

NEW SOUTH WALES

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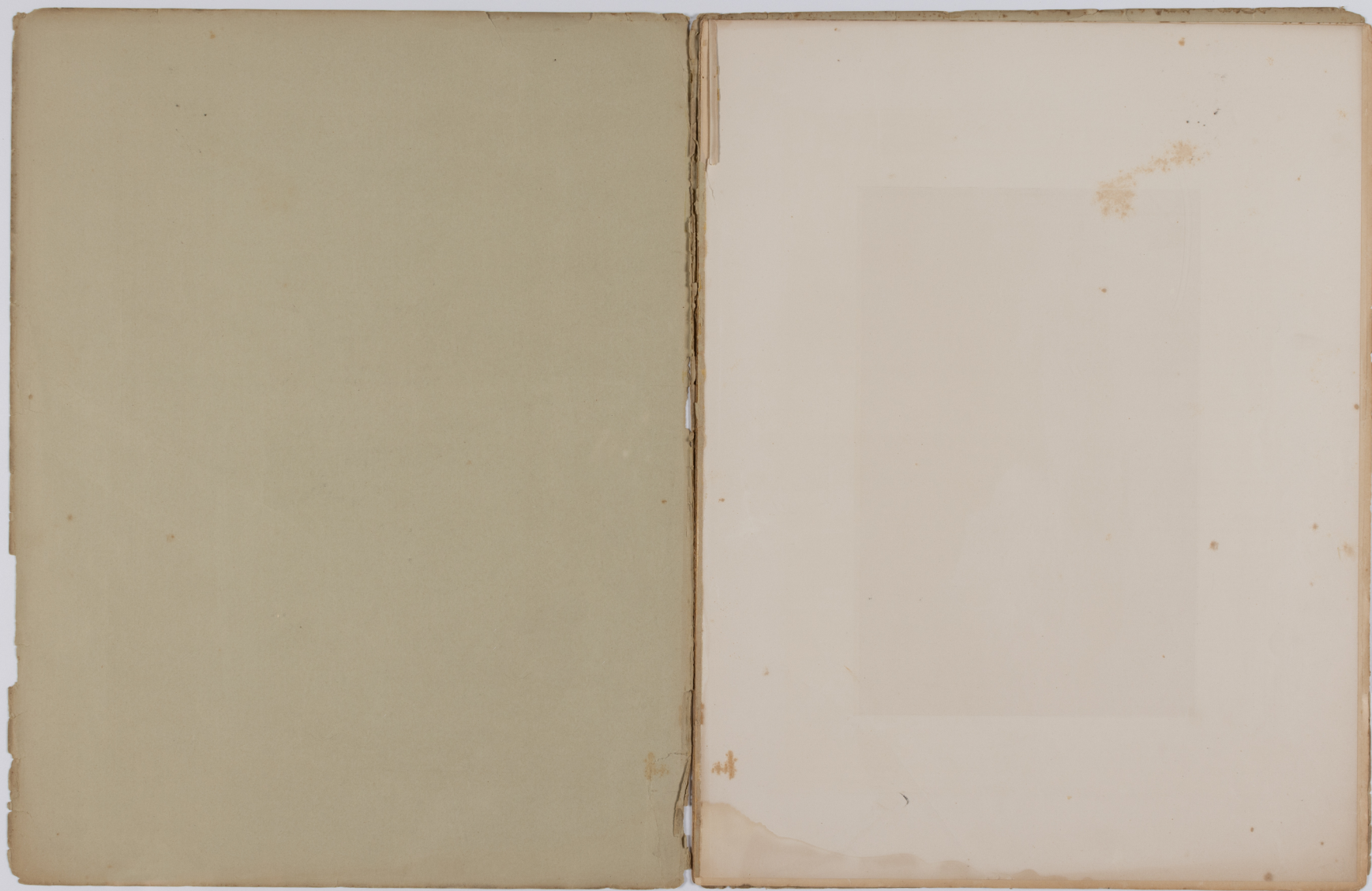
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PART 7
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NEWCASTLE FROM ROBERT'S HEAD.



WEST MAITLAND.

ground near the railway station, with a few sheds for perishable articles, being sufficient. To this market-place on Wednesday in each week come the farmers and the townsfolk, and many dealers from the port and the metropolis. The gathering is large and unique of its kind. Nowhere in Australia, perhaps, could you find a more thoroughly representative assemblage of Australian-bred men and women. The settlement is very old, and many of the farming people are natives of the second and third generation. There are clear indications of the distinctive Australian type, the sallow on men's faces blotting out the russet which their grandfathers brought from England. There is very little superfluous flesh, either amongst the men or the women. But if the people are beginning to vary a little from the English type, the produce they bring to market varies still more. Certainly the pigs of all sizes with the dressed sheep of an abnormal fatness, would be familiar enough in England, as would also the crates of poultry of all varieties; but somewhat un-English would appear the piled drays of farmers' produce—great green melons and bulky pumpkins stacked in mounds to be sold by the ton; grapes, rich luscious, heavy as the clusters of Eschol; oranges in their golden glory; tomatoes in boxes; chillies and pomegranates; bundles of green sorghum and maize and great bales of fragrant lucerne hay. It is such produce as the peasants on the Arno, or even farther south on the warm and fertile slopes of Etna, would bring down to the Italian cities for sale. All is bought and sold there with abundance of good-humoured Australian banter, and when all is over the farmers mount their drays or carts, waggons or buggies, and jog along homeward with many a gossiping pause. It is their life

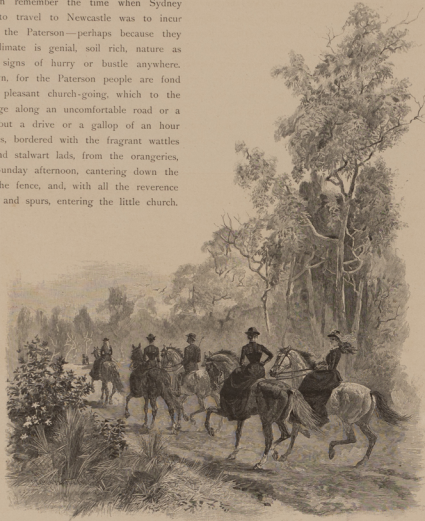
from week to week, from year to year—a fairly useful and satisfactory life, with which in all our rich coastal districts we ought to be far more familiar, for we have other breadths of naturally fertile country, though few, perhaps, so rich as Maitland in prosperous agricultural development, and certainly very few that would lend themselves so fairly and kindly to artistic treatment. The rich soil and humid climate afford not only luxuriant vegetation and beautiful foliage, but an atmosphere which permits warm lights in the foreground, with soft and mellow distances (even before the eye is brought to rest on the spurs of the Liverpool Range), and a sky of all manner of cloud-shapes, from the faintest, fairest forms of cirrus to the dense strata through which the setting sun scarce breaks, and the rolling masses of cumuli with their lustres and lights of silver and gold.

At Maitland are the waterworks for the district. The water is pumped from the river, filtered in large beds and delivered by gravitation. One feature of the scheme is a great artificial lake to be filled whenever the river is clear, so that in flood or fresh the supply may be had from this reserve store, instead of from the turbid stream.

From Maitland it is but an easy two hours' journey to the Paterson River and the pretty Paterson village, passing on the way the healthy little settlement of Hinton, lying on the south bank of the Hunter, opposite the junction with the Paterson. In very early days settlers took up the land on the river banks, and within a few years must have set the willow twigs which show such luxurious beauty of form, and yield in summer time such delightful shade. The fruit trees and English oaks on the clearings of the upland have an equal date with the

willows, and many an old resident can remember the time when Sydney seemed a month's journey away, and to travel to Newcastle was to incur unknown risks. Folk live long about the Paterson—perhaps because they live well. Everything favours them; climate is genial, soil rich, nature as beautiful as she is bountiful, and no signs of hurry or haste anywhere. Sunday is a busy day in the little town, for the Paterson people are fond of their church, or it may be of the pleasant church-going, which to the country settlers is not a dreary pilgrimage along an uncomfortable road or a walk stiff-starched through city streets, but a drive or a gallop of an hour along the bush roads or the river banks, bordered with the fragrant wattles or the shadowy willows. Bright girls and stalwart lads, from the orangeries, vineyards and farms, may be seen on Sunday afternoon, cantering down the village street, tying their horses up to the fence, and, with all the reverence that can be associated with riding habits and spurs, entering the little church.

Northward from Maitland the railway proceeds along the narrowing valley of the Hunter River, through country well fitted to the vine—the vineyards at Lochinvar and Branxton being especially celebrated. Just before the first great bridge of the line is reached stands Singleton, fifty miles from the coast as the rail runs. Singleton dates as a settlement from 1825, and the town has much of the substantial if not the venerable aspect of age. The rich alluvial flats known as Patrick's Plains will grow maize, tobacco and grapes, as long as people are found to till them, and the coal industry established at Riv's Creek, three miles away, shows signs of a large development. Singleton is a prosperous and contented colonial town, putting on the airs and aspect of importance only when the annual



RIDING TO CHURCH AT PATERSON.



CHURCH OF ENGLAND, PATERSON.

agricultural display is made in the really fine pavilion of the local show-ground, at which time excellent stock is to be seen in the adjoining stalls and yards. The next town is Muswellbrook, remarkable for its beautiful church, built by a wealthy local family at a cost of eleven thousand pounds, from the designs of Sir Gilbert Scott. Muswellbrook is the centre of an agricultural and pastoral district, though the character of the country is principally fitted for tillage. Though situated in the valley of the Hunter, it is fairly elevated, being nearly five hundred feet above the sea-level. The population of the town is somewhat over a thousand, and that of the entire district nearly four thousand; the chief local industries are the growing of wheat, maize, and tobacco, and the cultivation of the vine. Of its public buildings, besides its fine church, the hospital and the school of arts are the most noteworthy.

From this point branches off the road to the north-west, through an important district, and one which was early settled in consequence of its convenient access to the sea. This road lies through the towns of Denman, Wyong, Merriwa,

Cassilis, Denison Town and Cobborah, and there is no other route from the coast by which the main range is so easily crossed. Denman is situated on the Hunter River, three miles from its junction with the Goulburn. It lies in an agricultural and pastoral district; the flood deposits of rich soil being bounded by ranges of sandstone hills. Standing on the main road to Sydney, it forms a watering station for travelling stock. Wyong, the next town in order, is a little to the north-west of Denman, and is really but a small and unimportant village. More to the northward is the agricultural centre of

properly to the Dubbo district, being reached by coach from the Western Railway. Cobborah is the last town of this north-western route, which stretches through a broad expanse of highly fertile pastoral and agricultural country.

North of Muswellbrook lies Aberdeen, situated on the Hunter River and touched by the main road stretching between Muswellbrook and Scone. Aberdeen is over six hundred feet above sea-level. The country around it is both farming and wool-growing, though the latter predominates. This town is also a railway station on the Great Northern line. Eight miles farther on, the railway passes through the old settlement of Scone. Although the elevation is seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, the climate is genial in winter and warm in summer. The country in the neighbourhood consists of well-wooded plains and gently undulating ground, for the most part occupied as pasture land; but on the Kingdon Ponds, a tributary of the Hunter, wheat is cultivated with success. The ugly cactus bush known as the prickly-



MAIN STREET, SINGLETON.



SHOW GROUND, SINGLETON.

Kayuga, while to the southwest lies Gungah. Of these north-western towns, however, Merriwa undoubtedly occupies the first place. It is situated on the Merriwa River and on the main north-western route to Bourke, and is in a very thriving condition. At Worond Hill, in its vicinity, gold has been found, and at Portmanthe, coal and kerosene shale. Throughout the district iron-bark, box, pine, gum, cedar, and stringy-bark, maize, potatoes, and the vine. But the country about Merriwa is neither entirely mineral nor agricultural, pastoral pursuits claiming a fair share of the attention of the settlers. The scenery near the town is exceedingly fine; mountains surround it, and their stern grandeur is softened by the numerous streams that have their rise in the Liverpool Range. A feature of the town is the fine bridge which spans the river near the recreation ground. Merriwa is famous for its merino sheep, and the names of Australian breeders and wool-brokers, Cassilis, on the Munnurra Creek, to the west of Merriwa, is the chief town of a large pastoral district. The soil is very rich, being composed of basaltic detritus. Beyond Cassilis is Denison Town, and still further west Cobborah, which belongs

pear has unfortunately been allowed to overrun many fields, and completely beats the farmer, the cost of clearing being more than the land is worth. From Scone the spurs of the Liverpool Range may be seen in the distance, and about ten miles in a northerly direction is the one burning mountain of the continent—Wingen. Closer to the town is a highly romantic and wildly picturesque bit of scenery known as Flat Rock, a never-failing attraction to northern tourists. Scone has the character of a sanatorium, and its climate is as healthful as the scenery of its mountains is grand. Gold is found near the town, though not in large quantities, the district being more a farming than a mining one. Pastoral and agricultural pursuits are successfully conducted, the main products of tillage being wheat, maize, and tobacco. Wingen, the next important station on the railway line, is situated on the Kingdon Ponds Creek, at an altitude of a thousand feet above sea-level. Kerosene shale and coal of good quality are found in the neighbouring hills, but the village is very small, and is chiefly known from the proximity of the burning hill of the same name, some three miles distant. After leaving Wingen, the railway traveller passes some miles of plain country, till the



PEEL STREET, TAMWORTH.

line through rich level country. The greater part of the journey is along the edge of a treeless plain, twenty-four miles in breadth. Here the mirage is a common phenomenon, and north of Maitland there is hardly a more beautiful vision than this vast expanse, a sea of green in spring, of yellow in autumn, whose boundaries are woods so distant that they appear in a purple haze below the line of the dark blue mountains against the pale blue sky. The railway passes through the little villages of Gap, Breeza and Curlewis, but the first considerable stopping-place is Gunnedah—a town of about a thousand inhabitants, situated at the junction of the Mooki Creek with the River Namoi—which, being the centre of a district already prosperous, and destined soon to support a larger population, promises to be an important market town. The surrounding country grows large quantities of excellent wheat, over five thousand acres being under tillage. Far westward is the little village of Baradine, the terminus of a coach service from Gunnedah. Farther on along the line is the small settlement of Baggabri, surrounded by rich alluvial plains, well fitted for the production of various kinds of grain. Passing through Baan Baa and Turrawan, the line terminates at present at Narrabri, though it is intended to continue it to some point on the Darling.

NORTHERN DISTRICT.

Narrabri, the second town of importance on the North-Western line of railway, is situated on the creek of the same name and contains nearly nine hundred inhabitants. The soil is very fertile, but is occasionally submerged by the floods that rush down from the ranges. There are, however, vast tracts of



THE PEEL RIVER, AT TAMWORTH.

rich land on the hill slopes that are altogether out of danger of inundation, and these are being rapidly settled by pioneer farmers, whom the opening up of the district by railway

At this point begins the great railway work of surmounting the bold front of the Liverpool Range. Beyond Murrumbidgee, the line, sweeping with a rising gradient round the face of the enclosing hills, pierces the mountain with a tunnel over five hundred yards in length. On emerging, a new kind of country is disclosed—a great squatting area, a vast tract with marvellous resources as yet undeveloped. Its virgin harvest, and little more, has thus far been reaped. It is the country of the Liverpool Plains, the Cobbon Comleroy of the natives, ten million acres of rich volcanic soil sloping away from the coastal range towards the Darling River.

The first station of any importance after entering this northern district is Quirindi, situated on the Quirindi Creek, a little village of some three hundred inhabitants. But though itself insignificant, it is surrounded by a splendidly fertile country capable of producing in a propitious year a hundred thousand bushels of various kinds of grain, and which supports numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. To the east, in an almost direct line, are Nundle, Hanging Rock and Dangowan; to the west, a line of villages ending with Warkton and Coonalabarban.

A few miles beyond Quirindi is the station of Werris Creek, from which branches off in a north-westerly direction a

extension has induced to migrate from the country traversed by the longer established routes. Due north from Narrabri is the little pastoral village of Millie; and farther north again the slightly more important one of Moree, from which latter, traveling in a westerly direction, the border town of Mangindri is reached. It stands on the New South Wales side of the River Barwon, and is a most important frontier settlement and river-crossing for travelling stock. The main roads from Sydney and Maitland pass through it, and a great quantity of South Queensland wool crosses the river at this point on its way to Sydney. Mogil Mogil, Wee Wee, and Pilliga are outpost villages to the west and north-west, connected with Narrabri by various postal and stock-travelling routes.

This is the borderland between grazing and agricultural occupations, and only the uncertainty of the rainfall and the limited market prevents the latter from winning the victory. A few years ago the district was all pastoral, and nothing more than a little cultivation for station supplies was thought of. The map beyond was then "all white," but now every inch of available country to the west has been taken up, and naturally looks for its supplies of produce to the agricultural district which is near it. In good seasons the frontier farmers have the advantage of supplying the back settlers, but when through drought their harvest has failed, wheat, hay, bran and potatoes have to be brought up by rail from the country lower down, or even from Newcastle. The squatter can stand dry weather better than the farmer, but even the squatter has often been sorely punished. Notwithstanding the richness of the soil, therefore, and the facilities offered by the railway, the dryness of successive seasons has kept agriculture back. But the farmers have got a footing, and will keep it; though as yet they have not changed the dominant pastoral occupation of the country; indeed, the Liverpool Plains still constitute one of the finest squatting districts of the colony. On this volcanic soil the grass is always sweet, and after the

most devastating drought the face of the country is changed in a week by a good fall of rain. The rapidity of the transformation is almost magical. Over an immense area, looking just before as bare as a road, there is green grass, and in a few weeks it will be waving like a field of young wheat. In many places it will shoot up as the cane-growth of a tropic swamp; a horseman may take some of the longest

seed-stems and knot them above his head. Cattle are hidden in it, and sheep have to be taken back to higher and poorer feeding-ground. A stranger looking at this magnificent growth of grass could hardly believe that a few weeks or months previously animals were dying for want of food. It is one of the troubles of the Australian squatter that he is

DANGAR FALLS.



treated alternately to a feast or a famine. Nature is profuse at intervals, but has also her seasons of niggardliness. What man has to do in these climates is to learn the art of storing the surplus of good years, and making it provide for the wants of scanty years. Nature here teaches the lesson of forecast and prudence, and it is because this lesson has been so insufficiently learned that there have been so many reverses of fortune—that Australia has been alternately praised as a land of plenty and denounced as a land of barrenness. Enough has already been done by irrigation in some districts to show that by a moderate outlay in preserving water, and pumping from the rivers, sufficient hay could be grown at a reasonable price to save from destruction the choicest portions of the flocks. In a climate where the rainfall is so uncertain, permanent and productive settlement can only be secured by the storage of water and the storage of food, and this is the

double problem that lies before the settlers of the future. Tamworth or Armidale? Which is to be the greater of these northern towns? The question is one of local interest, and provokes some rivalry not altogether unwholesome. Both show a closer resemblance to English county towns than do most of the inland cities of Australia. Both enjoy a fine and invigorating



ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL, ARMIDALE.

climate, both have about them fertile areas ample for the support of large populations. Tamworth was the first settled, and in respect to population still retains the lead. Like Maitland, it is a divided town—Tamworth East and Tamworth West. The western side is the first touched by the railway, and in the course of nature should have been the larger of the two, but the Peel River Company, an offshoot of the Australian Agricultural Company, possessed and used for pastoral purposes all the magnificent land to the south and west, and freehold farmers could get no footing there. No farmers, no town, is a law in these districts. Great squattages are not so favourable to the growth of inland towns as small farms are, because their business lies more with the commercial towns on the coast. Absentee landed proprietors, especially when they take the form of dividend-seeking companies, have no close sympathy with local movements; for while they favour some forms of enterprise,



ARMIDALE.

streets, and to found an excellent public library. Amongst the business enterprises of the place are flour and saw mills, coach factories, breweries, and a manufactory of galvanised iron.

Northward from Tamworth the railway route follows the general line of the old road along the backbone of the colony, which here spreads into a great table-land. Over the Moonbi range—a terrible trial to teamsters in the old days—the line passes Bendemeer and Salisbury Plains, runs a few miles west of Walcha and through Uralla. For a space of about ten miles across the Moonbi a vast breadth of some of the grandest and most characteristic of Australian scenery is seen from the railway: great round hills, forest-clad to their summits; crag-fronted mountains with deep-ploughed ravines on their sides; giant tree-ferns, seen palm-like in the water-fed nooks below; and the lords of the forest, the great blue gums of the mountains, towering (like the serried lances of the Miltonic host) above the bright blossomed odorous scrub growth. Occasionally the gint of a brook or the flash of a waterfall is seen, the black cockatoo shrieks as he flies disturbed from his lofty eyrie, and the eagle hangs against the sky, apparently regarding even this most stupendous innovation of the human race with supreme contempt.



R.C. CATHEDRAL, ARMIDALE.

Uralla is situated on the Rocky River, and good gold has been found in the beds of ancient streams covered in many places by eruptive volcanic matter, or the detritus of ages, so that the town has been largely supported by miners. Fifteen miles beyond is the city of Armidale, at an elevation of over three thousand three hundred feet. This is the cathedral town of the Anglican bishop of the north, and sometimes his residence. The cathedral church of St. Peter's is one of the finest brick structures in the district. The city, also the seat of a Roman Catholic bishop, is the centre of a district of large and varied resources. The open downs invite the plough, and miners have found profitable scope for their labours within an easy distance. The soil and climate are especially adapted for orchards, the European fruit produced here being of first-class quality. Antimony exists in considerable quantities, and the ore is rich. Churches, schools, official and commercial buildings give indications of a rich, prosperous city. The post-office is a large and handsome structure, while the banks are built in a style showing unmistakably faith in permanent and profitable business. Armidale is also the centre of a district rich in natural beauty. A few miles from the town, the mountain chain rises—wild and picturesque, with precipitous heights and deep gorges, down which after summer storms and winter rains great bodies of water rush, producing the Dangar, Wallamumbi and many other lesser and unnamed cataracts. The Wallamumbi Falls are of peculiar beauty, especially at that hour when the slanting sun-rays, playing on the water mist, spans the twin torrents with a bow of prism tints. In ordinary seasons, however, water is as scarce here as in the gorges of the Blue Mountains, and only rivulets trickle through the ferns, and fall in spray-showers over the bare faces of the rocks.

The mineral enterprise of the New England district finds its larger development more to the north in the neighbourhood of Glen Innes, Tenterfield and Inverell, the two former towns being along the route of the railway to the Queensland border. Inverell lies to the west of Glen Innes, and is to be connected with the main line by a branch railway. Many settlers from the Scottish Highlands were attracted to this district by the congenial climate, and have fastened on the country some old

familiar names—Ben Lomond, Oban, Glencoe. Ben Lomond is the summit of the range, the railway track reaching at this point an elevation of four thousand five hundred feet; after passing the summit the line runs down to Glen Innes, a prosperous town

of two thousand people, in a fine invigorating climate. Tin-mining has added greatly to the prosperity of the place, the metal having been discovered in large quantities at Vegetable Creek, twenty-eight miles in a northerly direction. Many of the deposits were profitably washed out by the primitive appliances of the first discoverers, but claims more difficult to deal with have since been successfully worked by elaborate machinery. Inverell is also the centre of a tin-producing district, and the country lying between it and the town of Glen Innes contains a large breadth of agricultural land. The vine flourishes here, and is extensively grown. Where the soil invites to farming and the climate is favourable, mining often leads to permanent settlement. The mineral is the magnet that draws the people; who, searching for subterranean treasure, are struck by the richness of the easily-worked soil, and many adventurers throw aside pick, shovel and sluicing-gear for plough-share and reaping-hook. The miners furnish an immediate market for the local produce, and even if the mining industry should fall off, the farmers stick to their land and look for customers farther afield. This has been the history of many a settlement in Australia which began with one industry and finally gravitated to another.

Tenterfield, the border town, is also to some extent agricultural, though the country is granitic and the soil shallow. Minerals of several sorts have been traced about the mountain spurs and the river beds that lie to the east and north. Gold, silver, and tin have all been discovered in payable quantities. Some of the richest ores, however, are rather untractable, and those which could be most easily worked are in somewhat inaccessible positions. The thorough development of the wealth of this district awaits the right combination of skill and capital. The next township to the north, Standhope, the centre of the Maryland tin-fields, is within the Queensland territory. On the border-line is the junction of the railway systems, a break of gauge necessitating a stoppage and a transfer.



WALLAMUMBI FALLS.

This high table-land, along which the northern railway runs, will always be the home of a robust population. To the west, the ground slopes away, and as the rainfall becomes smaller



THE RICHMOND, AT LISMORE.

and smaller, agriculture gradually ceases, till pastoral occupation holds almost undisputed sway. And this is mainly the character of the large triangular tract of country lying to the west of the Great Northern line; of which Tenterfield and Mungindi may be regarded as the extreme points of the base and Tamworth the apex, while the two railway routes bound it on either side. Within these lines cluster a number of villages more or less important. The principal are Yerraman, Warialda, Emmaville, Stanifer, Tingha, Bundarra, Bingera and Barraba. None of all this number has, however, arrived to the rank of a town; they are merely mineral or pastoral villages, whose growth and whose future hang upon the caprices of climate and the success which may attend the enterprise of mining speculators.

The high table-land, on which Glen Innes and Tenterfield stand, lies between the great pastoral slope towards the west and the rich agricultural province on the east. The elevation of the table-land makes the descent to the coast necessarily steep, and for this reason the connection between the two is difficult and expensive. In early days a bullock-track was cleared up the ridges from Grafton to the high land; later a coach road was made, and the streams were crossed by

substantial bridges. But even this road is a severe one for traffic, and the inhabitants both of the highlands and the lowlands have been pressing for a railway. Such a line, it is said, would not only give to the table-lands the quickest access to the sea, but it would also facilitate an interchange of the semi-tropical coast produce with the wheat of the colder climate of the plateau. Two different routes have been surveyed; one goes from Grafton to Glen Innes, the other starting from the same point passes through the Richmond River district to Tenterfield; each has its local advocates. The latter route would pass through the townships of Casino and Tabulam.

Casino is ninety miles from the sea, at the head of the navigation of one of the branches of the Richmond River. In early days it was a rendezvous for stockmen, squatters and drovers, who sent their fat mobs across the river, where now stands the largest timber bridge in Australia. The whole of this district is a fine grazing country, and the rearing of cattle for the market was its primitive industry. To this was added timber-cutting, for the cedar, especially on the lower lands, grew luxuriantly. Timber-getters drew their logs to the water's edge, and floated them in rafts down the river. All the best trees within easy reach of the water have now been cleared away; but as one pursuit decayed, a new one arose to take its place. The advent of sugar-growing altered the industrial character of the district, and enabled agriculture to replace the earlier pastoral occupation. The rich flats were eagerly taken up for planting purposes as soon as it was found that sugar would grow, and that sugar would pay. Thick scrub, which it was not profitable to clear for pastoral uses, disappeared under the woodman's axe, and the rich soil became available for tillage. The population around Casino rapidly increased, and the town has now fifteen hundred inhabitants, with churches, schools and a hospital, while the stores and shops along the broad main street give



CASINO.

evident signs of a healthy commercial development.

At the junction of the north and south arms of the river is the township of Coraki, and at the head of the navigation of the northern arm stands Lismore, the port of the big scrub and the outlet for a large timber trade.

The timber-getters, forced to go further and further back, have often to cut their own tracks—tracks so rough and steep that to bring the lumber down them would to the uninitiated seem impracticable. But bullocks are patient animals; a long team of them pulling together, guided and urged by a skilful driver, do wonders. Lismore is a town of a thousand people,

Grafton is the capital of the Clarence district, and indeed may be regarded as the queen city of the north. It is the head of the navigation for large vessels, but small craft can ascend fifty miles higher; the town is laid out on both sides of the river, which at this point—forty-five miles from the sea—is half a mile in breadth. It is in the centre of a sugar-growing



THE CLARENCE, AT GRAFTON.

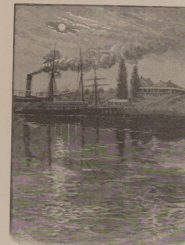
and fully three thousand find profitable employment in the surrounding district. A fine iron bridge spans the river, and good roads are beginning to stretch out into the country, now being settled by industrious farmers. Down the Richmond River, at its southern bend, is the township of Woodburn, the centre of a large area of sugar-growing country and the point nearest to the Clarence River.

The seaport of the Richmond is Ballina, a small place at present, the land on the lower part of the river being poor and sandy. The bar is both difficult and dangerous, and, according to the engineers, to improve the entrance would be an expensive business. Whether to do this, or to connect the commerce of the Richmond with the Clarence by railway, is a local question not yet settled. The Clarence is the larger river of the two; its entrance is already the more available, and it can be the more quickly and economically improved. The basins of the two rivers put together constitute one of the finest and richest provinces of New South Wales; their great want is better communication with the metropolis.

In the valley of the Orara River, one of the tributaries of the Clarence, is a magnificent timber forest, and when transit facilities are provided by railway, a large and profitable industry will be developed. When the trees have been removed, the highly fertile soil will be valuable for farms.

district, while behind it lie prosperous squattages. In the creeks and mountains in the background many indications have been found of mineral wealth. Grafton, which with Armidale is the see of an Anglican bishop, is practically "the city" for a large number of people for whom the great metropolis is too far off. Hither they come, to see and be seen, to buy their stores, spend their surplus, and see life. The surveyors laid out the town with streets of a width sufficient to let them be shady avenues as well as convenient routes for traffic. Trees have been planted, and are already well grown; they give grateful coolness in the hot summer months and contrast pleasantly with the glistening fronts of the buildings. Of these the courthouse is the most considerable, though the banks are built substantially, and, taken as a whole, the city is not unworthy of its fine surroundings. The population is at present about five thousand, but Grafton is one of those cities which are destined to grow. When the river entrance is improved, and railway communication is open with the table-land and the rich coast country, the development of the district will be greatly quickened.

Around Grafton, and studding the Clarence between it and the coast, a number of thriving villages have sprung up. Chatsworth Island, lying at the mouth of the river, is an important maize and sugar growing locality. The soil is very rich, and produces large crops every year. There are



THE GRAFTON WHARF.



COURTHOUSE AND POST-OFFICE, GRAFTON.

here eight sugar mills, including the extensive works of the Colonial Sugar Company, employing some hundreds of hands. The population is over twelve hundred, and its prosperity is gradually increasing. Lawrence, a shipping port for a great deal of the Tenterfield wool, is another riverside village, and the site of three sugar mills. It is situated on the Clarence, about eighteen miles from the city. A little to the south, on the opposite bank of the river, is Brushgrove, a village with one sugar mill; and following the course of the Clarence, Ulmarra is reached, with a population of over twenty-three hundred and supporting four sugar mills. To the south-west of Grafton is the little mining settlement of Dalmorton.

South of the Clarence sugar-growing is not profitable. The cane thrives luxuriantly enough, and many settlers went into the cultivation with high hopes; but there is just enough frost in winter to spoil the sap, and after repeated experiments the attempt had to be abandoned. But both in respect to soil and climate the district is admirably adapted to the growth of maize, and this is the great support of the farmers, the market for the produce being principally in Sydney and Melbourne.

The Namucca and Bellingen Rivers, though small streams, are the outlets for rich districts, in which there are many prosperous settlers whose only want is better means of transit. Farther south lies the large watershed of the Macleay River. The port here is in about the same latitude as Armidale, but the track up to the table-land is very rough, hence the commercial intercourse between the coast and the country inland is limited.

The township of the Macleay Valley is Kempsey, with about fifteen hundred inhabitants. The people build great hopes for the future, first on the Government expenditure on the great breakwater at Trial Bay—where the chief labour prison of the colony is situated—and then on the fine harbour of refuge which will be created when the breakwater is finished. Three little villages are situated on the Macleay—Gladstone, Frederickton and

Smithtown, of which the last is the most important. Farther south again lies the similar watershed of the Hastings River, of which the town is Port Macquarie, with a population of about nine hundred. It was a convict settlement in the early days, and many substantial buildings, for which it is difficult to find a use, still remain as relics of the olden time. The newer town is simply the business centre of the agricultural district and the pastoral background. The products of the district are maize, barley, oats and potatoes; the cultivation of the vine is also an important industry. Copper has been found in the vicinity, and towards the head of the river, gold in payable quantities. The geographical feature of the country is Mount Seaview, rising six thousand feet, and it is the proximity of this great cloud-gatherer that makes Port Macquarie one of the rainiest townships on the coast.

South of the Hastings lies the valley of the Manning—not so populous as the country to the north, but of a somewhat similar character. Wingham is the town, and it lies at the head of the navigation. There is fine timber in the district, and there are some mineral indications, but as yet no profitable mines. A number of settlements lie along the course of the Manning, among the more important being the little towns of Croki, Cundletown, Taree and Timonec, with populations ranging from two to six hundred. The inlets on the coast, especially that at Camden Haven, are famous for oysters.

A large district, of which Port Stephens, with its town of Carrington, is the natural outlet, lies south of the Manning. Along the shore are the extensive Myall Lakes, on the banks



KEMPSEY.

of which are valuable forests. Stroud, the principal town, has a large sawmilling industry; farther north is Gloucester, and to the north-west is the gold-mining settlement of Copeland. In the county of Gloucester is the great property of the Australian

Agricultural Company, but no corresponding development of the country has justified the policy of making such large grants. One or two small goldfields have been discovered, but as a whole the district has not been progressive.

These northern rivers in the coast district between Port Stephens and the northern border of the colony, constitute a

Hornshy and Pennant Hills—a delightful drive, affording magnificent views of the city and its surroundings; of rolling woodlands, with occasional glimpses of the water, and of glorious orange groves rich with fruit or odorous with bloom.

The town of Parramatta nestles in the bosom of the hills at the head of the river, and is not only quaint, but unmi-



CEDAR-GETTING ON THE RICHMOND RIVER.

very valuable portion of New South Wales, but as the communication with them is almost wholly by sea, and as all the rivers are bar-bound, progress has been greatly checked. A coast-line of railway has been proposed, and should this be carried out the line of settlements along the northern coast will greatly increase in importance.

WESTERN DISTRICT.

NEARLY a hundred years ago—in the month of November of the year 1788—Governor Phillip went up to the head of the harbour to choose a site for a redoubt, and quarters for those who were to be employed in clearing and tilling the agricultural land in the vicinity. Two years later—so successful had the primitive tillage been—the Governor issued orders for the laying out of a regular town, which received the name of Parramatta.

This old settlement, with a record beginning with the earliest history of the colony, lies at the head of that farthest reaching arm of Port Jackson called the Parramatta River. Steamers of moderate draught run up from Sydney in about two hours, which are passed pleasantly enough. As the river narrows the scenery changes gradually to lower, less rugged and more fertile banks. From the head of the navigation, a tramline, constructed by private enterprise, conveys passengers to the park gates on the westward side of the town. But there is another and beautiful route by the north shore of the river through Gladesville and Kyle, or longer still by the Lane Cove Road through

takeably old-fashioned. The tale of a hundred years is written plainly on the gray stone walls still backing up the ancient public buildings; on the broad leafy crowns of the beautiful oaks and the great heads of the stone pines.

The churches, however, as seen from the hills, have by no means an ancient appearance, though the double-spired St. John's dates as far back as 1803. There is little, however, of the original structure left, save the old foundations and some portions of the main walls. It was built originally to imitate the old church at Reculvers, on the Kentish coast, the last ecclesiastical edifice on which rested the eyes of Mrs. Macarthur when saying good-bye to old England, and which she piously vowed to reproduce in her new country if she ever lived to reach it in safety—the vow was kept. All Saints', with the tallest spire, is of recent date, and the handsome buildings erected by Roman Catholics and Congregationalists are also modern, typifying a new generation in contrast with the oaks, and the cottages they overshadow.

Among the buildings to be noted are the *Mercury* newspaper office, the banks, the commodious public offices, the old courthouse, the post-office, deeply alcoved along its front, and the old-fashioned and well-named Woolpack Inn, lying behind its broad lawn fringed with tall and shady trees. Primary schools, both public and denominational, are good and commodious. But the one educational establishment whose history is inseparable from that of Parramatta, and whose influence extends far and wide through the colony, is the old King's School, under



THE SUGAR INDUSTRY, RICHMOND RIVER.



PARRAMATTA.

the direct control of the Episcopal Church. Founded in the year 1832 when Sir Richard Bourke was the head of the State and Bishop Broughton of the Church, it immediately became the great Church of England school of the colony. It is by no means a beautiful building, having suffered many additions wherein utility was the primary object. The excellence of its management is, however, evidenced by the positions of many old pupils, now in the foremost ranks of social, professional and political life.

Manufactures in the town have been in a small way successful. There are three establishments where wool is woven into tweed, tile and pipe works, and a soap and candle factory. In early days linen was made from flax grown on the Government farm, but that useful industry died out. Conspicuous in the old town are the penal and eleemosynary establishments—general and criminal lunatic asylums accommodating together eight hundred and fifty patients, a reformatory for girls, a benevolent asylum, a commodious gaol, a district hospital, and another for erysipelas. Quite early in the history of the colony Parramatta, having a natural water supply, was selected for the pauper and criminal institutions, and most of them have been retained to this day.

To all visitors of cultured, artistic, aesthetic, or even historic tastes, the chief glory of Parramatta is the park—the old Domain, admittance to which is by an archway built in the Tudor style. Within the enclosure oaks tower aloft and shake their leaves in the light summer breeze with a cool and pleasant rustle, and willows in the damp flats bend their boughs, mighty

in their gift of perfect shade. Pines from Norfolk Island, only less beautiful and grand than those in the Sydney Gardens; pines from southern Italy; pines from the Californian slopes, and pines from Scottish and Norwegian hills, stand tall, strong and shady, contrasting with the trees of native birth still lingering beside the shallow and generally turbid waters of the characteristic Australian creek. The firs grew from cones, the oaks from acorns, the willows from slips, which Mr. George Suttor, Australia's first gardener, brought over in his plant-house on the "Porpoise" in the year 1800.

The park lands slope gently upward to a round knoll, where stands a plain old house about which cling many historic associations. It is the old Government House, the country residence of the sailor Governors, and of four at least of their successors—the place of their rest, and frequently of their most active labours. It was while walking in these grounds that John Macarthur met Governor Bligh in the earliest days of a troubled administration. In one of these old parlours they sat down together to breakfast with ex-Governor King, and when the meal was ended, they walked across to that other old house below the town by the river-side and inspected on the Elizabeth farm the little flock of sheep mustered on that estate. We can imagine the sheep folded in the evening for fear of the wild dogs, and the two distinguished officials looking curiously at the little flock whose development has been the main cause of the larger prosperity of Australia.

It has been well said that even had Parramatta been the least convenient of all towns, the beauty of its surroundings

would have made it a desirable dwelling-place. Old residents say with pride, "We can drive around through forty miles of oranges," and the statement is fairly accurate. From Parramatta to Ryde, Hornsby, Pennant and Baulkham Hills, and towards Prospect, orange groves fringe the road in almost endless succession. The trees are planted chiefly on the rich ridges or the higher eastern slopes of the hills. English fruit trees, caring little for an occasional bite of frost, do better in the hollows. The inland drives to Baulkham Hills or through Toongabbie towards Prospect, are charming, and it is as pleasant to be about Parramatta in September as in Kent in April. The orange is a winter fruit; in spring the trees are laden with their white and fragrant blossoms; the green fruit forms and hangs during the summer, getting its golden colour as autumn begins, and becoming fully ripe as the winter deepens. But the seasons are so mild that they intermix, and a tree may often be seen bearing at the same time the lingering fruit of last season and the blossoms and young fruit of the next.

The country lying between Parramatta and the Hawkesbury River is for the most part gently undulating. It was easily traversed in the earlier days, but being thickly timbered, was comparatively neglected; the attention of the colonists being naturally drawn first to the rich alluvial land on the banks of the river, at once available for the growth of maize, wheat and hay. The principal track from Parramatta to this early granary of the colony ran north-west to Windsor, a town occupying an area of rising ground at the point where the river turns northward, and which was then the head of navigation. A second track, which crossed the Hawkesbury, went westward to Penrith, and from this place the explored route over the Blue Mountains was opened. Tillage on the banks of the Hawkesbury, early begun, has never ceased, for the deep rich soil seems incapable of exhaustion, though several times the settlers have seen their farms under water, having to run from their cottages, or, when too late for flight, to be rescued in boats. Back from this alluvial belt the land is of a poorer quality, though on the tops of the hills, where some fairly good red soil is to be found, many patches were cleared for wheat, till the persistent appearance of rust compelled the abandonment of this description of crop.

For many years the greater part of the district was subdivided into large grazing paddocks in which the sheep and cattle that had travelled down from the back country rested and fattened for market. On the western road a good deal of land has of late years been utilized for vineyards and orange-tries, especially in the neighbourhood of Seven Hills, and still more recently this land has become valuable for residential purposes, particularly for those who desire a larger block than is easily obtainable eastward of Parramatta. The railway line as far as Blacktown serves the purpose both of the western and north-western roads, the branch to Richmond turning northwards from this junction. On the route is the station of Riverstone, where private enterprise has established a successful slaughtering and meat preserving establishment. The flocks and herds on their way down from the northern pastures are intercepted at this point and sent on as dressed meat to Sydney.

Windsor, which next to Parramatta is the oldest of the country towns, still retains the characteristics of early days. The ivy creeps over the old brick walls; the trees look almost weary with age in many neglected gardens. Old men in checked cotton shirts, moleskin trousers and cabbage-tree hats, sit beneath the long verandahs of one-storied inns and tell tales of the old, old times. Characteristic, too, of those times is St. Matthew's Church, built substantially on high ground in the Basilican style of architecture. The foundation stone of this church was laid, says the official record, a little after sunset on Sunday, October 11th, 1817, by Governor Macquarie, and his speech on that spring evening was short and very much to the point. He saw the "holey dollar" (the Spanish dollar with the centre cut out) safely deposited in the bottle, he tried the stone with a square, tapped it with the mallet, and saying "God bless St. Matthew's Church," left it in peace, but not, as shown in the sequel, in security. For that night sundry rascals uplifted the stone, broke the bottle and abstracted the dollar. His Excellency, holding to the belief that coin of the realm was the only sure foundation for the church, began the proceedings *de novo*, called together the whole of the respectable inhabitants and the notabilities of the viceregal court, addressed them in a pathetic manner, passed a high eulogy on the clergy, and planted other dollars, which, alas for the morality of the times, were within two days likewise abstracted. After this it appears that the Governor contented himself with fulminating against the probable robbers, and permitting the walls to rise without the silver basis. Yet no good luck attended this. For we read that "two years after, the walls of the building had to be pulled down to the very foundation owing to some defect in their construction, and another building of much larger dimensions and of the best materials was commenced on its site." This church is the St. Matthew's of to-day.

Four miles west of Windsor is Richmond, another village dating from the first decade of the colony. It is not so busy now as it has been—for the railways have diverted the great trade on which its early prosperity was built—but it still shows evidence, not only of past vigour, but of present vitality. Two great stock routes converge on the slope of the hills on the other side of the river. By the northern one, known as the Bulga Road, came down sheep and cattle from Patrick's Plains, on the Hunter River, along a rough and somewhat grassless track. The other route came from the far west, and crossed the Blue Mountains by what is still known, after the surveyor who discovered it, as Bell's line. This route takes the dividing ridge between the waters of the Grose and those of the Colo, and joins the other line near Mount Clarence. Richmond, therefore, was the gateway through which for many years passed the greater portion of the live stock destined for the Sydney market. The Kurrajong hills look down upon Richmond from the northern side of the river. Their seaward slope is covered with singularly fertile soil, originally thickly timbered, and clothed with a dense undergrowth of rich scrub vegetation. Most of this has now been cleared away, and orange-trees have been planted to the summit—an elevation of nearly two thousand feet. The drive up the steep ascent is very beautiful,

the undulating ground of the fertile lower slopes presenting a landscape of remarkably soft and varied aspect. The hill has long been celebrated for the purity and mildness of its air, and is a favourite resort for invalids. Over the ridge to the west the aspect of the country instantly changes. Rugged sandstone comes to the surface, and remains characteristic of Bell's line, broken only by the rich patches of Mount Tomah and Mount Wilson, where the trap-rock has burst through the sandstone, producing the soil that has given birth to magnificent tree-ferns and a rich jungle of semi-tropical appearance.

From Blacktown Junction the Great Western Railway continues through slightly undulating country. Rooty Hill was once a thickly timbered elevation, and still yields a supply of firewood and railway sleepers; but it has become more celebrated for its coursing-ground, a great lover of sport having fixed his headquarters here. The line crosses South Creek, the valley of which is in flood time filled with back-water. After this the country is moderately level as far as Penrith. This is one of the old-fashioned roadside townships—a place where the carriers used to rest before starting for the heavy pull up the mountains, or after coming down. Delay, too, was sometimes caused by the river being swollen by heavy rains, when the punt could not be worked.

Above Penrith is a beautiful reach of the Nepean, with still deep water for about fifteen miles up to its junction with the Warra-gamba. For a mile or two above the bridge the banks are moderately low, but gradually become steep and rocky. During the great floods the scene here is magnificent. The waters that come rolling down, gathered from an enormous watershed, are piled up between the steep rocky banks because there is no lateral discharge for them. Flood marks on the trees show that the river has risen sixty and even eighty feet above the ordinary height; but as it rushes out of the gorge and spreads out over the low land, which is mostly on the eastern side, the level sinks rapidly.

To the west of the river lie the Ema Plains, gently sloping to the foot of the hills. They are mostly above flood level; the soil is fertile, and this mile-wide belt was early occupied and tilled. It has never ceased to be profitable to the farmer. Where the plains end the mountains at once begin. In the old coaching days there were little more than roadside inns all the way until the mountain was descended on the

other side, when agricultural and pastoral occupation once more began. But since the railway has been at work some coal mines have been opened up, hotels have been built, and little townships have sprung up, such as at Springwood, Katoomba, Blackheath and Mount Victoria. The older road, which was superseded by a better one down Mount Victoria, made its descent into the western country at Mount York; but the railway engineers decided on going west and making the descent, not into the Vale of Hartley, but into the Valley of Lithgow. The line, therefore, after passing Mount Victoria, keeps its elevation for some distance, running along the Darling Causeway—the dividing ridge between the head of the Grose and the valley of the Lett. On the left is a branch constructed by the

Hartley Kerosene Company; the line makes a steep descent into the Vale of Hartley, the trucks being drawn up by a rope.

After all the rugged gorges at the head of the Grose have been passed, the point of junction with Bell's line of road is reached at Mount Wilson station. The railway then tunnels under Mount Clarence and emerges on a spur looking down upon Lithgow. To make the descent the engineers had recourse once more to a zig-zag—a much more difficult piece of work than that by which the mountain was climbed on the eastern side. The road down is in turn siding, viaduct, tunnel and cutting. Below there are two or three points of vantage whence may be seen the manner in which the line sweeps down the face of this bold inland cliff—the three ledges, one above another, being commanded in one view.

At the foot of the Zig-zag are the two adjoining townships of Eukhank and Lithgow. We are here at the western outcrop of the immense coal seams which underlie the whole of the Blue Mountains, and it is this which gives character to the industries of the place. At several points the seams have been attacked, sometimes by adits driven into the hills, sometimes by shallow shafts. A good market for the coal is found along the line of railway both west and east, as well as in Sydney. The existence of iron ore in the neighbourhood naturally suggested the possibility of smelting works, but the enterprise has met with many difficulties. The ore is scattered,



FYE'S ORANGE GROVE, PARRAMATTA.

and not cheaply raised, the lime has to be brought from a distance, and colonial labour is costly. It has been impossible, therefore, to produce iron as cheaply as it can be imported. But the basis of the industry has been laid, and its further development only awaits more favourable conditions. Meanwhile a good deal of work has been done for the Government in re-rolling old rails. Lithgow Valley is also well supplied with a great variety of clay; a successful pottery has been established, which is equipped with the most recent machinery. The coarser productions are naturally those for which there is the greater demand, and drain-pipes, tiles, and bricks are the articles principally manufactured. Enough, however, has been done with pottery, of the finer kinds to show the potentialities of the industry, and with abundance of the best clay close to coal, Lithgow has its hope in reserve.

Beyond Lithgow is the pretty old roadside village of Bowral, and still farther on Wallerawang—a township lying in the centre of a district rich in mineral wealth. At this point a branch line strikes off in a north-westerly direction to the town of Mudgee, about eighty miles distant. The route lies through somewhat rugged country, and only sparsely populated. The line runs not far from the dividing ridge, and skirts the heads of the streams running down into the Colo. On the western side stretches a large area of country unmistakably auriferous, and in which rich patches of gold have been found. The enthusiasm for mining has, however, greatly fallen off, and a systematic investigation of the district awaits the time when underground work can be carried on more economically. At Cudgegong, which is near the railway route, cinnabar ore has been found, but only in quantities to tempt, not to reward, the enterprise of the miner.

Before the line reaches Mudgee the character of the country improves, and a fine grazing district comes into view. The town itself exhibits a curious mixture of the old and the new. It was an early centre of pastoral occupation, but it is now showing the effects of railway communication. The trees on the river

are old, the crumbling cottages on the outskirts are old, the ways of the people savour of old colonisation, while the new churches, banks, and public buildings appear as innovations on an established order. Mudgee is the first place on a western journey where the true bush life is reached; men with genuine Australian swags on their backs pass frequently; station hands, lîhe, spare, and brown from much riding under hot skies, come in booted and spurred. On the road by the raccourse a trim jockey exercises a well-dressed racer, and past him rides a "cockatoo-boy" on a palfrey whose hide knows no more of grooming than that of a kangaroo. Mudgee has the capabilities of a beautiful town, being laid out on a rich flat, surrounded by well-grassed, highly-timbered hills.

It is more than fifty years since the first settlers came to Mudgee. They obtained large grants of the rich soil, and all threw on them; they have passed away, leaving their sons to reign in their stead. Their homesteads stand on the surrounding hills, three or four miles from the town—substantial, comfortable places, with broad and shady trees on the lawns and roses in the gardens, making Australian November fragrant as English June. The climate and soil are similar to those of the eastern valleys of the Himalayas—the cradle of the merino race—the table-lands of Spain, and the high lands of Algiers, and were therefore specially suitable for stud flocks. The best available blood was early taken up there, and good breeding was backed by liberal feeding, and thus was produced the distinct and profitable strain of merinos now so much sought after by flockmasters throughout Australia. The sheep are small in size, but the fleeces are dense and the staple is fine. It is in requisition for the delicate fabrics of the French looms, and has realised in the market over four shillings a pound. The effect of climate in some parts of Australia, both on the framework of the animals and the quality of the wool, is very quickly seen by a deterioration in type. Fresh strains are therefore regularly needed. To supply these, the choice stock is carried away to less favoured districts, and there is consequently a perpetual demand for Mudgee sheep. Buyers from all parts of the continent gather at the sale of stud rams, which makes an annual festival in the town. At these fairs, and at the races, Mudgee seems suddenly to start into

life. The streets are busy, the hotels are full. Stylish equipages roll down from the hills, and colonial lads scamper along the dusty roads on steeds that an Arab Sheik might envy. But at other times all is very dull. Morning, noon and night the town seems half asleep, and it is a matter of marvel where the people come from who on Sundays fill the really handsome and commodious churches, which in Mudgee are far superior to any other buildings. Some of the banks are substantial and handsome, but on the usual public buildings no money has been uselessly wasted, nor have storekeepers raised any very notable structures. The school of arts is a fine building, well equipped, and, what is not always the case with these institutions, out of debt.

The soil and climate of Mudgee are favourable to the growth of many English flowers, and seem also to be well adapted to the cultivation of the grape. The medals in the cellars of Mr. Bucholtz, of Frederickburgh, tell of success that has already been achieved, and indicate the possibilities of the future. Maize grows freely, and yields its abundant harvest within a few months of the sowing, and hay runs up a luxuriant crop. In a good spring season all the fairs are green with the young Indian corn, or fragrant with the odour of new-mown



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