

IMPRESSIONS OF AUSTRALIA.

By Josiab Royce.



WE hear nowadays a great deal about a future Imperial Federation which is some day to bring into a closer political unity the English race. I confess to a strong dislike of the whole speculation upon which this romantic dream is founded. The English race is indeed not without ideals, and not incapable of vast organizing enterprises. But the thing whereof the English race is incapable is romanticism in politics. The Englishman's problem of life is the conflict between his love of home and his love of wandering. He tries to solve the problem by carrying his home with him wherever he wanders. His institutions of local government are plastic, and easily adapt themselves to new regions. His ideals grow readily in new climates; he can safely transplant all that is dearest to him. The "expansion of England" has therefore meant, and will always mean, the making of new Englands in remote regions of the world.

Great nations ought to be united on physical grounds first of all, as happy marriages ought to be sought on the basis of a mutual personal attractiveness in those who are to wed. No race knows this better than the English, whose very unity and history as a people, in their own island, depended upon a minor accident of the physical geography of the French coast in the present geological period. And therefore the existence of a great English nation like our own is rather an argument against the possibility of an all-embracing English Federation in the future. We owe our own national unity to God and the Mississippi Valley. The English race will owe its future political divisions to the oceans, which the sentiments of human brotherhood can indeed easily cross with the winds, but which a sober domestic policy will in

the long run respect as regards all matters relating to national unity. Human brotherhood is a noble thing; but political unity is a matter of stern justice as well as of home-seeking devotion. You best honor both the justice and the devotion when you confine their work within easily intelligible boundaries.

For this reason the interest which I take in Australia and New Zealand is an interest for which they appear not as parts of the future Federated Empire of Great Britain, but as young nations for themselves. It is doubtful whether New Zealand will ever be very intimately united to Australia. It is certain, as certainties go in politics, that all of Australia will be ere long united into one comparatively close federation. It is almost certain that a period not far distant will see both Australia and New Zealand separated from the mother-country, and engaging in an eventful life as the principal powers of the southern hemisphere. And it is with this impression of the meaning of their existence that I desire to remember them, whenever I recall a journey that has first taught me something of their charm and significance.

II.

FIRST, then, for a few general impressions of the region where the coming Australian nation is to grow. Australia is as certainly destined by its physical conditions to be one great nation, with strong internal contrasts, as we ourselves have been destined to be one people, with sharply distinguished sectional feelings and interests. Australia is a vast, irregular plateau, with a few mountain-ranges. So far, all makes for unity. The continent has indeed but one great river-system, and that in the southeast portion. So much the more, however, must the fragmentary basins

of the interior depend for their future commercial existence upon long lines of railway that will connect the various parts of the land. But meanwhile, with all that makes for unity, there is the other equally obvious fact which secures strong contrasts of life; and that is the diversity of climate. Subtropical and temperate Australia will be related as regions of widely different latitudes have always been related elsewhere. The new continent will have its great problem of the relations of North and South. The interests of the subtropical North may easily tend to attract to the northern colonies Asiatic labor. The interests of the Southern civilization will always oppose the coming of alien races. Out of this opposition important complications are almost certain to grow. There is little doubt, then, that Australia will not lack the serious issues which are necessary to the development of a great people.

But we must turn to the Australia of the present. What attracts the stranger most in the physical aspect of the continent is the weird novelty of the mountain regions. Yet to these regions the stranger gives, doubtless, too much importance. Outside of the mountains, the well-settled portions of Australia are simple, charming, and comparatively unimpressive. There is, indeed, the vast interior desert region, whose desolation is said to be impressive enough. But the traveller of ordinary inclinations sees little of that. What he sees near the coast, in the cultivated parts of Victoria and New South Wales, is a fair and generally fruitful land, sleeping under kindly skies, amid conditions of climate which remind him of California. Far-off blue hills, seen against the horizon, remind him that there are wilder regions not far away. But all about him vineyards and pastures indicate prosperity; and the optimistic settlers, men plainly not as reckless nor as restless as our Californian population, but active and hopeful, assure him, with all the well-known loyalty and vehemence of English colonists, that this remote region is the best on earth for comfortable homes.

Perhaps it is well to let such loyal lovers of the new land tell the story of

their love themselves, and I have taken great pleasure in looking through a collection of papers by an Australian newspaper man, Mr. Donald Macdonald, who, under the title "Gum Boughs and Wattle Bloom, Gathered on Australian Hills and Plains," has sketched country scenes in southeastern Australia in a most charming way. His sketches form a sort of guide-book to the Victorian forests and farm-lands; only this guide devotes himself chiefly to studying every form of natural life, not, of course, for the purposes of science, but with the fascination of the loving observer. In a sketch called "Village and Farm," nature and man are studied together; and the mingling of old and new, of native and imported plants and people, of ancient and novel ideas, of conservatism and restlessness, is depicted with an art which one who has lived for a long time in our own West can well appreciate.

Mr. Macdonald's chosen village lies in a "hollow of the plain," beneath gray basalt cliffs. From the table-land above, the far-off smoke of the city is visible; but the village beneath is isolated and self-contented. If we expect to find it described as a raw and crude place, showing everywhere signs of its recent origin, we are quickly disappointed, as is proper. Whoever is familiar with new towns in fruitful regions, knows how quickly the wounds of nature heal, and how readily the old vegetation finds room for its new rivals beside it. In Australia, however, where the natural products of the soil are so unlike what the settlers have planted, the gentler contrasts of the scene are still attractive to the describing artist. Our author tells us first of the pond in the centre of the valley, not far from the village. Once this pond was a lake where the water-birds came. Stately gum-trees guarded it. "Sedate emus trooped in stately columns over the hilltops," above the lake; "kangaroo came out into the moonlight from the hollows." But "now the white tails of many rabbits twinkle in the dusk. Chrysanthemums of all shades spread their glory over the flower-beds in the autumn." The lake is half-filled with washings from farm-lands. Not only is there thus a contrast

in the surroundings of the village between the present and the half-remembered past; but even now the black Australian pine grows side by side with the English oak or the cedar of Lebanon. On the slopes above the village the gum-trees, "thinned in numbers, have broadened in shape, each throwing its arms outward, as though seeking always for that touch of companionship lost nearly fifty years ago." The author observes, too, the stubbornness of life in the old woods. "Wherever an Australian forest has been cut away, it will renew itself in time," if conditions permit. "All about the bases of the dead stumps the crust of earth is forced upward, as though mushrooms were breaking through." In the farms near the village we learn of the beautiful and "cosmopolitan" mingling of the flowers. At the margins of the fields, between fence and furrow, flourish in profusion "self-established communities" of blooming plants. "The marigold, the sunflower, and white clover are mixed up with such native flowers as the wild violet, the shepherd's purse, or the blue-flowered 'digger's delight.'" The latter flower, it seems, had formerly the reputation of growing only in gold regions, and near the gold. It has been doubtless transplanted to this region. The field-birds are as cosmopolitan as the flowers. Everywhere nature delights in the wealth of contrasts.

All this prepares us for an impression of the village itself. The inhabitants, to be sure, are not likely to include any aborigines. But the associations of the old home in Europe appear, in our author's description, to thrive as lavishly, side by side with the novel ideas of the young land, as the sunflowers flourish side by side with the "digger's delight." The most interesting of the older inhabitants are the survivors of the gold period, rugged men, as attractive as the California pioneers, although possibly more conservative. Our author finds the older men, in fact, generally loyal to tradition; lovers often of the Church of their fathers, and anxious still to see it an institution of power in the land; faithful to the mother-country, proud of the British connection, and all the while a healthy and steadfast folk. The young

Australians he describes in somewhat different fashion, and one may be sure, from very brief observation on the spot, that he must be right. Healthy and promising this young race indeed is, but "they are deeply imbued with the spirit of a new democracy." If they are still loyal to the Empire and the Church, "self-interest is the secret of their concern for one, and they are loyal to the other from mere force of habit." For the rest, the population is as manifold in origin as in our own West—English, Scotch, and Irish elements predominating, but the composite being "leavened by units of other lands who have almost forgotten their nationality."

Noteworthy in this account is the political activity of the villagers. "The political centre of the village is the blacksmith's bench." Here gather idlers and farm-hands busy with their errands. "Broad questions, such as protection, free trade, or secular education, are the subject-matter for argument. The subtleties of lobby politics rarely penetrate to Arcadia." In Australia, as the reader must always remember, the subject is always nearer to the State than he is with us, and that not merely because his State is a small province. Responsible ministerial government makes it always "presidential year" with him, to use our own phrase. And the political eagerness of the people is not yet blunted, as with us, by the habitual cheapening of the issues of politics.

Farming life is comparatively easy and prosperous. "There is little variation in the method of farming. When the fields are weary with the giving of their strength to so many harvests, they can rest for a season. There is no mortgage on the farm, no lien on next year's crop to draw every possible corublade from the soil, and exhaust both home and husbandman. There may be little wealth, but there is no poverty. No home-sick Ruth has to glean in the corn-fields. Indeed, the Australian Ruth either drives a pony phaeton, or is at least the charming autocrat alike of parlor or dairy." One sees that Mr. Macdonald is decidedly an optimist as to the health and comfort of the Victorian farmer. His description of the scenery of the farms near the village is through-

out one of cheerfulness and beauty. The fine-blooded dairy cattle appear to him "as ornamental as the deer in an English park." Gardens, with towering poplars, with wall-flowers, blackberries, currant-bushes, adorn the hillslopes near the river. Nature is not torn to pieces, as so often is the case in the neighborhood of our Western villages, but is rather overgrown with a wealth of old and new vegetation. The farmer himself has in his past much hardship to remember, as other pioneers have, but he has not been soured by it. The great incident of his early history, in days since the gold period, was his long conflict with the stock-raisers. This whole country near the village was at first a "vast common, or grazing ground." Then came the "selectors," and the new land was seized by stock-dealers who owned vast herds, and shut out the village farmers, until it came to a formal declaration of war between villagers and stock-dealers. In those days land-acts were the principal topic of political discussion. The public peace was broken by hand to hand fights, with stones, or even with guns, between the invading stock-owners and their retinue of hired servants on the one side, and the defending farmers on the other. Now all this is far in the past. Such political and social issues have been put to rest, at least in this district, and if the struggle of those early days left some traces on the farmer's temper, "it only ripened his philosophy."

Perhaps Mr. Macdonald is a trifle too optimistic in his sketches, but the rural conditions of southern Australia are certainly very promising, in view of this kindly climate and this vigorous population. And if great nations are created by their farmers, the future looks bright for the Australian.

III.

BUT we must not forget the other Australia, the region of the mountains, where the tourist seeks for fine effects, and where the inhabitant goes for recreation—or for coal. The mountains of a country often predetermine its poetry,

and even its thinking. A land where nature is original has more chance of developing original men. And surely Australia is not without ample opportunities of this sort. I, for my part, shall always associate the Blue Mountains of New South Wales with what I may hear of the intellectual life of Australia, for it was my fortune to visit these mountains in company with a friend whose ability and good fortune have already made him a power in the political life of the new country, and who seemed to me to represent some of the best tendencies of the young civilization. Shall I violate the obligations of hospitality if I sketch a scene or two of our life together as we wandered? At all events, I shall try the sketch, and shall seek, meanwhile, to say nothing of my friend that I should hesitate to say in his presence.

He was himself a young man, nervously active in temperament, cheerful, inquiring, speculative, unprejudiced—unless it were in favor of the political tendencies of the country where he is a Cabinet Minister—an admirer of America and of good scenery, a lover of life, of metaphysics, and of power. Our brief acquaintance was full of surprises and debates, of fanciful conversations, and of mutual good-will. All questions were open to my friend. If at one moment he wandered off into vaguer speculations on the future of Australia, at the next moment he would condemn almost cynically the preaching and the scheming of those over-hopeful colonial idealists who are already talking of immediate separation from England, or of other airy dreams of social reform. His reading was large and varied; he had visited America and made a pilgrimage to Emerson's tomb; he had even occasionally written, and either printed or burned, a good deal of verse and of literary prose; but what his countrymen best know him for is great practical activity in connection with public enterprises of a very material sort. His enemies, as I had occasion to discover, have often called him an Opportunist in politics, so ready are his resources as a party leader, so facile is his persuasive talent, so sensitive and plastic is his mind. But the accusation of such enemies would never

deceive a fair observer of character. The leader of the people has, in such countries, to be precisely that—plastic and sensitive. The popular minister in Australia is in momentary and constant danger of losing his very existence as a politician. The people are always awake to public matters. The rivalry of politicians is keen, their weapons are sharp, and the good fencer has to be a graceful and pleasing artist in the use of his sword rather than merely a sturdy fighter. Prophets do not succeed in such places. Yet happy is the people whose political life is not merely a contest among managers, but a warfare of skilful, but earnest, ministerial leaders. In our country, as I felt, my friend would have been anywhere but near the head of the State. These Australians must know how to find their public servants. We relegate such minds as my friend's is to the study or the lecture-platform. We call such intelligence a purely "theoretical" quality, and so indeed we do our best to make it what we call it, namely, theoretical in the bad sense. In consequence, our clever young men of literary and speculative tastes never learn what practical political activity means, and become abstract, vainly idealistic, and sometimes, if they engage in social speculation, even a mildly dangerous class. I can conceive that if my friend had grown up in California, he might have written something as shadowy as "Progress and Poverty;" or that if he had been educated in the Eastern States, he would at best have been known as a "Nationalist." As it is, he has a leading part in determining the councils of a strong young province. And such men as he will some day make Australia an empire. They will be speculative, and somewhat socialistic, men, confident of the safety of popular government, and perhaps too much devoted to bold social enterprises; but they will be men well trained in public affairs, accustomed to feel the popular pulse, conscious of the limitations of their practical life. In short, they will be not only men of large ideas but men of business. Would that our public life were as certain to combine these important qualities in its ministers!

The country where we wandered to-

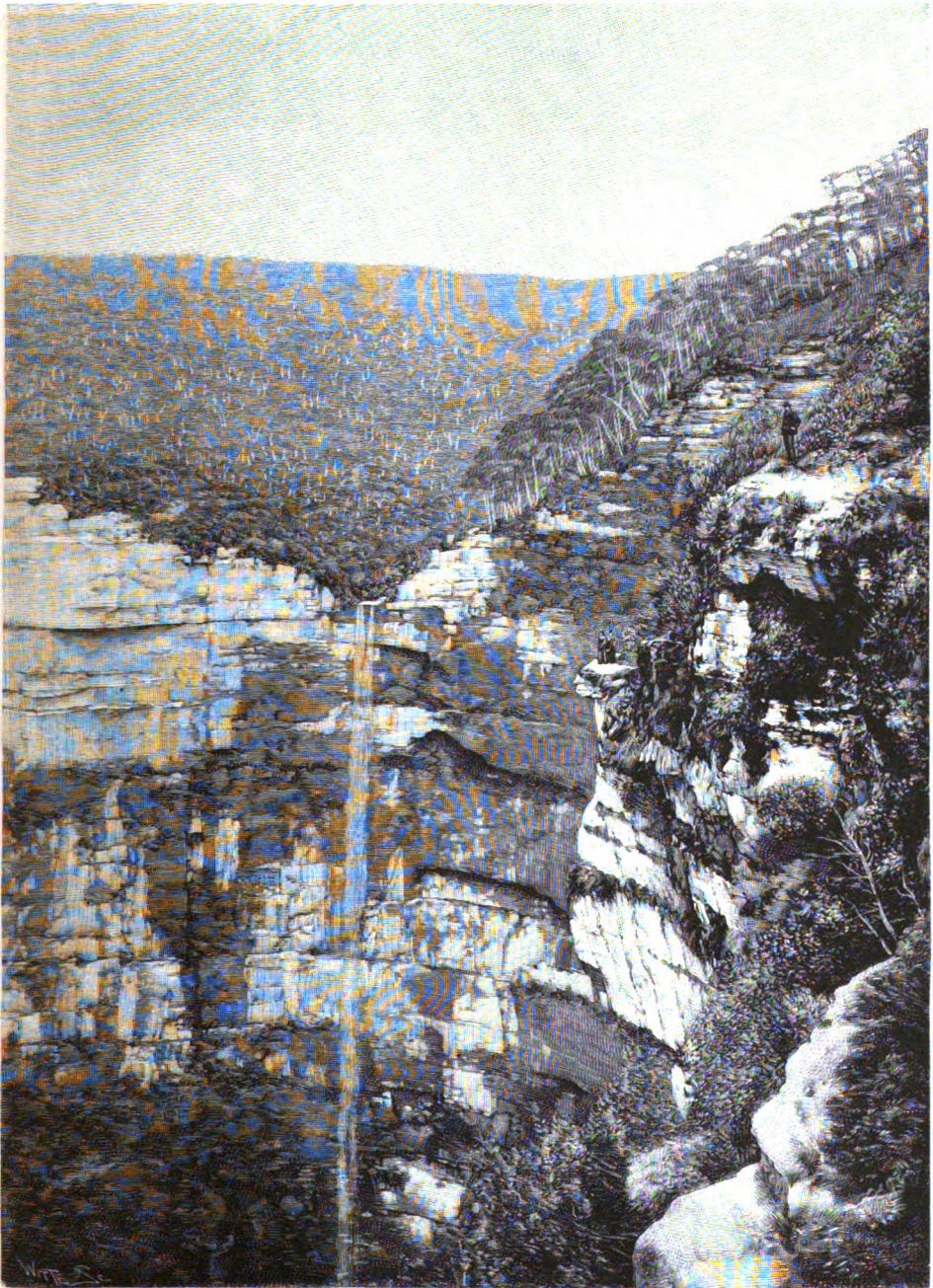
gether, and where our talk found all questions open and attractive—from the Moral Order to the conduct of Melbourne newspapers, and from Telepathy to the Chinese problem—was as full of mystery and wonder as the destiny of Australia and the future civilization of the Pacific itself. To be sure, as I must admit, the Blue Mountains are not precisely the region for tourists of a too conventional sort. Such people never desire to see the same thing twice, and the repetitions of nature weary them. But the Blue Mountains are magnificently tautologous in their scenery. This scenery, in fact, reminded me at times of the English Church service, as it is repeated weekly, with the eternal confession of error and straying, and with the eternal prayer to be delivered from lightning and tempest, from battle and murder and sudden death. For just so here, in these mountains, the effects vary little, and are always solemn and melancholy. On the summit you seem, as you leave your hotel, to be wandering in a fairly level and well-wooded region, with pleasant streams visible here and there (in the winter season), and with signs of human life not infrequent. Suddenly your path becomes steep, rocky, lonesome. You seem to have left all signs of life far behind. The slopes, as you glance downward, look treacherous; and you wonder if they do not lead to the edge of some near abyss. And then, at a turn in the way, you come indeed to the abyss itself. The ground flies away from under your feet. A valley stretches out for many miles, and far beneath you. A sheer precipice of a thousand or fifteen hundred feet is directly below where you stand. Beyond the huge valley stand the farther walls; and there dark red and dull gray rocks are piled in vast, roughly sculptured masses. The eucalyptus-forests, looking in the depths like thickets of chapparal in the California Coast Range, climb the precipices as if their trees formed an attacking army, assailing an enormous castle. The gum-tree, when old, is always irregular and twisted in shape. The curving white limbs, seen amid the dark foliage of the woods, look much as if the crowded trees, in scaling the

castle walls, had been wounded in the endless battle with the rocks, and were writhing in pain. In the whole scene, especially as viewed in winter, every color is sombre. Cloud-shadows wander swiftly from the far-off plains up the long valleys, and cover gorge and cliff in the rugged foreground. In the valleys, there is little or no sign of the presence of man. As you listen amid the solitude, you hear now only the strange notes of the native birds, notes such as you never heard before, unless in a troubled dream. In fact, the desolation of this wilderness is distinctly dream-like. For some reason or other, our own Western solitudes, even in the wildest regions of the Sierra Nevada or of the Selkirk Range, yes, even in the deserts of Nevada, or of the Sierra la Sal, never appear so unearthly and inhuman in their lonesomeness as do these singular Australian gorges, with their strange bird-voices, and their tangled thickets of writhing eucalyptus-branches. Our Western scenes may be forbidding, and are often sublime; but they seem, more or less, to belong on the same planet with ourselves, and to our own geological period. In Australia, as has been said more than once before this, you feel that you are in the midst of the relics of a past time, as if in a sort of fragment of the primeval world.

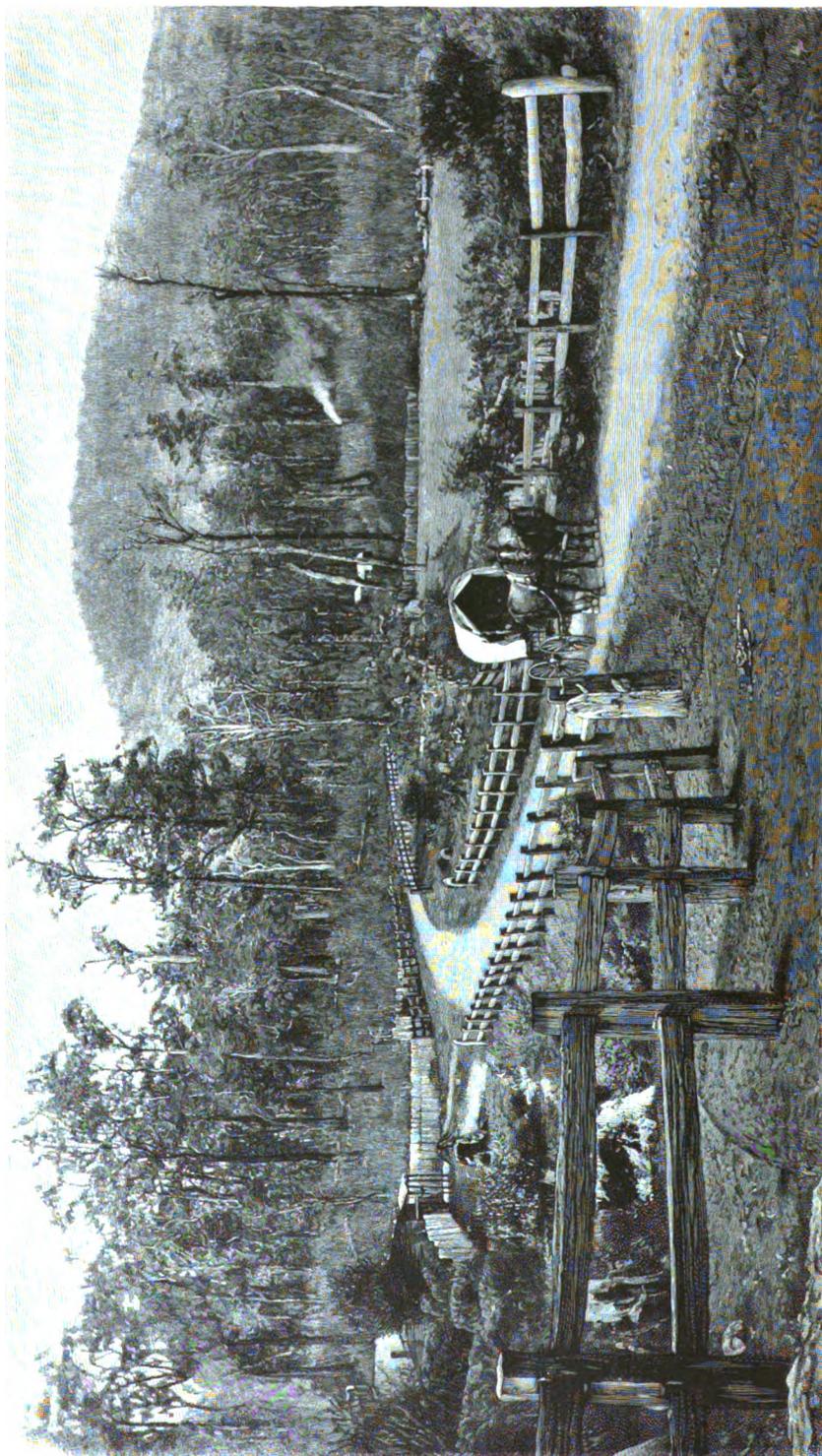
One morning stands out with especial clearness in my mind among the experiences of my journey with my friend. It is useless to try to describe completely either what we saw or what we said on just that occasion. What we saw was too Australian to be fully understood by one who has not seen it; and what we said is of course mingled in my mind with the contents of numerous other conversations. Perhaps, however, I do my friend no wrong if I put into his mouth, in my sketch of this day, the substance of what I heard from him on various occasions. At all events, let me try to give the spirit both of the day and our speech. The morning in question was the one when we visited what is, after all, a very familiar place to Australian tourists, namely, the cliffs above the "Wentworth Valley." For my part, I found the Wentworth Valley the finest

of the more familiar sights in these Blue Mountains. There is a still more celebrated valley, the one called "Govett's Leap," where the dark cliffs are some two thousand feet in sheer height, and where all the weird effects of the mountains are exemplified in one vast landscape. But to my mind the scene at Govett's Leap undertakes, as it were, too much at a time. The valley is long and wide, the cliffs in sight are endlessly numerous, the whole outlook lacks unity. The Wentworth Valley, on the contrary, at the point where the tourist looks down into it, is a narrow gorge, into whose secret and gloomy depths a beautiful stream vanishes in a series of magnificently graceful cataracts. A glance gives you the whole effect in its first fascination and terror, while hours will not exhaust the individual features of the landscape. The ferns that gather at the feet of the cataracts, about the pools where the water rests a moment before taking its next plunge over the still deeper precipices—the cliff-climbing armies of eucalyptus trees, the dark rocks, the cloudy sky above, the distant bird-notes—all these blend at one moment into a single impression of the majesty of the place, and, at the next moment, invite afresh your closer scrutiny, to see if haply you may not catch and hold henceforth every feature of the landscape.

As you look from the cliffs toward the cataracts at the head of the valley, you face a rocky amphitheatre whose walls have a nearly sheer height of possibly a thousand feet, while from the base of these perpendicular rocks the lower cliffs fall away in terraces, until at last the sides of the gorge seem so nearly to meet in the depths that the eye wearies of searching in the forest below for any sign of the lost stream-bed. At the summit of this amphitheatre a fringe of dark eucalyptus-forest bounds the scene, standing out in rough outline against the sky. From the midst of the opaque mass of the forest-fringe springs the shining stream, eager, rejoicing before its fearful plunge, tumbling over rocky rapids to the edge of the sheer precipice. Then comes its first great leap. The waters part into thread-like streamlets, cling, as it were,



Govett's Leap.



The Woods Point Road Australia.

in terror to the cliffs, grow dead-white, and then fly out in sprays into the mid-air. There, in a twinkling, their volume is lost, they have become a veil of mist, that sways and comes and goes in long cloudy streamers, until it descends to where the first terrace begins. And now, as if by magic, the water has become once more a boiling, angry mountain torrent. It buffets the rocks, whirls and dashes, and then plunges afresh—this time but a little way. Hereupon, lo! it has suddenly changed into a dark pool, lying deep between the rocks, a fairy lakelet. All about it the ferns are massed. Their deep green covers the high banks that bound the pool. Here is a spot apparently inaccessible from above and from below, except for the birds—a peaceful home for the water in the midst of all this changing and falling. But the water may not stay here. Another and another plunge—and then at last the stream is indeed lost beneath the forest, and one's glance turns to follow the gorge farther downward, between its gloomy walls, toward the blue and hazy lowlands that appear in a faint glimpse many miles away. All this one sees standing himself at the edge of the abyss, the thrill of the scene quivering all through his nerves, the fascinating depths begging him to step from the rocks and try to imitate the water flight himself. And so here is the place for a true lover of mountains to spend a long time.

Such scenery, I have observed, usually first acts to make one very gentle and submissive in mood. One feels like a child watching a great multitude of busy folk. It is delightful, but it is also physically overwhelming. What is going on here is too large to be made out. It tames you. A truly great scene does not affect you because you have first reverently chosen to hunt up whatever is sublime. On the contrary, what you notice in yourself is a simple, brute sort of panting, a leaping of heart, or some other visceral sensation; and after you have reflected on the elemental freshness of the experience for a while, it occurs to you, perchance, that this childish fright and joy of yours is what more pious and reflective persons would call a sense of the sublime.

After we had enjoyed the landscape long enough, my friend and I rambled yet farther about among the rocks, and then lunched, whereupon the talk may be supposed to have run on much in this wise:

"And so," said I, "I find you also lamenting what you call the evils of your parliamentary system, as we in America lament our own political apathy. Why is this? Apathy, at all events, is surely not what your colonial political life suffers from."

"No, indeed," he answered. "The colonist passes but a very short time without hearing many political speeches. Agitation is always in the air. Political life moves fast with us."

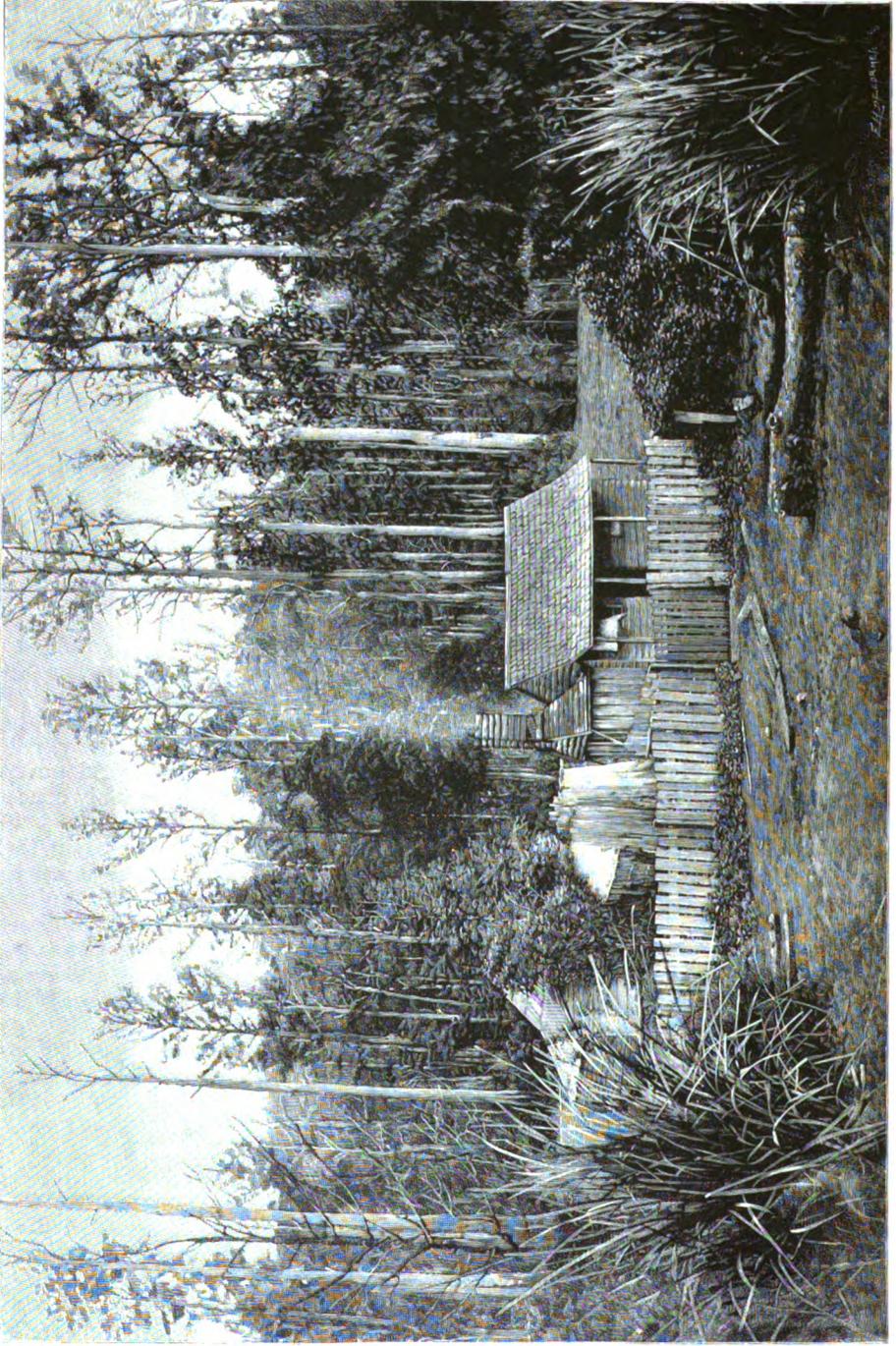
"And with us," I replied, "life also moves fast enough, but it is seldom that the larger political problems trouble our public very seriously. Politics, to the cultivated American, and in great measure to the general public also, may be said to offer rather amusement or vexation than thrilling hopes or great anxieties. Even in our Presidential year, there is more show of enthusiasm than depth of patriotic feeling."

"Well, with us the colonist is rather narrowly, but still very intensely, patriotic. The affairs of his local government are of the strongest daily concern to him."

"Do you lament your condition, then, because the popular will, with all this intensity of feeling, does not find adequate expression? With us, you know, great public needs often exist for a long time before we can find expression for them in new laws. Is your legislative machinery slow to act?"

"Usually not. It is a popular government that we want, and we get it. We believe in agitation, and in strong legislation, and we find means of making the popular wants known and met."

"So much, then, for responsible ministerial government," I said. "You know that with us there is a small, but very intelligent and persistent, company of theorists who are always assuring us in their writings that the one thing lacking in our form of government is just the ministerial responsibility that you possess. If they are right, you ought to have reached the millennium—the pop-



A Splitter's Hut in the Australian Bush.

ular will always ready to express itself, and a responsible ministry always ready to express that will, or to retire. And yet you aren't content."

"I am not content, because what I miss in our system," responded my friend, very frankly, "is stability in the ministerial tenure of office."

"Stability and responsibility joined! How can that be? But what more could a ministry accomplish if it were more permanent?"

"It could give more time to administration of the laws, and to deliberate legislation. What is the result now? A minister has no time for his department. His clerks manage that. He can't reform it. He can't invent new plans for making its work effective, and carry them out. Day after day, on session days, he must sit in the House, gibing at the Opposition. A colleague makes some parliamentary blunder. Well, then, the minister is bound to support this colleague through thick and thin, and to repair the blunder in debate. He must be always by to see that things go well. The whole ministry must give up time to tactical moves in the House, and so, although great measures of policy do indeed take care of themselves, many minor matters of popular concern have to pass by without proper treatment. More strength is needed. Not less responsibility, as with you, but a stronger hand, and more time for administration."

"More government, then, not less, is your ideal," I said. "What socialists you all are! Would you have the State do everything for the people? As for us, we are too apathetic, by far; but I fear this strong-handedness of your colonial governments. This quick, drastic legislation of your colonies fills me with fear for your future. What if the labor agitators become more and more a power in your councils? To what excess of socialistic legislation will they not some day lead you? With us there is a safeguard in the fact that it is a long way from agitation to legislation, from projects to hasty, so-called 'reforms.' You would make of your ministerial governments not merely the vigorous legislative powers which they already are, but yet more merciless ad-

ministrative machines, yet more skilful inventors of minute enactments for the benefit of the people. Are you not afraid of popular government, if you make its power too easily expressed? May it not commit great mistakes?"

"I fear, indeed," my friend replied, "the baser sort of men, whenever they are in politics. What I do not fear is the people itself, whenever it is well organized. You talk of the labor agitators, as if they were a danger. I tell you, our labor organizations are already, as I hope, far on the way toward a fair settlement of many of the most serious modern labor questions. For instance, our laborers have learned that their own trades' unions must exist, not merely for the sake of meeting force with force, but for the sake of establishing fair dealing on a fair basis. Our trades' unions have in more than one notable case disciplined their own members for unfair dealing toward employers—have, in fact, begun to establish the principle that laborers organize to protect the social welfare rather than to gain merely selfish ends. The aim with us is everywhere popular sovereignty under a strict organization."

"And in consequence you have an early closing law in a certain city, whereby, for the benefit of their clerks, vast numbers of shopkeepers are prevented by force from doing the most ordinary business after certain hours in the early evening."

"Yes, we have such a law, and we think well of it. We except from its operation certain classes of business. The booksellers, for instance, may keep open to a late hour, because that is for the benefit of the popular intelligence. Why should not the people organize for their own good, and make laws to that effect?"

"Well," I said, "we, too, have our agitators for State interference. But are you not going too far and too fast?"

"See the results. A people in each colony already provided, at the cheapest rate, with the public works they most need, public libraries even in remote country-districts, an advanced state of popular intelligence, strong interest in public affairs, sturdy patriotism—are these not things to be proud of? Not

that I overlook the many evils of our public life. Our parliamentary system, I admit, does not exclude the baser demagogues of whom I spoke before. Our irresponsible legislators talk too much and work too little. Our ministries are overworked in the House, and are distracted from their administrative duties. Our legislation is too roundabout and often too sordid. But at heart we are sound. I often regret the weary and petty vexations of our provincial public life. Your own great nation must offer so much more that is ideal and inspiring. But I believe in our people, and in the great strength of popular organization among us."

It was hard to argue against a confidence like this. Perhaps my friend was only insisting upon that side of the duty of the State which he found me most disposed for the moment to ignore; but throughout his discourse I was always struck with his frank and intelligent confidence in the power of the State to do a great deal for its subject. And the important thing was that all this confidence seemed to be founded on practical experience. It was not a mere semi-socialistic theory, such as doctrines in this country may often enough express in an airy way. It was the view of a busy politician, who seemed to be voicing the spirit of his people. If, by way of criticism, I ever called him a State Socialist he made light of the accusation, or vindicated his good judgment as a practical man by disclaiming any sympathy with this or that socialistic absurdity then under discussion among irresponsible schemers. For my friend was, after all, a responsible and not incautious official in his own work. His general theories have never turned his head. As a politician in daily life, he knows very well what it is safe to do, and does it at a fitting time. But it was this undercurrent of idealistic socialism that attracted most my attention. Our early statesmen in this country used to fear nothing so much as the European tyrants who, no doubt, were longing to get at our liberties; hence our early tendency was mainly toward whatever secured popular freedom, and checked the powers above. The Australian leader is nowadays think-

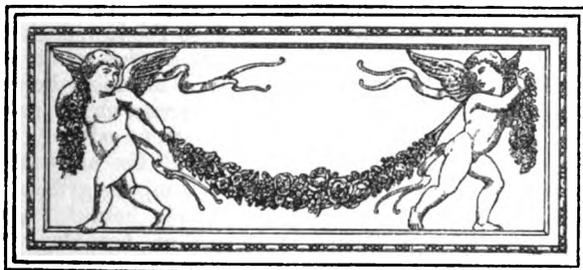
ing, it would seem, of nothing so much as of some new social tie by which he may persuade the popular will to bind itself. After all, are not social ties the glory of rational human life? The result is already strange—this vast, weird continent, where nature is the most primitive and unexpected in her desolation and barbarism, fast filling with men whose thoughts are daily fuller of elaborate political schemes and social theories. At this rate, before another century Australia will show us some of the most remarkable experiments in State Socialism that have ever yet been seen.

IV.

YET a hasty sketch like the foregoing is sure to give one-sided impressions. Australian politicians are not all young, nor all idealists, nor all so progressive on the lines of social organization as my friend. One of the best and most widely known of the Melbourne newspapers, the very one on whose staff the author of the rural sketches above cited was a worker, is a journal of a generally conservative English tone, whose ideals represent those of a large class, and whose purposes amount to nothing as novel as those I have just been describing. Just so, not all Australian scenery is so novel as that of the Blue Mountains. But I confess that when I consider this charming young nation, with its romantic past and its most attractive future prospects, I feel a little thrill comparable to that with which I watched the fortunes of the water in the Wentworth Valley: so full of surprises must its life be—so splendid in its ventures, in its fearlessness, in its joyous seeking of dangers, in its bold plunges into mid-air, in its enjoyment of the calm prosperity of peaceful moments, and in its ceaseless progress to new adventures and conflicts. Its future is hidden, like the stream in the forests at the bottom of the gorge, but the sea is far away still for the young mountain-torrent; and the long course is full of fair scenes and great experiences. Australia will not be one of the happy countries without a history, but will surely know, in Carlyle's sense of the word, the "blessed-

ness" of having a history. Its varied and progressive population, its contrasts of climate, its relations to Asia, its important position in the Pacific, its vast resources, and its social progressiveness, all unite to assure it of a very significant

place in the future tale of civilization. I fancy that I may have done a very slight service to some curious reader if I have thus given him any new interest in these our southern fellow-countrymen and in their land.



THE ROTHENBURG FESTIVAL-PLAY.

By E. H. Lockwood.



PLAY which has a whole town for its theatre, and half the population for its actors, and whose chief incidents take place on the spot where they actually occurred

more than two hundred years ago, is certainly not common anywhere, least of all "at home," as we wanderers always say when we refer to the land across the ocean; and among the crowds who flock here at Whitsuntide to the "Festival" every year, none get more enjoyment out of it than the Americans; not to speak of instruction, for the whole affair is an object lesson in history.

Until within the last ten years Rothenburg an der Tauber was almost unknown outside of its own walls, excepting to a few antiquarians and half a dozen artists. The antiquarians dived down into the damp vaults under the "old Rath-haus," as the oldest part of the Town-hall is called, and revelled there among chronicles which told about the tower that Pharamond, the Frankish king, built on a spur of the same hill which afterward bore the fort-

ress of the Counts of Rothenburg, and, later, the town much as it stands to-day, only then, instead of being an obscure Bavarian dependency, it was a free city of the Empire, and governed itself. And they settled their spectacles still closer to their near-sighted eyes, and peered through the delightful half-darkness, sneezing at the dust, into more chronicles that related how one Pluimond, another Frankish king, built another tower farther down toward the valley, and called it the "Vinegar-jug," because it was raised with the benevolent intention of "spoiling the teeth" of his Swabian neighbors, in case they ever tried to crunch it; about the tournament that was held here by Conrad the First, and the invasion of the Huns; about Salians, and Hohenstaufens, the Italian wars of Frederic Barbarossa, and how a Count of Rothenburg was the first to plant his victorious banner on the high altar of St. Peter's. But when they got down to Frederic Barbarossa, the antiquarians felt as if their researches were growing too modern to be interesting. As for the artists, they settled their camp-stools in mouldy corners and drew. There was no lack of what they called "motives." Rothen-