

Adventures in Australia.

WE WERE having hard luck on the Loddon, in the province of Victoria, Australia: as the grazing pastures, which we had leased from the crown, had not been blessed with an abundance of rain as we had hoped and had a right to expect; for the previous season had been dry, and all the old settlers had said that the present winter's rains would be abundant, and that the little Loddon would become a mighty stream, overflow its banks, and fill the ground so full of water that it would become like a wet sponge for months after the winter had passed away. But all their predictions had come to naught; and here we were, with half the cold months passed away, and not enough rain had fallen to lay the dust or cause the dead grass to change its color, or to supply the hungry sheep and cattle with food to prevent them from growing thin and wearing that peculiar dull expression which distinguishes animals when suffering for suitable sustenance. The river was dry, and only by digging holes in its bed could we obtain enough to water our flocks, and prevent them straying from our range in search of better quarters, which they were certain to do unless all their wants were supplied; and our stockmen were always on the alert to prevent their leaving our range, and wandering into the wild districts, or else mixing with our neighbors' stock, where they would be likely to remain until the assorting took place some time in the spring.

When cattle are once possessed with an idea they would be better off in some other section, eternal vigilance and a pretty free use of the stockmen's whips are necessary to make them abandon the idea, and settle down to the fact that a sharp protest will be made every time they have laid out their plans for an escape. We had four herders in our employ; and they were on horseback day and night for two months, with but scant opportunities for sleep, before we could consider our property secure, or tame the roving disposition of some three-year-old bulls, which were ugly and fretful because they were on short rations. The sheep did not give us so much trouble; for several dogs which we owned took very good care of them, and kept them in bounds when disposed to stray.

But this was not the only trouble which we had to contend with. Within two weeks we had lost several head of cattle; and they had apparently been slaughtered in the most willful manner, only the choicest parts of the carcasses being taken, and the rest was left for the wild dogs and the fowls of the air. We knew, by the manner in which the brutes were cut up, that no white men, or bushrangers, were concerned in the slaughter; for there was not a gang of the latter on the Loddon at the time, having been driven back into the wilder districts by the mounted police and the settlers: so we were at last forced to the conclusion that a colony of black men had camped in the mountains near us, and were growing fat and greasy at our expense. We tried all manner of methods of snaring the scamps; but a native black Australian is like a ghost, and can vanish about as quickly, and reappear when you least expect him. In fact, when you think you are watching him, he is on the lookout for you, and knows your movements much better than you know his, and you wait with patience in the hope of catching him, while he is probably not three rods off, in a tuft of grass or a clump of bushes, perfectly content to stay there until you fall asleep, or return to your hut, satisfied in your own mind that there are no blacks on your place, and that your cattle are safe for one night at least. Your patience will not compare to a native's, and after a few months' experience you understand that most perfectly.

To be sure, the black fellows could easily knock you over with a boomerang, or pin you to the earth with one of their long spears, which they throw with wonderful precision; but the natives do not like to kill a settler, as they know that such an act would wake up the whole mounted police, and all the stockmen within a radius of fifty miles, and that a war of extermination would be entered without delay, and never cease until the murder was amply avenged.

We gave up watching at last as a useless waste of time, and looked around to see if there were not other methods that could be adopted to stop such wholesale slaughter of our cattle. The only one that we could think of was to send for Elric, the Tracker, a celebrated black fellow, who lived some twenty miles from us, and was noted for his love of whisky, tobacco, and animal food. He was often employed by the settlers and police in finding lost cattle and people who had strayed away into the bush, and were unable to discover the right way out, and so often perished of starvation and want of water.

One morning it was decided by my partners and myself that I should visit the Tracker, and see if he could be induced to help us. If he was sober, or did not have a stock of liquor on hand, or was not engaged, we thought that we might secure his valuable services; and, saddling one of our best horses, I started on my journey, and luckily found Elric in his hut and quite sober, for he had been on a drinking bout for a week, and his liquor was exhausted, and he was anxious to earn more as soon as he could.

"Elric," I said, as I left the saddle, and hitched my horse, "you come with me, and if you good boy plenty of whisky and tobacco."

"What want?" asked the brawny, hairy-faced fellow, who was inclined to be a little sullen.

"Black fellers—kill plenty bullock—no can catche—you come—find 'em, and plenty eat and much rum."

"How much?"

"Oh, lots. All you want for week."

"Me come," was the answer; and the fellow took from his hut a spear, such as the natives use for catching fish, a boomerang, and a long knife, and, without another word, plunged into the bush, and disappeared.

I knew there was no danger of his losing his way, and did not fear but he would find our place in the course of the day; and some time in the afternoon the Tracker made his appearance, and squatted down outside of our hut, and waited for us to bring him a stock of damper and boiled mutton, the whole to be washed down by half a pint of rum undiluted by water. Then he smoked one or two pipes of tobacco, and curled down in the shade for a sleep, first uttering this prophecy:—

"Black fellers come 'night. Me find 'em 'morrow."

Sure enough they did come, and killed one of our best cows; and, when we discovered the fact, we woke up Elric, and told him what the blacks had done.

"Yes, me said come—no moon—all cloths—good night for black fellers. Give me eat, and den we go find 'em."

He ate his breakfast, but did not drink his rum, as he wanted to be clear-headed; and then we went to the place where the remains of the last slaughtered animal were lying. Elric examined the ground in all directions, and did not speak a word until he had made a thorough survey. We could not see a footprint on the sun-baked earth or on the grass; but our eyes were not accustomed to such things, and we knew that the Tracker would make no mistakes, therefore we were not surprised when he held up four fingers, and said,—

"Four black fellers do dis. Dey carry away much meat, and go dar;" and he pointed in the direction of the hills.

"Can you find them?" we asked.

The old fellow allowed an expression of contempt to pass over his face at the absurdity of the question; but all that he said was,—

"You come."

We took two of our best stockmen with us, mounted our horses, and followed Elric, who started off on a dog trot, his head down, and eyes on a trail, plain enough to him, but not discernible to us.

Over rocks and dead earth the Tracker led the way, never at a loss for a moment, stopping only for a second when a ledge was gone over, now winding around the bed of a brook or a mud-hole, but never leaving the marks of a footprint in the soft earth. On, on we went, and at noon saw smoke at the foot of a hill toward which we were headed.

"There damned black fellers," the Tracker said. "No more boss. Walk. See boss, and run like debbles."

We fastened our horses to some gum trees, and resumed our tramp, keeping under the shadow of bushes, and never slackening our pace, although it was a hard one, and the hot sun poured down upon our heads as though it would beat us to the earth.

"Now mind! we by 'em!" whispered Elric; and we drew our revolvers, and waited for the signal for a rush.

A little more creeping and crawling, and then the Tracker raised his hand, and with a bound we sprang into the presence of a dozen or twenty men, women, and children, who were stuffing themselves with the meat which they had stolen from us.

The black fellows sprang to their feet, and would have run and made their escape, leaving their wives and children to take care of themselves; but we shouted to them to stand or we would shoot, and they did not dare to trust to luck and feet feet."

"You black rascals!" we said, "you kill plenty cattle, and now we kill you!" and we pointed our revolvers at them as though about to fire; but we had no intention of so doing, although plenty of stockmen would not have hesitated for a moment in shooting two or three of the natives just as a warning to the rest.

"No kill!" cried one fellow, who could speak a little English.

We got Elric to interpret for us, and swore that we would shoot every man and woman present unless the four thieves were pointed out, and after a long parley they were delivered up to us; and then we exacted a promise that the rest of the tribe would leave the neighborhood, and never come back to the range, but seek other quarters to ply their thievish propensities.

We secured our prisoners, and returned home, driving them before us. They took the matter quite coolly, and knew the fate that awaited them as well as we did, for the backs of two of the blacks showed scars as though they had been flogged for like crimes.

We got home by sunset, and sent word to the mounted police that we had four prisoners who needed flogging for theft. But the scamps did not get punished that time, as they managed to make their escape in the night, and probably rejoined their band before we were awake. They had worked their lashings loose, and vanished, without even disturbing our dogs, which were guarding our hut, and were scattered in all directions. The rascals took half a sheep to feed them on their way; but we never saw them more.

We rewarded the Tracker, and he went home satisfied; and two days afterward the rains fell in sheets, and continued so long that the Loddon was like a large river, and the lowlands were under water for six weeks, and the grass sprang up as if by magic, and our cattle waxed fat and contented, and our clip of wool was the largest that we ever sent to market, and we made some money that season in spite of our misfortunes at the commencement of the year. But keeping cattle is trying work in Victoria unless the rains favor you at the right time.

Burdette's Tilt With a Mosquito.

BUT down at Musquash. Last Sunday night we all went to church down at Musquash, and heard Mr. Hopper preach, a pleasure that all Burlington will envy us. Mr. H. was down there helping the rest of us enjoy ourselves, and the Baptists of Musquash just pressed him into their service for one day. Well, I had been trout fishing all the day before and had waded down the river a few miles, and Saturday night I poured a bushel and a half of oats into each of my boots, and all the bright, sunny, Sabbath day they set out in the sun and basked, while I lounged around loosely shod in slippers, and extremely happy. I went to church in the evening, and you can't imagine how easy and comfortable were my slippers. I thrust them out before me and admired them. In a moment or two a mosquito came sailing along, humming the refrain of a hymn the congregation had just ceased singing. This startled me a little, but not much, because I always believed that the St. John mosquitoes could sing if they would. Well, this fellow sailed on, passed me, then he turned and came back, and I observed that he had a rather wicked look in his eyes, although, I reasoned, that was no more than one might expect of a mosquito that flew around on the Sabbath. Presently, still humming "Broad is the road that leads to death," the bird made a few circles and lighted on my slippers, making his landing about an inch above the slipper.

"Now, son," I said, "this is a little too much. I admire cheek, but you fairly gorge my admiration. I am sorry for you, because I know your harmlessness and your stupidity. But your impudence is more detestable than your imbecility is touching, and I am compelled to mash you."

I lifted my other foot to crush him, and I hope I may live a thousand years if that mosquito didn't get the drop on me.

I haven't felt anything like it since seven years ago, when I tried to mend the family wash-boiler, and poured a table-spoonful of sizzling, glowing, bubbling solder down inside my shoe.

As I am a truthful man, when I felt the shot, I looked down, and that mosquito had his hind legs bent under him, his front legs stretched out and braced against my foot, while the venomous wretch, holding his mouth full of epidemics and stocking, leaned back, pulled, and shook his head savagely, like a bull terrier, without ever breaking his hold. Just before I kicked him he let go and sailed around behind my head, while he joined the congregation in singing:—

"Brethren, while we sojourn here, Fight we must, but need not fear."

I sat in silent enduring agony, wondering what manner of bird the Musquash mosquito was, when suddenly another one came behind me, caught me by the heel, and I thought in my soul it would pull the leg off me before I could shake and kick it loose. And then it dodged about my ears, snapping at them as it went by, and humming with great affectation of feeling, "I Would Not Live Alway." I was glad that it felt that way about it. It lived long enough to satisfy me, all the same. All through the service this inhuman ban-

quet went on. The mosquitoes that came late didn't stand on ceremony, but drew right up and helped themselves.

"Cut a little closer to the bone," the old one would say to the new comers, "you'll find the meat sweeter." And closer to the bone it was. I kept up a regular tattoo with my feet, until the senior deacon came over and whispered to me that the Dominion churches had not adopted the New York custom of applauding the good points in a sermon. Then I held my feet off the floor and kicked them straight out, every time a new mosquito got the drop on me and made a bull's eye, until a man sitting in front of me turned around and sternly assured me that if I didn't quit kicking his wife and children he throw me out of the window. I had wondered several times, in an abstracted sort of way, what the children were crying for. Once, in my suffering, I got my feet up on the pew and tried to sit on them, but the maneuver seemed to afford the young ladies in that vicinity so much amusement that I had to give it up. I got hold of a window stick, and tried spearing the mosquitoes with it, like eels, but it attracted too much attention, and owing to my nervousness was a failure anyhow. At last, either because they had enough, or because it was all gone, or because the service was concluded, the mosquitoes quit, and the last I heard of them as they started off toward the other side of the room to swarm on a bald-headed man before he could get his hat on, they were singing with the congregation, "Happy day; happy day!" Musquash is one of the pleasantest places in the world, and I think it must import its mosquitoes. I am now quite content with the St. John variety.

A Queer Church Difficulty.

John Wagner, who resides at Indianapolis, through his attorney, Ben. F. Davis, filed a complaint against the Rev. Victor A. Schnell, pastor of the Catholic Church of Cincinnati, alleging that in July last, while his wife, together with their infant daughter Katie, was on a visit to Cincinnati, that the said infant daughter Katie was, without his knowledge or consent, by the said defendant, the Rev. Victor A. Schnell, baptised into the Catholic Church, and that a record and entry of the same was made in the church records; and plaintiff demands that said Victor A. Schnell be required to come into court with the said church and baptismal record by him made of the baptism of said infant child, Katie Wagner, and that there and then, in the presence of the Court, he be required to make "erasure, cancellation and destruction" of such church and baptismal record, and asks such other relief as the Court may think "meet and proper." This is certainly a very peculiar case, and is the second case of the kind ever brought in the Courts of the United States. Francis T. Hord and Cooper & Burns, of Cincinnati, have been retained by Father Schnell as his counsel, and the case will probably be heard during the present term of Court.

BE EXACT.

Above all things, boys should be careful to speak the truth. I know several boys, who perhaps mean well, but who are careless in this particular, and whenever I hear them talk I am afraid I do not put as much confidence in what they say as I ought, because I know their love of approbation and the marvelous, and I find myself making allowance wherever my native sense sees the need. This is bad; for sometimes we might make allowance, just where we ought not to, and make ourselves much trouble. It makes us doubtful, too, which is bad.

How quick you know if any one tells what is not exactly truthful, and you do not forget it. Think then that others regard you in the same way. Our opinion of others is, generally, a fair example of how others regard us. You do not mean to be untruthful—of course you do not; but there are two ways of telling anything, and if you contract the habit of coloring it, it will give you a great deal of trouble. Speak and act the truth, and you will never go far astray.

A gentleman gives the following advice in relation to dogs: "If," says he, "you enter a lot where there is a vicious dog, be careful to remove your hat or cap as the animal approaches you; hold the same down by your side, between yourself and the dog. When you have done this you have secured perfect immunity from attack. The dog will not bite you if this advice is followed. Such is my faith in this policy that I will pay all doctor bills from dog bites and funeral expenses for deaths from hydrophobia."

Apples of the crop of 1878 and those of 1879 are offered for sale side by side on the fruit stands. Twenty years ago such a sight would have been regarded as wonderful, now nobody is surprised at it. The art of keeping fruit has attained a high degree of perfection in this country within the last decade.

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