's young spring
When varied joys each moment wing;

False shapes, the parasites of the hour,
Flit round, in impotence of power;
These, when Hope's buoyant yearnings are
A dower all care to drive afar,
Their various blandishments essay
Revelling in plenitude of sway.

Lo! when the gloom of autumn's shades
The atmosphere of life invades,
Where flock these birds of vagrant wing?
Fled to adorn some recent spring,
Their votary seeks in vain to trace
Their path through viewless realms of space:—
Himself in desolation of the mind
By all but Faith and Hope resigned.
Then claims his empire real love;
Sorrow but lures him to dominion:
The dove hath wings, but doth the dove
Desert his mate to prove his pinion?

XX.

Though social charms awhile may soothe
To short forgetfulness of truth,

From them the heart to solitude
Recoils in silent grief to brood
O'er passions dead and pleasures fled ;
Would we could grieve their flight alone !
Alas ! when keen-eyed Hope hath flown
(Our herald once to realms unknown),
When smiling Joy his station quits,
There Care in grinning mockery sits.
Reversion sad ! at Hope's command
'Twas bliss to image forth a brighter land,
But, bound in Memory's fast-compelling thrall
E'en while we loathe, the frenzying cup we drink,
Helot-like, shuddering on the act to think
That conjures to our mind's distempered sight
The melancholy ghosts of past delight,
The ruthless denizens of reflection's night ;
Night which can make time past a settled gloom ,
Past joys a curse, and Memory but their tomb.
Alas ! in such a world, where all is frail,
What lot must aye be ours but to bewail ?

END OF CANTO I.

NOTES TO CANTO I.

[1] (p. 9) Long years have passed ; those rites are done.

The ceremonies of the Australian savages have been so often, and in some respects so truly, spoken of by travellers, that I need not here detail them. Allusion to some of their principal characteristics will perhaps suffice.

The scrupulous care which conceals from women and children all knowledge of the occurrences at these ceremonies cannot be over-rated.

The punishment due to a revelation of these mysteries is death.

This statement can hardly be considered inconsistent with the fact that some white men have been made acquainted with them. The initiation has invariably taken place under promise of secrecy, and the information thus given is so much out of the bounds of local tradition that the Australian might fairly, and actually did, look upon such a revelation as unforbidden by his country's jurisprudence. Thus, when the English took possession of New South Wales, Governor Phillip and his principal officers were made acquainted with the ceremonies, as soon as they had established friendly relations with the tribe at Port Jackson.

But I have known no instance of a native revealing to his own class any of the mysteries which he is forbidden to

speak of, and if it were not that the tribe from which I obtained information is now extinct, I might perhaps be chargeable with a breach of confidence, even though at different times and places other white persons have been similarly confided in.

Some of the rites may be glanced at in this note.

The circle, so universal an emblem of eternity; the sinuous line of beauty; and, above all startling to the Christian observer in Australian woods, the Cross—are to be found amongst the ceremonial emblems used at the places where youths were initiated. Those spots no women or children were permitted to visit.

The footprint (an ancient Aztec sign) is in request at Australian ceremonies. The quartz-crystal, once revered in parts of Europe, and used in incantations or impostures, was an object of mysterious reverence among Australian tribes; and, moreover, they were assured that some of their wise men were possessed by the spirits of various animals which inspired them with characteristic passions and powers. Whencesoever the tribes had migrated to Australia, they carried with them relics of astronomical knowledge. All the larger stars had names, and by the position of the Pleiades they accurately calculated the approach of summer.

Not only as regarded sight, but also in sounds, there was a freemasonry of acquisition by the Australian when initiated by the tribe.

Peculiar songs, a peculiar call (or *cooey*) with its peculiar answer, and much mysterious lore were imparted to him. So stern was the law imposing secrecy that on one occasion a native lost his life rather than participate in a breach of confidence.

Fine specimens of rock-crystal were treasured and

venerated. There were of course districts in which no such crystals abounded, but they were obtained by barter or as presents from other tribes, and were carefully enveloped in twine made from the fur of the opossum. In 1835 a white man seized one of these, and showed it to a native woman in the presence of the man whom he had despoiled of it. A black was ordered by the tribe to punish the crime, and he slew the criminal.

A missionary, Rev. Mr. Threlkeld (author of an Australian Grammar), attended to interpret in a court of law for the obedient executioner. Mr. Threlkeld reported to the Government, "Charley was found guilty of murder, which he did not deny even when arraigned, but pleaded the custom of his nation, justifying himself on the ground that a talisman named Murramai (the crystal) was taken from him by the Englishman, was pulled to pieces by him, and shown to the black woman, which, according to their superstitious notions, subjects all parties to the punishment of death, and further that he was deputed, with others, by his tribe, to enforce the penalty which he too faithfully performed."

Threlkeld attended at the scaffold the man who fell, Spartan-like, in obedience to his country's laws. Threlkeld wrote, "he kneeled and prayed; we ascended the gallows; he stood firmly, saying, 'I am now cast away for death,' and repeated the prayer, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'"

The "conflict of laws" sorely exercised the patience of Threlkeld. He represented, on another occasion, that it was anomalous that a black man should be tried in an English Court for killing another black, inasmuch as, if "acquitted, he must again stand trial amongst his own people"; and, moreover, in the English Courts no black was allowed to give evidence.

The close resemblance of observances of their rites by various Australian tribes, even where the languages or dialects widely differ, is worthy of remark.

[2] (p. 13) "he will seize
Thine own loved Mytah for his bride."

The custom which sanctions the forcible abduction of native women widely prevails, but has often been erroneously represented as a necessary condition.

This is an error. Marriages were often the sequel of an affiancing of many years' duration, and were peaceful and happy. On the other hand, despite any affiance, the strong hand of a warrior frequently seized upon an unwilling bride, and was exerted to retain her, in defiance of friend or foe.

[3] (p. 14) "The night-enamoured cuckoo's call."

The Australian cuckoo of the colonists is only heard at night. There is an Australian bird, of the parasitic order, which casts upon other birds the care of its egg and young, but it is not known by the name of "cuckoo," which is given to the night-bird whose call reminded the early colonists of the notes of the English cuckoo.

[4] (p. 17) "the rifle-bird
To whom the serpent glides unheard."

The rifle-bird which inhabits secluded places, is peculiarly liable to the attack of snakes which also frequent them.

[5] (p. 17) "Ye powers! who rule the midnight air."

The religious rites of the Australian tribes, identical as they were in many respects throughout the vast territory over which they were scattered, may be accepted as proof that though their ideas of the supernatural were vague when

Europeans arrived amongst them, those ideas had been handed down from a time when their ancestors had a more definite creed. The symbols in use seemed to be relics of a belief of the past ; not modern inventions, appearing locally and with widely varying developments.

Of prayer they knew nothing, although they believed in supernatural powers. They had traditions of danger in darkness, and many tribes had fear of the depths of unfathomable water in which some devouring monster was supposed to abide. This may have been (among tribes in the interior) the result of tales of sharks or of crocodiles which abounded on the coast or in rivers.

There were gloomy forests which they feared to penetrate at night ; but if any warlike danger was imminent, the natural drove out the supernatural fear, and they would thread the gloom with resolution.

[6] (p. 18) " The crescent toy whose airy flight."

About the boomerang (such was the tribal name for the implement at Port Jackson, where the English first settled) the most absurd notions still prevail in England. The settlers applied the term to all the curved missiles used by the natives. The natives had a different name for each variety of their curved missiles. The boomerang which returns to the thrower was only a plaything, and was never used in war ; nor, unless the native had no other missile at hand, even to throw at birds.

The massive war-weapon (called among the colonists by the inappropriate name given to the returning plaything) was specially fashioned so that in its hurtling and bounding course it should go straight to the enemy. It could not return. Its shape and the warps which were given to it

compelled it to go straight forward. Similarly the smaller weapons thrown at birds or game of any kind went straight to their object. These could be thrown quite two hundred yards without touching the ground.

The toy, called "barracun" in the tribe with which the writer was best acquainted, was fashioned with much art. The side which was undermost during the flight of the implement was flatter than the other side. The thickest part of the blade was about one-third of the distance from the edge of the convexity ; and there were no less than four warpings of each half of the implement. These were produced by careful warping. The implement, when shaped by the tomahawk with care, was placed over warm embers. The heat made the wood plastic, and the maker then warped the implement, tested its flight in some open space (it was dangerous to throw the light implement among trees, for its rotation was so rapid and its course so swift that contact with anything hard almost certainly fractured it), and, if necessary, warped it more, until he had brought it to such perfection as the particular wood permitted. Differences of specific gravity in various portions of the wood necessitated differences (in degree, though not in principle) in the warping.

There were several varieties of the weapon thrown at game, and each variety had a different name.

The following ludicrous mis-statement about the boomerang appeared in the *United Service Journal* in June 1833 :—

" When used as an offensive weapon it is usually thrown with the *convex* side outwards, but when intended to return it is held in the reverse position ; although it will probably act in either direction if properly handled."

The writer proceeded to explain mathematically how such results might be brought about.

If he had known that no Australian ever threw a boomerang "with the convex side outwards" and that the boomerang of war, "used as an offensive weapon," was so constructed that it was impossible for it to return to the thrower, he need not have "cudgelled his brains" to account for that which had no existence.

In the *Sydney Gazette* of 1804 it is recorded that at a fight, witnessed by the whites, Bungaree "distinguished by his remarkable courtesy," threw a war-boomerang with such force that, striking at some distance, "the right arm of one of his opponents, it actually rebounded to a distance of not less than seventy or eighty yards, leaving a horrible contusion behind, and exciting universal admiration."

[7] (p. 22). "Not there the courtly wreathed smile."

Those who have only contemptuously or cursorily observed the habits of the Australians can scarcely imagine how gay and good humoured they could be. Those who have really gained their confidence will admit that the simple black was at once the blithest and most cheerful companion.

[8] (p. 24). "Who? Who? Moyarra!"

The perceptions of the Australians were so keen that this line implies no exaggeration. Expert trackers knew at a glance whose footprint they met, if they had had previous opportunities of becoming acquainted with it.

[9] (p. 25). "By Mytah and the one she loved."

Maugre all the accounts, and I regret to say the true accounts which have been given of the vile subjection to

which women were reduced among the tribes, there were instances which justify the statement in the text.

The vignette on the frontispiece is a reproduction of a drawing from life by the late Sir Thomas L. Mitchell, explorer, and Surveyor-General of New South Wales.

[10] (p. 32). "His tale reserved till reverenced age."

The respect paid to old age was universal. In opposition to the theory of the case, however, the respect diminished rather than increased with the increasing age and infirmities of its object.

Before a very infirm old man died he was neglected by the majority of the tribe ; but it must be remembered that a decrepit man could not accompany them in their wanderings.

As cannibalism was the exception, and not the rule among Australian tribes, the lonely creature, unable to journey with his people, was not exposed to danger from assault.

I once knew an active lad forego his desire to accompany the tribe, and remain with his infirm grandfather to minister to his wants.

CANTO II.

I.

'Neath the fragile mimosa dark Mytah was laid,
Where the care of her lover a soft couch had made,
The leaves, in a delicate tracery woven,
Formed a bower by the sunlight that never was cloven.
Though, confessing his ardour, they glowed in his beam
Till the bright parroquet on the bough one might deem
An emerald blossom its branches that graced,
Were it not for the star-flower that nature had placed,
Fit bloom 'mid such verdure, to deck that bower
As the stars gild their blue dome in midnight hour.

'Twas there where hours of rapture past
Still o'er the spot their influence cast,
Where every herb that round her grew
Flourished familiar to her view,
Soothed by the thought of time gone by
That Mytah wished in peace to die ;—
There, when her fast-receding breath
Might yield her to the tyrant Death,
In solitude she wished to lie.

She knew 'twas fancy ; yet, 'twas sweet
To think the earth she oft had trod
And wandered o'er with careless feet
Would shield her with its sheltering sod.
If feeling yet pursued that state,[1]
That gloom which all must penetrate,
'Twould soothe her lonely heart to know
The accustomed trees around that grow ;

The frail mimosa o'er her bending
Its feathery foliage of emerald green
Seemed sensitive of the aid 'twas lending
To shroud her closing scene ;
And 'twas a pleasing melancholy
To think when soon the tree must die,[2]
O'er her lone grave 'twould seem to show

A sad companionship of woe.
A little, too, she strove to wean
Moyarra from his desperate mien ;
And when, at times, from her was wrung
A sigh she could not all conceal,
She fain would say her tremor sprung
From thinking on the future weal
Of him she left behind to grieve.
Alas ! what fraud can Love deceive ?
Close to her dying couch he clung
And o'er her wan form hung,
While every pang her heart that rent
Seemed as electrically sent
To prey upon his heart,
As though of her he was a part
And the same life informed each frame ;—
Yet, as the moth still courts the flame
Though each approach invite swift ruin,
So now, his eager gaze renewing,
Entranced Moyarra stood, as though
He loved such martyrdom of woe,
Feeding the canker in his breast
Which knew nor hope, nor rest.
His soul was centred in his eye,

Searching as if it would deny
The too appalling certainty.
Turn! turn! Moyarra! from the sight,
Thy glance is powerless as thy might.

Who hath not felt, when Death was near
And all he loved lay on the bier,
That icy chill, that deadly calm,
That calenture that gulls the sense,
Shedding disease, but feigning balm,
Like the stillness ere the storm
Bursts in its wild magnificence
And the lightning springs from its form?
Canst thou tell where that lightning vanished,
Or where the spirit Death hath banished?
The sorcery of that hour, confessed,
Weighs heavily on the gazer's breast
As the miasma's deadly dews
O'er the languid frame their power diffuse;
Felt, though unseen, yet all-pervading
The soul, which recks not the invading
Till, sunk beneath the treacherous thrall
Flung o'er us by Death's gloomy pall,
With stupid stare we view

The clammy features' livid hue :
Is that the idol of our heart ?—away !
'Tis but its mockery in clay.

II.

The priests of Death be Disease and Fear ;
They attend his footsteps everywhere ;
While gentle Hope, with dewy eyes
And dizzy search, would pierce the shade
Which, like a mist, doth all pervade
Around the temple of sacrifice.
Turn, frantic one ! that filmy veil
Is but diaphanous of ill :
Fold after fold awhile withdrawn
As night-glooms at th' approach of dawn
The fitting time the priests await
Their impotent prey to immolate :—
'Tis done—the blow is sped—
Horror around is shed—
Hope, exiled from the heart of man,
Resigns her seat to Terror wan.

Out on thee, man ! thy pomp, thy show,
But swell the triumph of thy foe :—

Thy funeral obsequies nothing are
But trains to grace his conquering car.
Go to thy chamber! wail the doom
That on thyself must one day come.
Gods! shall the Egyptian harlot shame the globe
Who nobly dared to die
Ere tricked in gorgeous robe
She'd grace a Cæsar's pageantry?

III.

Yes, weep Moyarra! not for thee
That face, now sealed in dim repose,
Shall wake to soothe thy misery
And wean thee from oppressing woes.
Wreathed in the cold embrace of Death
Thy bride from thy fond clasp is torn,
And yielding languidly her breath
She sinks forlorn:
The teeth of pearl, which did surround
The portals of that mine whence sprung
The spells by which thy soul was bound
When thy enchantress sung—
Arrayed in grim defiance, woo

No longer thy distempered view:
The ringlet curls which wont to stray
Adown those cheeks in wreathed play,
No longer weave their witching maze
Ensnaring thy rapt gaze,
But, like the bruised tendril, cling
  Lifeless and withering:
Still, in their last act merciful,
They shroud from thee those orbs, now dull,
Whose twin-born beams with grateful ray
Once cheered, with added light, thy day.
  Yet gazest thou? fond fool! desist:
Like thee have thousand thousands striven
  The spectre in his course to arrest
Whose mystery is yet unriven:
And still, as to the rapid driven
The mighty river's ceaseless swell,
Of which no drop returns to tell
The thronging myriads *where* it fell,
But plunges to the drear abyss—
Thus much alone revealed "*It is*"—
Or as of mist the floating stream
Which wavers in the morning beam,
Anon, its grossness laid aside

Ascending in a radiant tide,
In purest particles alone
Soaring to attain th' Almighty throne—
Impelled by power which tempers all,
Such is our doom—we rise or fall.

Yet are there hours (who has not known ?)
When, of our rigid task abhorrent,
We fain would, like the sullen torrent,
Court the abyss before us thrown,
Rather than, on the wings of faith—
Our sordid part resigned to Death
As the mist-wreath to flee from earth
Freed from the taint that dimmed our birth.

And why ? but that the past still flings
Its gloom o'er all the future brings :
Hope meted by our pleasures past
Deserves not that her shrine should last :
Fruition follows not her bloom :
Pining expectance droops her plume :

Whatever our pursuit, the part
Achieved sates not the longing heart
Restless, immortal, destined here to roam
Striving 'mid finite things to build itself a home.

IV.

Woe! woe! since the primæval fall
The dirge of bliss was ever sung,
In each reverberating tongue,
The pregnant theme of grief for all.
The ground is cursed for thy sake;
Thy bread in sorrow shalt thou take.
Earth shall deny each pleasant blossom,
Ill weeds and thorns deform her bosom:—
As, heretofore, the dews of heaven
Did gently on the plains descend,
Henceforth to thee the task be given
The rugged soil to tend:—
Toiling, in sweat and agony of frame,
Till dust return to dust from whence it came.

V.

Go, pluck from the blossoms the humming bird loves
The fairest that bloom amid Indian groves
Of odours so rare, and hues so bright,
That the senses faint with extreme delight:
Aye! add if you will of those that grace

The gardens of art, of every race :—
Is it not sweet ? Then fling
But one small branch of some loathed thing
In the dank marsh whose stem is reared
(By man abhorred, by wild beasts feared)
The vapours of whose pestilent breath
Might antedate the sense of death ;—
And thou shalt find that drug hath power
To corrupt the sense of each precious flower—
'Mid all their odours to infuse
The venom of its poisonous juice.

Thus, of our earth each varied joy
That ceaseless curse hath power to cloy :
Ever present, never weary ;
Ready, with its bodings dreary,
Our most prized bliss to infect
Making it of none effect.
Crushed by such consciousness of doom
Is there no hope that, proudly flinging,
Like storm-drops from the eagle's plume,
The dross which, to our spirits clinging,
Obstructs our course—erect in conscious worth
We may arise, the demigods of earth ?

Alas! as well the parent shape
Might hope its shadow to escape
Whose dull, untiring mockery,
Still haunts it wheresoe'er it fly.
Yet, if revealed in one wide glow
Light's glories from the heavens might flow
That shade, o'erwhelmed in the bright maze,
Would vanish from our baffled gaze.
E'en thus it soothes the soul to think
That, when disrobed of earthly stain,
And clay to kindred clay shall shrink,
The immortal spirit shall remain,
A pure and perfect emanation
Of the great source from whence it came,
Soaring in heavenly aspiration,
As a lambent flame,
To mingle with the quoir above
Who chant unending hymns of love ;—
That there the soul may float in bliss,
Drinking in at every pore
Tides of celestial mysteries
Which fooled its keenest search before ;
Filled with a joy for utterance too deep
And holy love which doth its being steep ;

While round, in gleaming circles, soar
The great, the good, from every clime
Gathered triumphant over Time
The murmurs of whose ebbless sea,
Which bore them to Eternity,
Drowned in the music of the spheres
No more attract their hopes, their fears ;
As, round and round, in mazy flight
They wheel, a galaxy of light.
Celestial gales ambrosial fragrance bring ;
To harps celestial angel voices sing ;
The hallowed concord of whose magic fills
The air with love, and on the sense instils
A holy joy, a trembling transport blended
With fear that aught so sweet must soon be ended :
But ever do those winds of heaven blow
Wafting that melody's richest, fullest flow ;
And ever doth that train celestial float
In undulating union with each modulated note.
It is a faith that well might win
To virtue every child of sin,
To think that from such blest communion
With spirits made perfect, from that union

His soul alike might perfect grow,
Secure never again to know
Or pain, or sorrow, or that worst
Of ills with which the heart is curst,
A sense of thanklessness to Him
Who framed our being here, a dim
Yearning for nothingness again
To free us from the world's dull chain.

VI.

Around by dusky chiefs arrayed
Now low in earth is Mytah laid :—
While o'er her early bier they hung
Her closing requiem, thus they sung :

Thou art gone from us, Mytah ! the salt tears of woe
Are our portion on earth, now thou art laid low :
One sun beheld thee with breath as light
As the soft summer wind at morn that weaves
Its melody 'mid the silvery leaves
Of the pendulous acacia's boughs ;
Another viewed thee far and faint
Sighing like the mournful plaint

Of the river oak, when storms at night [3]
The gloomy mountain's echoes rouse :
And now thou art gone, loved Mytah.

Though the rites of our country forbid that thy name [4]
From the lips of thy kindred meet homage may claim,
Yet, more deep than the glozing of language may tell,
Enshrined in our memories thy image shall dwell,
Though now thou art gone from us, Mytah.

Yes ! if aught our affection for thee may outgo
It shall be of our hate the untameable glow
That burns to consume thy destroyer, with rage
Which the blood of its victim alone can assuage
Because thou art gone, loved Mytah.

Destruction shall couch in his path, as the snake
Ere, darting its venom, it springs from the brake,
Till the hand of thy foe from his vile carcase torn [5]
Thy shade shall appease, and our triumph adorn
Because thou art gone, loved Mytah.

May the earth which enwraps thee be clothèd with
flowers
The sweetest that bloom amid Spring's first showers;
May the fresh dews of heaven its bosom bedew
With a fragrance for ever undying, yet new,
And rest thee in peace, loved Mytah.

VII.

"Nay, nay, Koreungat; say not so;
Thou shar'st alike my weal, my woe.
But vainly now I strive to shield
My heart from ills by time unhealed.
Still, o'er my fancy, one by one,
Flit memories of joys bygone:
From commune with myself I shrink
Stung with the agony to think.
What marvel if such lot be mine
I seek not solace though 'twere thine?
By heaven, when clouds deform the sky
Each gloomy scene offends mine eye,
Seeming to arrogate a share
In sorrow mine alone to bear.
Fond fool! a brighter hour succeeds,

And inly, then, my sick heart bleeds,
Reflecting that from me alone
The weight of anguish hath not flown ;
And I could crush each tender plant
In the sun's light which seems to pant
With rapture of delight, while I
Must watch its smiling apathy
And recklessness of my distress ;
Till, like the hunted prey, whose foe
Drinks its hot sobs with fell delight
No refuge from despair I know,
No ray adorns my night.
And not the least of pangs that wring
Is, that while thus remembering
The priceless debt to thy affection due
Though still to thee, I am as ever, true,
A listless apathy of voice denies
To shape the thought which gratitude supplies,
And I, repugnant to my crime, remain
Enervate in its galling chain."

"Not to upbraid thee, did I speak,
Moyarra, but with hope to prove
(Howe'er against despairing love

I feel my language faint and weak)
That this engrossing apathy
In which you strive, and vainly strive,
To bury thought of time gone by
Is but the spring which keeps alive
The source which feeds your constant grief
And bars the access of relief.
'Tis weak opposing ills to fly,
Nor effort make their force to try;
But wise to prove each avenue
That hope can tint with prospects new.
Look! when the face of heaven is drear
And clouds obscure the light of day
The glad earth drinks each genial tear,
The sun resumes his golden sway.
What bird or beast, by adverse fate
Bereaved, finds not another mate?
One fountain of their joy is dried:
Another pours its willing tide.
No sorrows that we see endure,
Shall ours alone reject a cure?
But, Moya, tell me not again
Of gratitude won by my love:
Thou dost but grieve a heart which fain

In silence would its fondness prove.
Enough, I know were mine thy pain
Thou wouldst have been the friend to me
That I have striven to be to thee.
But let us choose another theme ;
Two days we now have traced this stream ;
And though as deep its bed, and wide,
As when we first beheld its tide,
The mountains hang around our way
Repelling the broad light of day,
Beetling as if their craggy sides
Frowned vengeance on the foaming tides
Which sap with ceaseless flow their feet.
Escape is none for those who meet
Within this chasm the foe they fear.
If rightly we have judged, we near
That awful precipice whose crest
Groans with the weight of raging waves
Which plunging down with perilous haste
Are shattered in its yawning caves ;
Where echo-waking cataracts come
Rushing with hoary crests of foam."

VIII.

Truly the warrior spoke ; for round
Each jutting precipice as they wound
Nearer and nearer swelled the sound,
While dark and gloomier o'er them grew
The shade th' impending mountains threw.
Aloof the eagle swooped in air ;
No little warbler flitted there,
Nor herb was there its weight to bear ;
Nought but the huge rock's columned side
Rearing aloft its crest of pride.
Now louder grew the sound, and more
Magnificently rude the steeps
Re-echoing its terrible roar—
And lo ! revealed to sight, where leaps
Thy turbulent stream, Tiara, prone [6]
To the black gulf before it thrown.
The artillery of storms ! the flash,
Electric, where thy waters dash !
The ambient clouds of mist that rise
Like spirits pure freed from the ties
Of earthly shocks and agonies !
Oh ! who shall hear and gaze upon

Nor bend in spirit at the Almighty throne ?
Temple of Nature ! where the eye
O'ergazing to satiety
Reels on its liquid throne,
Each mortal feeling quenched and dead
Save passionate ecstasy thy dread
Magnificence to own—
As if the heart in one fond gush
Forth on the wings of sight did rush !

Here, high precipitously piled,
Rude, beetling crags, and columns wild,
Hung vast, as threat'ning to o'erwhelm
The intruders on their rugged realm :
And *there*, as doth the war-horse bound
Rejoicing at the trumpet's sound,
From rock to rock, with frenzied wrath,
The chafed flood clove its hoary path,
Exulting to have found a foe ;
Then, plunging in the gulf below,
Foamed o'er the horrid rocks, and hurled,
In wreaths fantastically curled,
The scattered spray which floating there
Now hovered like a mist, in air ;

Now caught the lustre shed in streams
By the fierce sun's meridian beams,
And weaving hues of every dye
Blended with magic harmony,
Glowed in celestial mockery.

And when, at times, a heedless zephyr
The bow which trembled there did sever
Each broken arch would, wavering, woo
Its gentle image to renew
Their love—now in the sunbeams waving,
Now in the ambient spray-dew laving
Their charms—then close in fond embrace
Leaving no tinge of parting's trace.

Oh! ever thus should friends remain
Aye linked in friendship's golden chain;
Seizing the sunshine of bright hours,
Plucking the rosy-blossomed flowers;
And if the world's unwelcome breath
Taint with its blight one roseate wreath
Unheeded let it find a grave
When not our skill its sweets can save.

If from our grasp the rose is torn
Why should our bosoms nurse the thorn?
In amity's pure cup we'll find

A balm to soothe the wounded mind ;
Wealth's votaries never can possess
The joy we'll find in one caress,
Nor empire like the mutual union
Of soul with soul in full communion.
But here I cannot pause. Farewell
Torrent ! whose thunder-mocking throne
Of ever-during power doth tell ;
Whose glories, silent I have gazed upon
Till from my mind earth's joys and sorrows fell.

IX.

From crag to crag the friends have gained,
With difficult labour, the ascent,
And now upon the summit stand
With eager gaze around them bent.
Short time they tarried, ere with spring
As silent as the far bird's wing
They bounded on, yet cautiously,
Leaving no trace to mark their way,
On printless rocks alone they tread
Nor bend the humble floweret's head.

Now sunk the sun, whose fiery rays
Revealed in all their energies
Paled the rich azure of the skies,
Quenching their bloom in one wide-scorching blaze:
Sullenly plunging to his rest
In lurid glare he robed the west;
His red, round orb glowing in rayless wrath
Denounced the terrors of his morning path;
An ashen gloom as of a thunder-cloud
The horizon girt with dusky shroud:
Seemed it as if the fires of day
On the parched earth but smouldering lay,
Till lit by morn's electric ray
Again in one bright gush all nature to display.
The warriors paused; and, having found
A hollow by green mounds hemmed round,
Prepared for food their simple fare:
This quickly done, they quenched with care
The glowing embers, and in low
And earnest tones then communed
How, in the morning, to proceed;
And how, themselves unseen, to know
The present station of the foe.

X.

When fell the chill that tells of day,[7]
Darkling, the warriors took their way.
Leaving the river's rocky bed
Silent and swift, Moyarra led.
Nor long they journeyed, ere a star
Eclipsed in station high, while near
Beamed brightly many a rival sphere,
Served to their practised eyes to show
Where frowned a neighbouring mountain's brow;
Nearing it with unslackened pace
They bounded up its rocky base:
With joy beheld that winter's chill
Had bared the summit of the hill,
Save where in dreary order stood
Some hardier scions of the wood
Which, having bloomed their little hour
Remained, types of their tyrant's power,
Lifeless, yet in bleak array
Memorials eloquent of decay.

Now, lo! each moment brighter than the last

Proclaimed the coming glories of the East:
Red and more red in deepening circles grew
Rays which revealed the waking world to view
(Like some fair vision of enchanted land
Where mysteries flee before the magic wand)
Till, leaping from his roseate couch, the sun
Rejoicing his bright course to run,
Like his great Author, looked—and all was light.

XI.

"Moyarra! fate befriends the bold;
Caution had found no surer hold
Than this, your ardour hath bequeathed."
From the near forest's bosom wreathed
In welcome eddies many a spire
Evolvent of the latent fire:
Beyond, far-stretching plains were seen
Adorned but by their lawny green,
Save where at intervals, afar
Rose a few eminences, bare
Or crowned in mockery with a leafless wood
Like that on which the chieftains stood

Firm, and of fear unconscious, glancing
With all the ardour of the deer
Who knows his agile playmate near;
Hope, fixed yet eager, was entrancing
With high and earnest thoughts the pair:
One passion ruled them both—to attain
Full vengeance for dark Mytah slain.

Soon as the sun, with ardent ray
Asserting from high heaven the day,
Glowed on the forest's waving crests
The warriors marked with throbbing breasts
Each movement of th' unwary prey.
As bees, that with the morning light
Disperse their troops in banded flight,
Winging at will their odorous way
From honeyed flower to flower; so they,
For various chase prepared, depart;
Some to ascend with perilous art
The gaunt stem of the tree, whose womb
The squirrel makes his daily home;
Some, with the flying spear arrayed,
To rove at will the forest glade,
And, ambushed, [8] pierce the kangaroo

Or the far-striding, swift emu.
To thee, Muntookan, fate decreed
The former choice, when most thy need
Demands the safeguard of thy spear.
Thou, blind to fate! might'st thou not fear
From thine own inroad's vile success
That fortune might thy rival bless?
Yes! he e'en now, from that near height
Marks with a proud and fierce delight
The course thy comrades with thee take
Though tending to his recent track;
Though, of thy five companions, two
Armed with the quivering javelin go.

XII.

Now, while with careless step and eye
From tree to tree at ease thou'rt turning
(Like some fond bird, that joyously
Carols in the light of morning)
Thine enemy notes thee; so the snake,
Extended latent in the brake,
With glance fire-darting marks its prey
Which flutters on the o'erhanging spray:

His polished scales with livid lustre glow
As varied lights the mutable colours show,
His lambent tongue protruded licks the air,
With ardour vibrating—he keeps his lair
But till arrives the fitting time to spring
And crush the victim with its futile wing.
"Koreungat! now our track they near
That seen, for us is no regress:
My life I value not, nor fear
But for our enterprise' success:—
And see! Muntookan swerves; do thou
Retreat—I lay the spoiler low."
He spoke, and heedless of his friend's appeal,
Unerring as a beam of light, departed;
His soul was but one passion strung to feel,
With eagerness of Hope his lips were parted:
Muntookan, startled, turned, and shrunk to see
The rapid death approaching: time was none
His swift assailant to repel or flee:
A fearful commune shook his breast alone
Whose craven judgment owned his race was run.
One effort yet is prompted by despair;
The fatal axe which laid dark Mytah low

Now cleaves, but cleaves in vain, the parted air :—
The uplifted club diverts the forceful blow,
Then, whirled on high, descends and, crashing, rends
The cowering front which, ere its coming bends.
The recreant falls, with blood and brains defiled,
While o'er him hangs his foe unreconciled.
Yet fell he not unmarked : his scattered friends
To the fierce victor throng, with bearing wild,
Who heeded not their coming ; nor, when flew
Th' unerring javelins which his life-blood drew,
Did once retract his gaze from his slain foe,
But glared upon him when himself laid low.

XIII

But thou, Koreungat ! who thy grief can tell
When thus, so near to thee, thy comrade fell ?
Not ineffectual was thy rage : thy spear
A victim adds to grace the warrior's bier,
Ere rushing from the covert of the shade,

Scorning the weapons in thy path arrayed,
And dashing down one foe while others gave
The wounds which grant thee no unwelcome grave,
To thy loved friend thou held'st, unchecked, thy flight.
"Moyarra! could'st thou doubt my truth?" A light
Like the faint lightning of a quiet night
Played o'er the victor's features fierce, and fired
With momentary joy ere he expired.
Then fled the vital spirit, free from care,
The hope fulfilled which, only, made life dear.
Not unattended did he sink in death,
Koreungat, glad, resigned his equal breath;
Worthy to wear th' imperishable wreath
That blooms and decks immortal Nisus' faith;
Would that his praise were hymned by worthier tongue
To raise his name the deathless great among,
Nor, as to harp of mine, thus humbly sung.
His place was vacant in the tribe; who knew
When came not back the warriors to their view

That they had fallen by the stranger's hand ;
And there was mourning deep throughout the land.

XIV

Thus far have I essayed to trace
The lives, the loves, of that dark race
(Chequered the tale, and fraught with ill
For frail is bliss, life human still),
Heirs of the land where I must pine
Reflecting that it is not mine.
My tale is done : and I would fain
Believe, though humble be my strain,
A pitying tear may dim some tender eye,
Some breast may heave a sympathetic sigh.
But yet it matters not—to me
It hath fulfilled kind ministry ;
To purest fancies it hath won me
From sorrowing thoughts that crowded on me ;
Affection, homeward prone to veer
It hath compelled with magic wand ;
Beguiling the sad truth that here
I am a stranger in the land.
Thou mild moon ! pouring down each night

Thy trembling showers of silver light ;
I love thee,—but I love thee more
That thou revisits't England's shore ;
That though I view not, thou dost shine
On sacred haunts which once were mine,
And still, by Memory's aid, are shrined
In holiest precincts of the mind.

Aye ! thou returns't to gaze thy fill
On scenes by thee made holier still :
If shadows o'er the landscape fleet
They render thy next smile more sweet ;
But fruitless is my fond endeavour
To pierce the gloom which shrouds me ever :
My steps no more shall pace the grove
Endeared by childhood's earliest love.
Yet, when thou climb'st thine azure throne,
Encircled by thy starry zone
Thou bring'st remembrance of each night
I sported in thy gentle light ;
Or conned the legendary rhyme
Beneath the oak, long spared by time,
Which reared its venerable head
Relic of many a century fled ;

Or, fearful, tempted the stern shade
By the old moss-grown parapet made,
Doubting to leave thy light which wont
To quiver o'er the embattled front,
A lustre seeming to impart
Hallowing the remains of art.

As o'er those ruins thou could'st shed
A recompense for glory fled,
A holier grandeur granting them
Than was their boast in day's broad gleam

So, o'er the wreck of feeling crushed
Thy midnight hour, when all is hushed
A balm doth fling which can awhile
Of all its woes the heart beguile,
Prompting, since joy may never last,
A grateful memory of the past.

Yes! those were happy times, when youth
Imagined, and received for truth
Its halcyon dreams; in every dell
A fairy spirit feigned to dwell,
And fancied in the wind's low sigh
Tones of aërial minstrelsy.

But why enumerate the thousand ties
Subtilely woven with love's sympathies

Which bound me to that hallowed spot
My home? enough, I view it not;
Those ties are riven, and callous were the heart
To view without a pang such joys depart;
For which the world could soothe such sadly-
pleasing smart.

Shades of my fathers! haunting yet
Each object of my fond regret;
The memory of whose fame is twined
With tendril clasp around my meeting mind;
Ye tutelar deities! whose presiding love
Sighed in the gale, and whispered in the grove;
Say, can your spells pervade this distant clime,
Alike victorious over space and time?
Once I conjured ye—"Be your airy forms
Bright harbingers of fate in life's dark storms!
Still hover o'er, your pinions weary never,
Beckoning to realms where bliss endures for
ever!"
Vain invocation! rests with me alone
A dim remembrance of fair visions flown;
A lonely sense I yearn to lose—the ghost
Lingering, memorial sad, of pleasure lost.

Yet though the boon ye not accord to me,
Oh ! in the councils of my father-land [10]
Instil the wisdom which may keep it free,
Great, glorious, wonder of the nations : so shall be
Your benison wafted o'er the circling sea
To hearts which, faithful still, revere your sacred band.

THE END

NOTES TO CANTO II

[1] (p. 55). "If feeling yet pursued that state."

Though, as previously stated, the Australians had no definite creed prevalent throughout the tribes, they had legends of the supernatural, and frequently discoursed about them.

[2] (p. 55). "To think when soon the tree must die."

The mimosa, which bears leaves shaped like those of the sensitive plant, is short-lived.

[3] (p. 67). "Of the river oak, when storms at night
The gloomy mountain's echoes rouse."

Those who have heard the solemn, sighing sound produced among the boughs—one cannot say the leaves—of the *casuarina* will appreciate the mournful feeling which in some circumstances must arise in the mind when the melancholy sound seems to be an echo of the sense.

[4] (p. 67). "Though the rites of our country forbid that thy name."

The Australians scrupulously abstained from mentioning the names of their deceased friends, and were aggrieved when they heard their names referred to by strangers unacquainted with their customs. This custom produced one curious result. It sometimes happened that the name of a

chief was taken from some place, or borrowed from a tree or flower. Another name was then given to the place, or to the tree, and the old word disappeared.

[5] (p. 67). "Till the hand of thy foe from his vile carcase torn."

It was the custom in some tribes to cut off the hands of their slain enemies, and carry them as trophies of prowess. This custom led to curious misconceptions when colonists saw the trophies, and imagined that all the tribes were cannibals, although most of them were not. Some of them were. Those who were not recoiled with disgust from those who were. In Taplin's *Folk-Lore of South Australia* are recorded instances in which a few tribes were bound by their superstition to a repulsive ceremony. They were not bound to devour a dead relative, but certain close relations were compelled to take a prescribed morsel, however minute, of the deceased, as a token of duty.

[6] (p. 72). "Thy turbulent stream, Tiara, prone."

The chasms or gorges which are found on the east of the mountain range which separates the waters of the Macleay and other rivers from the waters which form the tributaries of the Darling, and which were known among the early colonists as "The Falls," were thus described by their discoverer, Surveyor-General Oxley, in 1818.

"We had seen many fine and magnificent falls, each of which had excited our admiration in no small degree, but the present one so far surpassed anything which we had previously conceived even to be possible that we were lost in astonishment at the sight of this wonderful natural sublimity, which perhaps is scarcely to be exceeded in any part of the Eastern world."

[7] (p. 77). "When fell the chill that tells of day,
Darkling, the warriors took their way."

The sudden chill which precedes the dawn is well known to all who have spent night after night in the unhoused bush.

This expedition of the friends may appear Quixotic, but as a daring exploit in war I have known something similar. I knew three active warriors who made an expedition into their enemy's country to wreak vengeance for the killing of one of their tribe.

The expedition lasted several weeks, and the three friends returned with trophies of the withered hands of three enemies.

[8] (p. 79). "And, ambushed, pierce the kangaroo."

No more expert sportsman than the Australian has been known. He could carry an ambush with him.

Watching intently his game, never moving a muscle while the creature looked towards him, carrying a bough so adroitly that it seemed a growing bush, he stealthily advanced while the animal's eyes were not turned towards him. When near enough he resorted to his spear, or when hunting on behalf of an European, his gun.

[9] (p. 87). "Vain invocation! rests with me alone
A dim remembrance of fair visions flown. . ."

This may appear exaggerated language for an exile in his teens who only accompanied his family to an English colony: and it seems now somewhat overstrained in the eyes of the writer; but it sprung from fervent feelings at the time, and as it is idle for old age to prune the exuberance of youth, the original words are in this case, as indeed throughout the legend, left untouched.

[10] (p. 88). "Oh! in the councils of my father-land
Instil the wisdom which may keep it free."

This was indeed a "vain invocation!" I have lived long enough to see the principles of the English Constitution violated by men solemnly pledged to defend them; to see the House of Commons comport itself like Caliban in the garden of Prospero; to see the very principle on which representation was founded by our forefathers trampled in the dust; to observe the gathered voices from all parts of the realm dominated by the will of numerous delegates from towns so few in number that they may almost be counted on the fingers—the result being that decisions, which under the ancient constitution represented a composition of many forces gathered from various places, have been degraded until they represent little more than one force, that one being dependent upon clamour in the streets prompted and controlled by self-seeking wire-pullers behind the scenes.

The once time-honoured principle of representation of the tax-payers has been so grotesquely inverted that they who contribute the bulk of the taxation have but a nominal voice in its expenditure.

It is even demanded that the formula—one man, one vote—shall supersede all claims for representation of intelligence and industry.

The conduct of foreign affairs, and of all momentous problems in government, must be thrown into crucibles controlled by ignorance and passion. In the very heart of the Empire intelligence is to be stifled. If none but those who lodge within the electoral district of the City of London can vote for a Member for the City, the caretakers of property will wield the power heretofore possessed by proprietors

deemed worthy to represent the wealth, the intelligence, the industry, and the enterprise of the metropolis.

Nay, more; it is contended that if a majority told by heads demand what is injurious to their country and to themselves, their fatal demand should be conceded.

Nor is this enthronement of disorder, this proscription of common sense, confined to the hoarse unreason of the streets. Right and wrong, in the words of the greatest of Englishmen, are to lose their names.

> Then everything includes itself in power;
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey,
> And, last, eat up himself.

We see a party leader, a man of marvellous culture and powers, enslaved to this degrading heresy, abetting what he has denounced as hurtful, and pleading that a leader is wise in his own generation to keep "always a little in advance of each popular movement"—a rule of action which (as a great orator declared) "if the distinguished author of it had been living in Jerusalem on the first Good Friday in the history of Christendom must have made him the first to cry —'Not this man, but Barabbas.'"

Prophetic voices have been heard from time to time, but have been unheeded.

The betrayal of England by an exotic partisan in 1867 aroused the wrath of Carlyle, who saw the gulf across the path so unscrupulously chosen and so wildly followed.

Another of England's sages, Sir Henry Maine, pointed out in burning words, which will ere long be recognized as

prophetic, the inevitable consequence of the follies of 1867 and 1884.

"The effect" (he wrote) "of the virtually English discovery of government by Representation was to diminish the difficulties of popular government in exact proportion to the diminution in the number of persons who had to decide public questions. But this famous system is evidently in decay through the ascendency over it which is being gradually obtained by the vulgar assumption that great masses of men can directly decide all necessary questions for themselves." . . . "The delusion that democracy, when it has once had all things put under its feet, is a progressive form of government, lies deep in the convictions of a particular political school. But there can be no delusion grosser. It receives no countenance from experience or from probability." . . . "We may say generally that the gradual establishment of the masses in power is of the blackest omen for all legislation founded on scientific opinion, which requires tension of mind to understand it, or self-denial to submit to it." . . . "Perhaps we are not at liberty to forget that there are two kinds of bribery. It can be carried on by patronising or giving to expectant partisans places paid out of the taxes, or it may consist in the directer process of legislating away the property of one class and transferring it to another. It is this last which is likely to be the corruption of these latter days. . . ." We are drifting towards a type of government associated with terrible events—a single Assembly, armed with full powers over the Constitution, which it may exercise at pleasure."

The warnings of the wise, the experience of Greece, of Rome, of mediæval Italy and modern France, are thrown away upon those who lust only for the spoils of the present.

The halls which once resounded to the voices of the great are defiled by the intrigues of the little, and England staggers in disordered course along the road, and driven by the same causes which have conducted ancient communities to ruin.

The sagacious Hamilton, and his coadjutors who provided safeguards in the Constitution of the United States, bore in mind the warnings of Montesquieu, who insisted on the necessity of an essential separation of the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial functions.

In some respects Hamilton's care has been rewarded; but degradation of the suffrage and dictations of a "caucus" have so far perverted the order of the last century as to present to us an organized State which prefers committing murders to amending its jury-law, or purifying its electorates.

But in the land "set in the silver sea," from which the French philosopher drew many of his arguments, the virtue he commended seems doomed.

Members of a body degraded in its own composition may be seen one day wallowing in the mire of criminal details, and on another revelling in aspersions against the judiciary.

When earthly things which deserve respect are traduced, "Reverence, that angel of the world," can hardly remain to hallow it, and debased generations may pollute the homes of God-fearing ancestors.

Already the sanction of an oath has been barred from one branch of Parliament in deference to insolence and intrigue; and if the same low arts succeed in banishing religion from schools, and in uprooting the national Church, a decay of the moral fibre of the nation must ensue.

But this end is not yet. The train is indeed laid for the

miseries foretold by Sir Henry Maine, but they will be evolved in England, with more or less precipitance, as they have been evolved in other lands.

The preponderance of voting power lodged below that centre of stability in which reside the intelligence, enterprise, and industry of a nation cannot fail to be abused by inheritors of the low arts of a Cleon or a Clodius. The wheel must "come full circle" in England as elsewhere. Successive generations repeat the follies of the past.

It is the most pity-moving characteristic in the history of man, that the self-earned miseries of one country are powerless to guard against their repetition in another.

Each seems to crave to work out, not its own salvation, but its own—destruction.

"There is a history in all men's lives
Figuring the nature of the times deceased;
The which observed, a man may prophesy
With a near aim of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life; which in their seeds
And weak beginnings lie intreasured.
Such things become the hatch and brood of time."

Richard Clay and Sons, Limited, London and Bungay.

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