"BAIL UP!"
Ned Kelly, Bushranger

BY

HILARY LOFTING

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a https://www.fadedpage.com administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at https://www.fadedpage.com.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

Title: Bail Up!
Date of first publication: 1939
Author: Hilary Lofting (1881-1939)
Date first posted: Nov. 29, 2023
Date last updated: Nov. 29, 2023
Faded Page eBook #20231139

This eBook was produced by: Marcia Brooks, Pat McCoy & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at https://www.pgdpcanada.net

This file was produced from images generously made available by Internet Archive/American Libraries.

“BAIL UP!”
Ned Kelly, Bushranger

By
HILARY LOFTING

1939
Sydney
NEW CENTURY PRESS PTY. LTD.
3 North York Street.

Wholly set up and printed in Australia by
New Century Press Pty. Ltd., 3 North York St.,
Sydney.

Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney,
for transmission through the post as a book.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

COPYRIGHT.

CONTENTS

BOOK I.

“BAIL UP!”

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.		9
II.		18
III.		31
IV.		39
V.		48
VI.		61
VII.		70
VIII.		78
IX.		94
X.		101
XI.		114
XII.		123
XIII.		130
XIV.		142
XV.		152
XVI.		159

BOOK II.

THE STARK FACTS ABOUT THE KELLY GANG

I.	THE STARK FACTS ABOUT THE KELLY GANG	167
II.	BUSHRANGING IN VICTORIA	173
III.	OUTRAGE BY THE KELLYS	185
IV.	THE VIEWPOINT OF THE PUBLIC	194
V.	LETTERS AND LAW	199
VI.	THE KELLY GANG IN N.S.W.	209
VII.	OPINIONS OF THE PUBLIC	219
VIII.	AFTER JERILDERIE	222
IX.	ANOTHER KELLY OUTRAGE	226
X.	DESTRUCTION OF THE KELLY GANG	229
XI.	AFTER THE BATTLE	239
XII.	BEFORE THE TRIAL	248
XIII.	THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE	252
XIV.	NED IN COURT	255
XV.	THE TRIAL AND CONVICTION OF NED KELLY	264
XVI.	A REPRIEVE WANTED	271
XVII.	THE KELLY HAUNTS	279

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I

SOMEWHERE between Donnybrook and Greta he was born, the year being 1854 and the times good for the upper and middle classes and very bad for the underdog. He was born without benefit of surgeon or midwife. There was the tent and the bush, and maybe some neighbour's woman picked up along the track to help with this birth. He was a fine strong baby with a good loud opinion of himself——

"The way he'd be thinking he owns the world already," Mrs. Kelly murmured. Her white face was like a ghost's in the dim corner away from the feeble lantern light. She was very strong, but—well, a tent is only a tent and a pile of rugs and rags is not a bed.

"And why not?" his father asked, looking proudly at this new son in the crook of his mother's arm. "Let him bawl and yell if he has a mind to—he's airing his voice."

"Ah, well, if he gets his share of the world it'll be as much as ever."

"And that's God's truth." Red Kelly watched mother and son a moment longer, before he took his pipe out into the star-heavy night. She'd be the better for a sleep, now that the baby was quiet again.

In the heavy rank tobacco smoke he saw no visions of the future of this boy or himself or the fine woman in there. What future would there be, worth calling the name? Anyhow, there was always the bush, and freedom if you knew how to keep it.

Edward—that would be a good name for this new-born son. Edward, after himself—maybe he'd make the name famous—Red Kelly grumbled a laugh into his pipe at this foolish thought. Even old Daddy Quinn, sour as he was, would have had a laugh at that. The Quinns were camping up farther on the track; maybe some of them would be down, now that the dark had fallen, to see the new baby.

Old Daddy Quinn. . . . He was a hell of a fellow, so he thought. Fancied himself as a sort of a settler, back in Donnybrook, giving himself airs and graces and looking askance at a decent upstanding man coming courting his

bit of a daughter. . . . Well, he was a grandfather tonight, let him put that in his pipe and smoke it.

The child's cry sounded from the tent again as Red tapped his pipe out on the log of dead timber. No future worth a thought, but a deal of past of a sort—for his family at least, and he'd be sharing it soon, the little shaver with the fine big voice. Red chuckled; a deal of past for some of the gentry to be thinking over in their snug beds.

His hands filling his pipe again were suddenly stilled. Small sounds, far off up the track, a shadow of distant voices in the darkness, the faintest of faint rustlings in the scrub—to any man a nothing, a part of the bush night and the little breeze. But the expert bushman nodded his head and put away his tobacco box; that would be the Quinns coming down and perhaps Mother Lloyd with a noggin or two of rum to wet the baby's head.

To young Edward—Ned, as he was soon called—life was mostly bush and travelling on, always travelling on. Maybe home would be a tent and some stones for a fire; maybe it would be only the ground and the starry sky with the moving bush and its voices. But whichever it was, it soon vanished, to give place to travelling on—that was the only thing you could be sure of. Travelling steadily on up into the ranges or down to a creek, with rich thick bush on its banks; going slowly with mother and the new baby and Dad smoking his pipe and boiling a billy of tea whenever he had a mind to. Or travelling suddenly, and fast and furiously, with snorting nervous horses and curt low orders from Dad or an uncle or cousin—a swift plunge up into a dark silent place in the bush, where you waited and watched and did what you were told instantly. Horses, a lot of horses, changing horses and cattle—then no horses or cattle and Dad and the cousins drunk about the camp and Mother laughing at them, the new baby in her arms.

Fights began to come into it pretty soon—fights with cousins, with stray boys that appeared haphazardly at the camp with men who talked long and earnestly with Dad and the Quinns and then as haphazardly vanished, fights later on with young brother Dan. From Ned's angle these fights were good; they taught him control, rapidity of thought and action, that you were not beaten until you were unconscious, that a lot of boys are not nearly as strong as they think they are, that silence is better than talk. He became hard and muscular beyond his years, so that soon he could hold his own with grown up cousins and grown up uninvited wanderers into the camp. There was a power in this muscular quickness and readiness, a power which gave him a certain position in the shifting camp, a position also beyond his years.

Bushcraft he learned too, from Dad and the cousins, a specialised bushcraft that became a sensitive second nature. The bush became his home, since in all this travelling on, the world had clearly no other home for him. He learned all the bush moods, all the bush trickiness, uncertainties, cruelties more patience than he gave to anything he gave ungrudgingly to the bush. In time far-off sounds instantly translated themselves into their cause in his super-sensitive hearing; a track travelled once was registered indelibly in his memory, so that he could unhesitatingly take it again, even in darkness; all sounds, smells, movements, however faint, gave him their evidence as clearly as if he were a hungry bandicoot seeking a safe meal. He learned how to be as motionless as a terrified bandicoot, as swift and ruthless as a death-adder. The bush, his home, was education, romance, imagination, thought—all life to him in these young years when he was too strong and handsome, too self-reliant, too much a figure in his narrow world.

And Dad was a horse-thief, a cattle-duffer—that, too, became clear very soon. So were the cousins and all the wanderers in and out of the shifting camps. There was nothing in that; any man might find himself in any job, or any boy for that matter. Bits and scraps of talk from Mother and Dad, from the wanderers who came and talked and vanished, showed him that this was a dangerous sort of a job; mates here and there had been killed at work in it, but it was exciting; it had a flavour, a relish entirely absent from the pale jobs that gave you a roof and a safe life. Drifts of talk showed him, too, that in these pale jobs the whole world was your master, that you couldn't call your soul your own, that you were the underdog, who got trampled on anyway and died in the workhouse. So why not be free and get some fun out of it, the wanderers argued, their non-committal eyes watching young Ned's face.

All the pros and cons made too close a pattern for a sixteen-year-old mind, already self-centred and self-sufficient, to grasp. Mother and Dad, the Quinns, the Lloyds, the Skillians—all the people who had ever meant anything to him had pushed out farther and farther away from the safe jobs, the world of the underdog. Melbourne was only twenty miles south of Donnybrook, and even old Daddy Quinn, who had tried to jump on Dad for courting Mother because Dad was a rowdy—old Daddy Quinn who had called himself a settler and thought he was pretty near gentry in Donnybrook—had turned his back on it at last and travelled north with Mother and Dad. Farther and farther away from the gentry, deeper and deeper into these ranges, into the bush that could give you more freedom and life than the gentry knew existed.

And take a dark night and no moon, and the carrier's two fat nags in his lower paddock. A good breeze is blowing from the west, so if you're fool enough to make any noise, the wind'll carry it up into the ranges with you. You come down to the rails like one of the shadows of the moon would make if she were up, slip the top rail out of the socket and dodge into the paddock. Now you're a horse, a silent invisible horse, and you settle down to getting it into the heads of these two brothers of yours that you want them to come with you, to something lazy and at the same time exciting over where the rail is down. You can't tell them this; it would startle as well as interest them and they'd make a to-do about it, and the carrier and his ostler would both be in the paddock before you could get out of it in comfort. So you can only think it into their heads, as from one friendly horse to another. Well, you do, and they edge over lazily to the fallen rail, you being a part of the darkness somewhere near them and as happy as Larry. Presently they step lazily over the lower rail, and wander up the road a bit. You leave the rail down to make the carriers think it slipped and the nags strayed, change from an invisible horse to a boy, slip the halter from round your waist on to the offside nag in one movement, mounting the other in the last hitch of the movement. And before they have realized that the lazy comfortable thought has become a tearing race up into the ranges, you are well up in the wind and safe, and still as happy as Larry.

Maybe Dan would be waiting for you at the narrow mouth of the gully, the small gully, no one would dream was there in the shoulder of the hill. And it with a flat grassy floor and hardly a boulder or a rock—a perfect place to hide anything you wanted hidden. Dan is not yet ten years old, but he's quick and clever, and he thinks the whole world of his big brother. The horses are cobbled in the green silent place which feels like the end of the world in the darkness; they're happy enough and quiet—Ned's murmuring voice and easy hands would make any horse happy and quiet.

Down the hill again to the camp, a glance and a faint nod to Dad smoking his pipe by the fire before you sat down beside him.

"No hitch, Ned?"

"Nary one. As easy as silk."

"Good, Miles'll telegraph in a couple of days. If he doesn't we'll take 'em down t'other side."

But Miles did "Telegraph"—that is to say a wandering boy stopped at the camp for a drink of water and carelessly dropped a letter before he wandered on. It was the clumsily printed type of leaflet that was pinned to

inn parlour walls and displayed in shop windows; it stated that Mr. Pockrington, the well know carrier at the service of the township and district, would pay £15 reward for the return of two valuable horses which had strayed, etc., etc.

Ned took the nags down himself. Mr. Pockrington glared suspiciously at him, but Ned's bland easy smile was impervious to much more than that.

"Where did you find them, young feller?" Mr. Pockrington demanded.

Ned's eyes opened wide in astonishment at the gentleman's violence. "Where I told you sir—on the track just above my father's camp. We're wood-cutters sir, and we live in a camp."

"H'm—camp—lot of men: no family life for a growing boy—"

"Oh yes, sir, me mother's with us too. She likes camp-life, and you ought to see my new baby sister."

"Ought I," Mr. Pockrington was not satisfied with this smooth young giant whose eyes were so respectful and yet so mercilessly hard. "What I ought to do is to let Constable Jenner investigate before I pay a penny——"

"Why don't you do that, sir? And I'll take the horses back until you and the officer are both satisfied."

"Take them back?" Pockrington laughed. "Don't be stupid, my good fellow. They're my horses."

"They can't be, beggin' yer pardon sir."

"Can't be? What d'you mean, you impudent—"

" 'Cos if they was you'd take delivery of 'em and gimme me reward like an honest man—your bit o' paper doesn't say you had to like the colour o' the cove's 'air wot took 'em in an' fed 'em and kep' 'em safe for yer', does it?"

"Honest man?" The well-known carrier was like to burst with indignation. But the eyes were not respectful now, but only mercilessly hard in the young face. And Jenner was a fool—he'd talk and cogitate for a week, while the nags ate their heads off in the pound and did no work. Here they were now, ready to go to work at once; and this bitter youngster was just the type to start a lot of expensive foolery; a very touchy type—you didn't feel too safe even just talking to him in your own yard.

Mr. Pockrington took delivery of his nags and paid the reward.

But after you'd turned this easy trick a few times it was dull, not worth your energy and time. Life soon became dull, took on a stale routine as if it were holding you in chains instead of the freedom they were always boasting about. Dad had grown dull too, sitting at the fire with his pipe hour after hour, never opening his mouth, like an old man. Breaking camp and shifting, whether easy or worried he did his part; travelling on, he was still the best bushman of the lot—could pack a big camp away into silent invisibility in no time, until the danger was past and the track safe again for travelling. But when they got there and the fire was lit for the tea and the johnny-cake, Dad sat on the ground beside it, filled up his pipe, and stared into the fire in his unbroken silence. His beard had gone suddenly grey, and his eyes always had a question in them now instead of the laughter the boy remembered.

Mother too, was busy and pre-occupied. Every now and again there was a new baby to join in time the bits of girls a couple of the earlier new babies had become. Dad couldn't hold his drink now and there'd be brawling and quarrelling at times and sometimes a bit of a sing-song and laughter as in the old times. The camps had to be more and more inaccessible as time went on, and few wanderers and "Telegraphers" came in to yarn awhile before they vanished, travelling on. The Quinns vanished, too, for long stretches of time about their own affairs; one or two of them got "pinched" and did their spells in quod; the Lloyds and Tom Williamson and a couple of the Skillians still came and went; and sparse "telegraphed" news of the others filtered in from time to time.

But it was all narrowed and dull, as dull as ditchwater compared with the vivid vigorous community the boy's eyes had seen and learned at first. Perhaps there wasn't so much to learn now, nor so much to believe in as worth learning. That was as maybe; Ned couldn't tell where it came from. It was there, and it irked and chafed his spirit, making him sit in silence like Dad, staring not into the fire, but at a dull world which had lost its savour.

Until the little man came wandering in that night with his soft-spoken "telegraph."

CHAPTER II

OTHER men, large and small, had wandered into the camps, given the Telegraph sign, and sat down—had smoked their pipes, had a yarn and a feed, and had wandered on, just as this little man. Why should Ned, whenever he closed his eyes, see this little cove squatting on his haunches, his wrinkled face ruddy in the firelight? Why should Ned, in darkness and solitude, hear for a week the gentle rise and fall of the cove's silly ladylike voice? Because the game had narrowed and grown dull and this telegrapher made a break in it? Perhaps that was all it was—

"Harry Power's heading up for your ranges here," the little man was murmuring.

"Harry?" Dad took his pipe out of his mouth. "He's in chokee, in Pentridge."

"Why no." The telegrapher chuckled softly. "He's out—been out more'n a fortnight."

"Well?" Dad demanded in the pause.

"Amusin' gent, Harry. Tough as oak while he's out an' they're after 'im, an' soft as fresh butter the moment he's in—singin' hymns, runnin' errands, bowin' an' scrapin' until 'e sees a chance. One's enough for 'im; 'e drops on it like a jackass on a snake. You'd think they'd tumble to 'im, wouldn't you, Red?"

"Why would they, an' with no gumption to help them? What's Harry been at, then?"

"Well, 'e soft-soaped 'em an' bowed an' scraped to such a tune that they put 'im on the rubbish-tip."

Ned stared at this little telegrapher. Was he trying to be funny? "The rubbish-tip?"

Dad laughed for once. "The rubbish-tip at Pentridge is a great honour, me boy, as ye'd know if ye'd the bad luck ever to be one of the guests there.

’Tis reserved for the white-headed boys, the very best behaved of the guests.”

“Why, Dad?”

“Well, a special squad is told off every week to cart all the refuse and rubbish from that great institution to the tip—under guard, of course, of two armed warders. ’Tis a long job, filling the cart maybe a half dozen times and wheeling it out to the tip beyond the walls of the gaol—sure, they wouldn’t have a thing the like o’ that within the precincts. And at times it’s not too savoury, as ye can imagine, an’ there’s a special issue of tobacco and maybe a noggin of rum, and it’s easy and out in the air, and if you know the ropes you can knock a couple of little extra concessions out of it—oh, ’tis the prize job of that great reformatory institution.” Dad chuckled. “Go on,” he added to the telegrapher.

“I told you ’e was like a jackass an’ a snake if a chance came. ’Imself an’ another were shovelling the last load from the cart into the chute for the tip when one of the warders asked the other for a light for his pipe, bringin’ the two heads together over the lucifer.” The little man laughed softly again. “And Harry fell down in the cart, and was shovelled down the chute into the tip. When the warder’s pipe was goin’ comfortable, ’e looked up to find the rubbish-tippin’ job finished for that week, an’ the squad standin’ eyes front wi’ their shovels on their shoulders, waitin’ his orders to go back to their cells—”

“Be the holy Saints an’ Martyrs!” Red Kelly’s great laugh roared out over the darkened camp as in the old days. “What a man, what a man!”

“Yes, ’e was good, wasn’t ’e?” The gentle titter was like a shadow of mirth after Dad’s great bellow. “An’ it was near dark an’ the warders’d be wantin’ their tea—it was a great disappointment to the authorities when they found next mornin’ at the 6 o’clock call that Harry Power was missing. ’E’s still missing, an’ ’e’s heading up here for your ranges.”

“I can see the yard,” Red growled into his pipe, all the mirth gone from his voice and only scorn left, “and the two big fools in their uniforms solemnly pacing beside the squad of men, and it one man short.” Red spat into the fire. “They can’t even count,” he added.

The little man slipped to his feet like a cat. “I was to tell ye that, Red,” he lisped, “an’ I’ve told it ye. If ye have a bit of a rug or a blanket I’ll roll up an’ be on me way at daybreak.”

“Ned’ll put all that right for ye,” Dad said. “G’night.”

Power, Harry Power . . . . Ned couldn't sleep. There was the little man, squatting over the fire, giggling and trying to be funny. . . .

Next week Ned was due to go down Beechworth way to Joe Byrne; there was a mob of horses coming up, so the telegraphs had been saying. It was going to be a tricky job, Joe said, but he had a mate down there, a good flash lad who knew the lie of the land and would put them right. . . . That was a good trick, that rubbish-tip; quick thinking and quick action, before the thought grew cold. That was what made the difference! A horse-lifter, a cattle-duffer was just a cove doing a job of work. If he learned how to do it, like any other job, it was all right; he could go on for years! if he made a fool of himself, or even a false step, he paid for it, just as a carpenter falling off a roof paid for a false step. A job of work. . . . But to break out of quod because one of the guards struck a lucifer, to vanish while he was getting his pipe to draw—*that* was more than a job of work. And the man who did it was more than a bit of a hunted horse-lifter. Those fools in uniform might not be able to count, like Dad said, but it was bad judgment to spit in the fire and forget them; they had the power; they could keep you on the run for years—did keep you on the run for years. . . . "made" a limited horse-lifter out of you. . . .

Joe Byrne was too young for that job at Beechworth; it was a big mob of horses, and there'd be a camp like a township bringing them up. Joe was nothing but a bit of a boy living in a good home where his old man was too strict with him. Well, he Ned, would have to look after him; he generally did have to boss every job he was on, anyway, so it would be nothing new. It was a good job he did know how to lift horses and cattle—pick 'em out o' the mob and make 'em vanish while the owners were counting 'em. Ned grinned in the darkness; perhaps it "was" only a job of work at times, but it was something to be the best workman at it at sixteen. Old hands, who had known the game since the convict days when it was started, said they'd never known anyone as quick and clever at it as young Ned Kelly. As neat and pretty as a picture his jobs always were, they said. . . . This Harry Power had been in and out of chokee a lot, off and on; but they hadn't broken his spirit, seemingly. There was the little man again, giggling over the fire, his piercing eyes laughing into Dad's gloomy face. . . . Wonder if the next camp would have a bit of a house on it, or a hut, or something you could knock together for Mother and the kids for shelter. What a silly soft voice he had, like a woman's; but you could feel a sort of danger in it too. You'd know that you had to match him hard, if it came to it, and that he'd be an ugly customer, with about as much softness in him as a pickaxe. . . . The dark felt kind and quiet—at last Ned slept. . . .

By Beechworth, deep in a jungle of impenetrable bush, he saw Harry Power. Young Joe's mate had told Ned to come up here, to whistle softly on the broken track and break in without waiting for an answering whistle. Power would know who he was, wanted to see him.

"He's a great feller, you'll understand, Ned," this Colin, Joe's mate, had murmured hoarsely, "an' it'd be as well if ye did what he wishes, I think."

Ned thought so too, he couldn't think of anything he wanted more than to see and speak with Harry Power. Ever since the little man had leaned over the fire.

But when he did see him Harry Power was a shock.

Ned was used to the bully-boys of the road and the bush, rough simple men who said what they meant and would knock you down as soon as look at you; men who spoke the rough tongue of the stables and the stockyards; men whose clothes did the covering work of clothes and no more than that, this easy graceful gentleman who raised his hat and strode across the little clearing with outstretched hand was altogether too much for young Ned Kelly. He found himself stammering and blushing, an experience entirely new to him.

"Thank you for coming in response to my message," a rich, well-modulated voice told him. "I regret the necessity of sending it, but I am—er—permanently in hiding and must use what means I can. How are you?"

He shook hands heartily and smiled at the dumfounded Ned, putting his hat back on his head with a flourish. Four murders, according to the underground reports, Ned's subconscious mind was saying, in and out of quod for years, a price on his head at this moment—Ned looked again at the easy smiling man without a care in the world, at his long sleek coat and polished riding boots, at the cock of his hat, at his strong well-kept hands. This was gentry. A sudden vision of the Pentridge rubbish-tip and this smooth dandy crawling out of it made Ned laugh, and banished his embarrassment.

"Ah!" The smiling glance also slipped over Ned, his strong well made figure, the firm precision of his stand on the ground, his light strong hands and wide shoulders. "You laugh and make light of it—that is kind and well-mannered. I'm obliged to you, Ned—if I may take that liberty with your name; your father is an old acquaintance of mine. Sit down and be at home in my poor hiding place."

Ned sat down on the log and laughed again. This cove was good. Did he ever say what he meant? Now that Ned's flurry of embarrassment was gone, he could feel that Power looked like a sort of actor—he reminded Ned of the circus men he had seen once or twice on the roads, and a bit of one of the old telegraphers who had once been an actor. He had the same look in his eyes, the "come-hither" look, Mother called it, the same way of always standing, smiling, lifting his chin, talking, even filling his pipe and lighting it, as if he knew you were looking at him and admiring him. So much Ned's precocious powers of observation and judgment showed him, and he might have laughed a third time at this famous raider who was only a stuck-up dandy. But he remembered the Pentridge rubbish-tip and two armed guards perhaps five yards away with orders to shoot down all escapees without parley. One false step, the half of a false movement, a second's hesitation in the cart, and there wouldn't have been any Harry Power to put his fine boot up on the log and to lean over it, with his coat draped over his knee and a long, strong hand hanging gracefully from his cuff. Touch and go—he lived on touch and go, and took his chances with death and the devil. And he made a game of it, a handsome strutting game. More power to him, more everlasting—

"It was, er, intimated to me, Ned," the rich musical voice was saying, "that you were coming down to this district on business, and I thought—how is your father? He keeps well, I trust?"

"Pretty well, thankee."

"That's good, that's good. Pardon—I'm forgetting my manners again—" he held out his silver tobacco box—"Will you smoke?" he invited.

Ned shook his head, "No thankee."

"Well, then, this business of yours—it goes well, I hope, so far?"

Ned looked up. No come-hither look now; a steady searching stare. This cove, Harry Power, wanted something—"Not too well," he heard himself answer before the inviolable bush law of caution sounded its warning. He shut his mouth, but too late, he knew.

"Tell me, Ned," the rich deep voice commanded in the little pause. "We are brothers-in-arms. . . ."

Brothers-in-arms. . . . Harry Power and young Ned Kelly! A thrill touched Ned's spirit and opened his willing mouth.

"Well, it's a big mob—near eighty, all told—and it's comin' up in two mobs, a day apart. And Colin's been drinkin' for a week—he's half asleep.

An' Joe's only a schoolboy—a bit of a runner, no more'n that. An' I couldn't. . . . the first mob'll camp in the spurs down below to-morrow night, an'. . . ."

Power tapped his pipe out in his hand. "And you're alone," he prompted, "and with no time to, er, get help?"

"Yes."

"Well," Power put the pipe in his pocket, "I am at your service."

The thrill touched Ned again, as the world seemed to widen out from the dull narrowed camps to a far horizon of adventure, touch-and-go adventure that should make all penalties worth while. Brothers-in-arms—each at the other's service. . . . He sprang to his feet, his hand outstretched and his eyes alight.

Power laughed, took the hand, and shook it hard with a flourish. "Till death and the devil catch us!" he swore, his deep voice rolling to a faint faraway echo in the hills.

They cut five good horses out of the second mob and sold them at a good price on the other side of the range—it was no good wasting time waiting for rewards to be offered, Power said; they had better work than horse-lifting to do.

"We'll be the last of them, Ned. They are closing in on us; you can hardly find a tuppenny township in the colony where a gentleman can make a—er—deal with his own horseflesh without every busybody in the district peering round the corner at him."

"It's God's truth. I thought we was a goner with the last pair," Ned said.

"Oh no," Power shook his head in pained protest. "Not a goner, a near thing, perhaps—it's always risky to stand out for a fair price from these horse-copers. They know too much. It was near; but never a goner. And not 'we was,' if I may say so, Ned. 'We were' is the usual form."

Ned flushed. "All right," he muttered.

"Small, I know," Power continued airily, "but how often the small things turn the trick for you, don't they? Have you sent word to Wangaratta?"

"Yes. Joe picked up a telegrapher yesterday. He'll be through there by now."

“Good. Then your family won’t expect you. It may be some time before they see you.” He looked hard at Ned.

“I know. They’ll be content, as I am.”

“Content. . . . content. . . .” Power echoed the word, but let it pass. “We’ll make a good team, Ned; we’ll give them a run for their money, if we’re the last of the bully-boys. Robin Hood started the game, we’ll give him as good a finish as we can, eh?”

“We will,” Ned swore. He didn’t know who Robin Hood was and he didn’t care; he was to work with Harry Power till death and the devil caught them and that was good enough for him.

There was nothing dull or narrow about it now. Some fiery energy alight in Power drove the team up and down the tracks, along the roads, into the back country on a horse raid and back on the roads again, perilously near capture a dozen times but always free and out on the roads or in the bush again. Power was a perfect horseman, a rider who could make his horse think and act in the same moment with himself; he was a skilful and resourceful bushman; and the words “fear” and “hesitation” had no meaning for him. At work, the elaborate long-winded dandy was a demon; every hour was an invaluable lesson in swift precision of action for Ned, in the control that can be made sometimes to pull a hopeless situation out of the fire, in the necessity of always thinking and acting simultaneously when the cards are all against you. Once more young Ned was as happy as Larry.

Until Fate, against whom no precision or swiftness or skill can fight, took a hand in the game.

Hot and black as pitch, the night was like a blanket on the road and the bush, and the two masked riders sitting motionless on their horses. This was always the worst part of the job; you had time to think, and you mustn’t think—only wait. The horses hated it, too; both Power and Ned could do everything human with horses, but it was superhuman to keep them still and silent in a cloud of mosquitoes and sand-flies in thick scrub. Every now and again Power leaned down and cursed softly in his nag’s ear; every now and again Ned patted his nag’s neck. Otherwise, the job was to wait, to wait for the distant sound they expected.

Presently it came, the hollow rumble of wheels crossing the culvert at the gully-head.

“There she is!” Power muttered, the customary note of exaltation in his lowered voice. The waiting was over; the moment was at hand. “Stand by,

young Ned, and keep your hand light and free for your pistol. Remember, the near leader first, if you *must* fire!”

“All right,” Ned whispered. Talk—talk—but Harry liked his little flourish just before the job broke. Ned preferred action himself.

The coach came lumbering on, her lights making a soft glow round her, and showing small dim patches of the road.

Ned’s left hand stiffened round the leather; the bracing of every muscle in his body—

“Now!” muttered Power.

The horses slipped daintily out into the road and stood, two darker shadows in the darkness, as still as the breathless trees.

The coach lumbered on—

“Bail up!” Harry Power’s huge voice seemed to split the night asunder. “Bail up!” the echo called faintly from the gully-walls.

The off-leader reared frantically at these two incomprehensible shadows in his path. The driver tugged at his reins—

“Whoa, there! Whoa, you swine, you——” he cursed and tugged at the floundering plunging horses until at last their jingling harness and tossing heads were still.

Loud and shrill and long a woman’s scream tore out of the coach into the listening night. It too, echoed long in the gully.

The two shadows stood a moment longer in the road, before they moved leisurely into the lights’ dim glow. Ned, still mounted, stood off at the edge of the bush, his sack open across his saddle bow, his revolver levelled at the driver’s head.

“Move and I fire. You know that,” he said curtly. “All right,” to Power.

Power dismounted. Revolver in hand he strode to the guard standing at the coach door, while Ned took his horse.

“Open the door,” he told the guard, who hesitated and grinned. That grin—something seemed to tap at Ned’s spirit. . . . “Open!” commanded Power, his eyes boring into the man’s stupid face. “Do I have to kick your corpse out of the way to open it myself, fool?”

Still grinning oafishly the man dragged the door open.

“One by one please, ladies and gentlemen. Take your money and valuables, *all* your money and valuables over to my friend on the horse. He will take care of them for you; his revolver will also keep you covered in case any of you try to be funny. Mine will do the same here for those of you who have not yet reached him and for the driver and guard.” Harry Power smiled at them and made a little bow. “I mean every word of it, my dears,” he told them gently, his voice honey soft and rich in the shocked night, his eyes mocking them through the mask-slits. “Any one of you who doesn’t obey my orders to the smallest point will be dead on this road on the instant.” His teeth gleamed in his beard in another smile. “Come out, old money-bags!” he roared at the portly gentleman on the step. “You should be good pickings for a start!”

The portly man scrambled into the road and over to Ned.

“That’s better. Now—”

What was that? Power’s chin went up. Far away up the road, beating, drumming on the road . . . . hoof-beats——.

“A trap, Harry!” Ned shouted. “The troopers—slip back for your life ——.”

The portly man staggered as a thunderbolt crashed into his shoulder. Power was in the saddle and tearing into the bush, up the thin track his horse must find by instinct as the drumming hoof-beats roared over the culvert. Ned was hard at his heels—damn this sack; it had fouled his reins—Harry nearly killed that fat fool after all, taking off from his shoulder into the saddle—damn this blasted sack! the world crashed into his forehead and swept him off his horse like a leaf. . . .

Smashing down into the scrub he could hear his riderless horse blundering on, and the rustle of Harry ahead growing fainter and fainter. That was good; Harry was away. . . .

He blinked up at the lantern and the two troopers’ grim faces. “All right,” he said. “It’s a hop. You’ve got me—or the low branch of a tree got me for you.”

Back in the dim glow round the coach, the handcuffs on his wrists, he stared coldly at the angry passengers demanding his blood, his instant hanging, flogging destruction—.

“But ye’re nowt but a lad,” one of the troopers said, “Now I c’n see ye. Who’s yer mate?”

“Mate?” Ned laughed in the troopers’ face. “What mate?” he asked.

“T’other bushranger, the one wi’ ye.”

Ned spat into the dust at the trooper’s feet. “I saw no one,” he said indifferently.

“T’was Harry Power, officer,” the guard said. “This one cried ‘A trap, Harry’ when they heard yer horses——.”

“I know t’was Harry Power—wasn’t it him we had word of at the station tonight? How else was the trap laid, d’ye think?” the other trooper said. “We only wanted to make this one blab—”

“Thank you. I knew that,” Ned said in a fair imitation of Power’s manner. His gaze travelled up from the guard’s boots, slowly, to his face. “And I knew what the grin on your fat face meant. And the woman’s long scream in the coach was the signal.”

“You know too much, me lad,” the first trooper said angrily, grabbing Ned’s arm. “The next thing ye’ll know’ll be the inside of a cell, and after that the feel of a rope round yer neck. Come on.”

CHAPTER III

"IF you will circulate the decanter, dear boy," Mr. Bruce Dunsany smiled faintly at his racey misuse of the language, "We may—er—wet our whistles is, I believe, the expression." He smiled again, but deprecatorily, to establish the fact that with him slang also was a joke, a pleasant democratic joke that he could afford.

Jarvis Lorne pushed the heavy cut-glass decanter across the table to his uncle without any answering smile. Vincent Ellery, of the Treasury Department, came back from closing the door behind the ladies; *he* smiled, but with a faint sub-acid quality—Dunsany was never quite sure how genuine Ellery was. . . . However, he was in the Treasury, which was considerably more important than his appreciation of wit and humour. He pushed the decanter on to Ellery as he sat down.

"At all events, your port is always sound, Dunsany." Ellery filled his glass, smiled again over it at his host, and drank very slowly. "Very sound. . . ." Mr. Ellery drank very slowly again, and refilled his glass.

"Yes, it's a good wine." Dunsany decided to forgive him the "At all events;" after all, he was a powerful fellow in the Government, and particularly in the disposition of the quite sizable crumbs that sometimes fell from the Crown Solicitor's table. One really impressive crumb looked like taking a tumble at any moment now; hence this dinner to meet young Jarvis. Ellery was the only guest, which gave a highly satisfactory intimacy to the occasion. Dunsany trusted that this would bear fruit in the matter of that Crown Solicitor crumb—he was relying on its doing so, in fact.

"The Department's decision in that huge conveyancing commission has not yet been made public, I believe, my dear fellow."

"Not yet, Dunsany. But you won't have long to wait for it—the information, I mean, of course. Not more than a week, I imagine."

"A week?" Mr. Dunsany lit his cigar with unnecessary care. "But I understood from Stacey that the matter was, in a sense, urgent, a fortnight ago."

“Quite so. That is Stacey’s interpretation of urgency: from three weeks to a month. But you have no occasion to worry. You will find that once more extreme pressure of ‘work’ has made it imperative for the Department to farm out a peculiarly profitable commission which it ought to do itself, being equipped with something like four times the man-power it needs or could ever use in the very highest of extreme pressure.”

Mr. Dunsany glanced at Jarvis. This was not, perhaps, the happiest conversational topic in the circumstances. Particularly with Ellery apparently in one of his aggravatingly outspoken moods.

“Ah well, my dear Ellery, we must possess ourselves in patience—they tell me it is a virtue.” He smiled; he would change the topic at once. “This boy, Kelly—”

“It is a virtue. Stacey tells me so a dozen times a day.” Dunsany was good baiting. “Especially when it’s a question of urgency in the dispatch of Government business. But never fear—the, er, brief will come to me in due course to be ‘marked,’ and I shall put a comfortable fee upon it and see that it is bottled up for—”

“Quite so,” Mr. Dunsany broke in hastily. This was worse than ever. Was Ellery deliberately trying to give Jarvis a—well, a distorted impression? He glanced again at Jarvis; but that young man was apparently not even listening. “Did you see the report of this lad Kelly, my dear fellow? A most disheartening occurrence; it appears that the lad is not more than sixteen years of age. . . .”

Mr. Jarvis Lorne had been listening, but he had given it up. He had listened dutifully throughout dinner, and had not been amused. This city part of the Colony was only London over again—worse, it was a provincialised, watered-down echo of London.

These two old buffers were playing cat and mouse with each other; the pink fat-faced one, Ellery, was the cat, and Uncle Bruce, damnably solemn and legal, was the mouse, or pretending to be the mouse; he was generally pretty dangerous when his manners were at their best, Jarvis imagined. But the pink chap was a match for him. There was some sort of a government job on between them, and Ellery laughed at the whole dishonest transaction while Uncle Bruce persisted in treating it as if it were one of the Ten Commandments. Or pretending to. Gad! How he’d love to wring Ellery’s pink neck, wouldn’t he? But Ellery had seen to that; he had all the jobbery firmly under control, in his own hands.

But if this was what he had come twelve thousand sea-sick miles to hear, he was a fool, as all his elders had been insisting since he was a boy. To realise his legacy from Uncle Peter and use the result to buy a place in Australia, a convict settlement the other end of the world—that was the crowning example of his folly, these elderly relatives pointed out querulously. They had written to beg Uncle Bruce who was a Melbourne Lawyer of some prominence to see that poor Jarvis didn't throw his money away in his absurd quixotic fashion; and, seeing that there was some money in it somewhere, Uncle Bruce had almost affectionately undertaken this guardianship of a fool. "We must look after you, you know, dear boy," laughing heartily, with his cold eyes unsmiling; "the stranger in a strange land and the thieves on the highway, eh?"

But he wasn't a fool, despite this probably notorious jobbing solicitor and those money-hungry old women at home. He couldn't stand London, couldn't stand the solemn English make-believe in front of the six-years'-old factory-hands and their twelve hours work a day, couldn't stand any of the English smugness. This colony, as it called itself (for its own incomprehensible reasons, no doubt; that rubbish wouldn't last long) was a new country, the newest in the world, since it had ceased its career as a penal settlement. It was a new land, which yet was broken in, so to say. Here a new nation would walk and work and build. A democracy, the word these two fat fools and their like so hated. The hate that is embryonic fear—no more smug jobbery then, with a sound port and evening clothes and a good legal manner in front of it. It must be a democracy; there was too much blood, too much savagery and cruelty soaked into the Australian earth for it to stand anything but a democracy. Here in this sunshine the underdog had been driven too hard, had been too starved of *all* life's gifts, had been too broken and beaten and killed body and soul; the stones and the dust, the rivers and the sands of the sea, and all the dark places where the shame of the penal laws had flourished—all these would see that here the underdog got his rights, his justice—that here soon there *was* no underdog.

High-falutin', of course, and rather in the tub-thumping tradition. But true, nevertheless—more than a mere theory of his own, he meant. The place was beautiful, what he'd seen of it; it had a gaunt magnificence, a sort of stark splendour that probably didn't exist anywhere else on earth. This the colonists called "harshness," "bleakness," "desolation," which was the measure of their minds and the measure of their resistance to the ultimate democracy. *That* would be a bloodless victory, to show the blood-soaked Australian earth what you could do when the opposing army was made up of smug dishonest rabbits, instead of a savage cross between police and militia.

More high-falutin' tub-thumping. *What* a time these old buffers took to guzzle their port! Were they entirely constructed of stomach and monkey tricks with money? No—three parts, like Gaul; he'd forgotten Uncle Bruce's large family—he begged his pardon. Weren't they ever going to give those lost-looking women upstairs the vast benediction of their presence and their minds? Apparently not; they just went on, while the port lasted. What were they settling permanently now?

"But—sixteen years of age." Dunsany shrugged his shoulders helplessly and finished that glass of port. "He's a schoolboy!"

"Quite so, but what was his school? That's important you know, Dunsany." Ellery's mocking eupeptic eye was fixed on his host. "He was taken red-handed as an accomplice of this notorious Harry Power—some sort of a hold up, I believe, in which this Kelly was caught and Power managed to escape. The point is, where was he educated?"

"What are you talking about, Uncle?" Jarvis asked.

"Bushrangers, Mr. Lorne," Ellery replied for Dunsany in the hope that it would annoy him. "One of our—er—primary products, or should we call it one of our Australian industries, Dunsany?"

"It's rather what *you* would call it, isn't it, Ellery?" (Good. He did break the skin for once). "Surely you know our bushrangers, dear boy?"

"Yes. Vaguely. That is, we get a lot of highly-coloured sensational stories in the London papers every now and again. They always seem very remote, and—well, we are inclined to take them with a good-sized pinch of salt."

"Oh, you shouldn't do that Jarvis. The bushrangers are a great menace to our peace and security and, er, property. They are very real, dangerous criminals, believe me, and very far removed from exaggerated sensational romancing."

"Bushrangers. . . . They range the bush," Jarvis said: "Is that the derivation, sir?"

"I suppose it is. We could wish that they confined their attentions to the bush; but they range also the high road and the townships, the farms and stations, the banks, the stores—any place where there is large or small thieving to be done."

"The original bushrangers were not thieves, I think, Dunsany. There wasn't anything to steal in those days, or what there was entailed too much

risk for them. They were men who had broken away from their gangs—oh, from the earliest convict days—and taken to the bush to escape the horrors of labour under the Government.” Mr. Ellery lit another cigar. “One doesn’t blame them. Those that managed to stay free lived in a wild state in the bush until they died. They were probably glad to die when their time came.”

“Why?” Jarvis asked looking steadily at this pink chap.

Mr. Ellery shrugged and smiled. “Why not?” he asked in his turn.

“Don’t you think, sir, that if a man had the fortitude, the guts (Uncle Bruce stared at him and shuddered) to make his escape from the cruel infamy of the chain-gangs he could have made a life for himself in this beautiful bush, a life which gave him back his stolen birthright, a life that he was sorry to leave?”

“I hardly think so. Most of them seem to have joined the blackfellows, or many of them. A good deal of sympathy was wasted on them,” Mr. Ellery looked quietly and without any mockery into young Jarvis Lorne’s face, “by reason of the horrors of the strict military chain-gangs and the rigid discipline considered necessary in those days. And from that, shall we say misguided sympathy the tradition has grown that it is a rather romantic flourish for a young man to become a bushranger and defy society. I need hardly say, that this is a dangerously mistaken idea, both for them and for the inhabitants of the colony. Society is not responsible for them and—”

“Why not?” Jarvis asked.

Mr. Ellery paused, looked at Mr. Lorne in silence a moment. Mr. Dunsany pursed his lips; this was most unfortunate. Laura had warned him of this—this revolutionary streak in Jarvis, and now Ellery (of the Department of the Treasury) was apparently going to get the full benefit of it!

He cleared his throat and laughed. “My dear young nephew,” he said, a nicely calculated balance of indulgence and censure in his voice, “you can hardly call a reputable, law-abiding society to book for the criminal actions of those who defy it, can you?”

“Why not?” Jarvis asked again. It was cheek, of course, but these old buffers were a damned sight more dishonest than half the men in the chain gangs. They didn’t nick a loaf or a rabbit on a sudden wild peak of starvation; they feathered their nests steadily all the year round. They were sitting in judgment on their betters, in fact.

“The whole structure of society,” Mr. Dunsany’s voice was patient but there was a good deal more censure than indulgence in it now, “is designed for the good of the majority. Laws are made to protect the majority, and when those laws are broken, the criminals, for whom society is ipso facto no longer responsible as Mr. Ellery reminded us—”

“But society *is* responsible for them, Uncle. She brought them into being with her chain-gangs and stupid medieval savagery. Mr. Ellery reminded us also of that. To such an extent that a boy of sixteen can be clapped into prison, in this year of Our Lord and at this point in our civilisation, for doing the only thing that society has allowed him to learn to do.”

Jarvis glanced at Mr. Ellery, whose pink face had become quite inscrutable again, save for the flicker of mockery in his eyes; he glanced at Uncle Bruce, whose face was by no means expressionless, good as he was at his legal manner. After all, why should he waste his breath? These bastions of society were immovable, impregnable. There were all the years to come, wherein the blood-soaked earth would give the birthright back to the underdogs, without the help of any puny voices.

He laughed, looked at the clock. “Excuse me for reminding you, Uncle, but don’t you think we ought to join the ladies? They’ll be wondering what has happened to us.”

Expression crept into Mr. Dunsany’s face to banish the shocked outrage of a moment ago, the surprising expression of a faint gratitude. “Good Gracious, is that the time?” he exclaimed. “Thank you, dear boy—why, yes, certainly—your Aunt will consider us very remiss. . . . Shall we go up, my dear Ellery?”

Jarvis held the door open for them, and laughed gently again as they went through.

CHAPTER IV

FREEDOM, freedom again at last. . . . Ned could stretch his arms, he could laugh shout, sing—he could walk as far as he wanted to without being met by a stone wall—he could turn himself inside out if he'd a mind to—the world was his again, with no grim peering eyes, no voices yelling at him as if he were a dog, no shut-in darkness to drive him mad in a cell like a stone dog-kennel. Making his way to the Beechworth camp and Harry Power once more, he savoured the air, the sky, the smell of the bush, the look of the dust and the road, the feel of the clean sweet breeze on his eyes and lips.

But something was gone, something that would never come back to Ned Kelly's spirit. In all this rich new world beyond the prison gates there was no new youth for him to find. He was seventeen, a boy; but all youth had fled, never to return. You couldn't do it; the underdog was too far under when they got him in chokee. The reckless eyes were guarded now, cold with watching for which uniformed power would snarl next and trample the dog a bit lower yet, cold with everlasting hate.

Not again would they pluck him out of this sunshine into that cesspit of degradation and pain. . . . Better the rope and have done with it. All the old hands, the telegraphers, harbourers, scouts, even the fences who made themselves so snug and safe, knew that.

As the travelling days—very cautious travelling now—went by, the inspiration of the rich new world wore down and presently was gone. The hate and the old watchful eyes in the young face remained, the watchfulness always prejudiced by the hate. The heavy benevolence in a face in a township street became the judge's solemn face suddenly animated by horror at the prisoner's youth and record; a smile became a warder's grin, a warder with something up his sleeve to drop on you; a kind voice became the chaplain's empty sing-song; grace, the song of the birds, the quiet kindness of night in the all-forgiving bush—these were no more than hiding-places for a bitter ever-present menace.

Even Power had dwindled. There was too much heartiness in the flourish of his greetings—too damned smooth altogether, like a counter-jumper trying to be gentry.

"Ah, well, Ned, Fate tripped us for once—Fate and a talkative informing gentleman who won't trouble us, or any of the bully-boys, again." Power's laugh was harsh for once. "In this life, as the parsons say," he added with a certain relish. "What are your plans, Ned?" he asked, the come-hither in his eyes giving place to the hard stare.

Ned's laugh was curt and without mirth. "Same as they always was," he said. "Only more so."

"Good. Don't let 'em break your spirit."

Ned laughed again. "They won't," he said.

He looked at Power a moment longer. Had he really changed, become more of an ordinary cove? It was queer, but Ned felt that he was Harry Power's equal now, instead of his offsider and pupil—the great Harry Power. . . . But there was too much thinking about all this; he had been doing nothing but think for the past six months and more. "How's business, Harry?" he asked.

"Business—well, now, business. . . ." Power glanced at Ned, smiling at the changed tone of his voice. "We always feel the need of action at first, don't we? There is a rather nice little thing, if we can pull it off. Does your new liberty feel equal to, well, to a couple of bank clerks, well armed and possibly under an armed escort of one mounted constable?"

"Of course I'm equal to it, with you."

"Thank you. I *was* going to suggest it to Gregory Hands, who is within call at the moment, but now that you have arrived, of course. . . ."

"Greg's good—"

"Yes, but you're better." Power stood up. "Your horse is all right—followed me all the way up that blind track. . . ."

That was the best news of all in this new liberty. Ned had been afraid to ask. . . . Suddenly he was spent, dizzy with fatigue. A voice was calling "Step lively, you dogs!" across the prison-yard. Clashing of doors, bells ringing, the rattling of keys, darkness, the smell of damp walls and floors. . . .

“You’re done up, Ned,” Power’s soothing voice was saying above him. “Better roll up for an hour or two. . . .”

The storm of energy broke again. Years of tense keyed-up excitement and morose fallow times of hiding; years driven by the fire in Harry Power to raids and armed adventure up and down the roads and ranges, in and out the townships, at the farms and the settlers’ yards, anywhere, everywhere. Robbery under arms, robbery with Harry’s slow smile and silken laugh, robbery with Ned’s curt hard laugh, robbery in the midnight silence, robbery for the sake of the robbery, never for need. For the kick and excitement in the risk of the deed, for the hazard of death, the self-glorification grinning in the face of death, and for the smouldering undying hate in Ned’s spirit. All these underdogs were riding for a fall; soon or late the fall must come, and the abrupt end of all life. All you could do was give ’em as good a run for it as you could, as the old telegraphers told young Ned a thousand years ago, when he *was* young, while their tragic eyes watched him.

Power laughed at all this. His idea was to live the moment to the full and the devil take the consequences—what you see in front of you, take, and go on to the next. You never know the luck. No one’s riding for a fall—

“Why should he be, Ned?” Power cocked his hat and laughed again. “You all take the game and yourselves too seriously. How can a bully-boy have the impudence to take anything seriously? There’s rum aplenty, and girls aplenty, and fools with full pockets aplenty in the world, aren’t there?”

“You make it sound true, Harry, anyhow.”

“It is true, and our job is to empty the pockets and kiss the girls and guzzle the rum—you’ll agree that that’s true, I hope?”

Ned grinned. “If I had your gift o’ the gab, I’d be a parson instead of a raider, if you want the truth.”

“And, if you were? or I was? The girls and the rum and the other gents’ pockets ’a still be there, wouldn’t they? Your manners would be a bit better, and you’d have the law on your side—that would be the only difference.”

“I suppose so——”

“It is so. And there’s no difference between you and the Archbishop of Canterbury—no real difference. You’re no more riding for a fall than he is.” Power tapped Ned’s knee with a long forefinger. “You watch it, young Ned. You’re letting ’em break your spirit.”

"Think so?" Ned laughed. "It's a fine mess of talk, Harry. I could say as much in four words. 'Give what you get'."

"No. It's wrong, Ned." Power shook his head, looking seriously into Ned's sullen watchful face. "That's the way to break your own spirit. It's a game: their cleverness against your liberty, or your neck. P'raps they win; p'raps you do. But you *give* 'em the game before you start—"

"Listen, Harry. Suppose you're copped, and the beak gives you a good long go—ten years, say—what would you do when you got out?"

"Chuck it," Power said promptly, "and get a job, an honest job. They've won the game—"

"Kiss 'em good-bye." Ned's astonished laugh was loud and long. "Say 'Thank 'ee, gents, for my nice long stretch as a dog in 'chokee' ' and go straight! My God, you make me laugh, Harry!"

"Good. I'm glad I do—glad something does." Harry's voice was curt and hard. "You need it. Watch it, young Ned." He stood up, and for this moment Ned was only a boy listening to a man to whom life's rewards and penalties, had been an open book. "I'm not sure that they haven't done it."

"Done what?"

"Broken you—for good." Power turned on his heel, leaving Ned staring into the dying fire.

"Broken him?" Not they, nor would they. Ever.

Harry thought too much of himself. He was good; not a bully-boy in the Colony could hold a candle to him when Harry meant it. But that wasn't everything.

He didn't always mean it—not in the proper way, or in the best way to make certain of a job. He took wild chances, like the wild chance of running up that fat cove's back and taking off from his shoulder into the saddle the night Ned was copped; he'd rather do that than make certain of the workings of his plans for escape if anything slipped. It looked well, like Harry's chatter at coach-doors and in the township; the telegraphers and fencers would laugh about the fat man for years, as they'd laughed about the rubbish-tip at Pentridge. But suppose the fat cove'd lost his balance and let Harry down? He couldn't have reached his horse in time, and the troopers would have copped twice instead of once, wouldn't they?

Too much flourish, and not enough guts in the working-out of the jobs. The last embers dulled and blackened in the fire while Ned Kelly, older now

and firmer, more definite and purposeful for his years with Harry Power, settled that he must get more of the planning and working-out of the raids and hold-ups into his own hands, and leave less of it in the flourishing hands of Harry. Harry would let 'em down one time, soon or late, and the lot would be copped. . . .

And Harry would do his term, and chuck it and be an Archbishop or something, leaving the lot high and dry. . . . Ned grinned and spat into the dead fire. Time to roll up—

"Is it you, Ned Kelly?"

Ned wheeled, his hand at his holster. But the moonlight showed him the little wrinkled ladylike telegrapher. "Well, what is it?" Ned demanded.

"It's this—" the little cove threw a handful of leaves on the dead fire, stirred it, and threw on a stick or two. He sat back on his heels to watch it. " 'Ave yer got a bit o' baccy, Ned?" he asked.

Ned handed him his box. "Well," he demanded again.

The little man waited for his pipe to draw well. "Your father, old Red"—he watched a cloud of heavy smoke thin and vanish over the fire—"is dyin'," he lisped.

Ned started to his feet—

"Oh, there's no wild hurry," the telegrapher murmured. "He'll last the night, they think, and p'raps to-morrow—"

Ned wrenched him to his feet by his shoulders, stood him upright in one movement. "Have yer got a horse, damn you?" he said.

"No, I wouldn't," the ladylike voice began—

"Wait here—I'll get you one. I may want to send word to Harry—wait!" The little cove looked up at Ned, trembling in his grasp. "Who sent you?"

"Yer Mother—"

"Wait!" The telegrapher, still trembling, stared at the fire. In a broken heart-beat it seemed, Ned was back. "I've told Harry you'll be over to-morrow with word from me if—if I don't come meself. Put that pipe in your pocket; you'll want all yer breath—we ride hard tonight, damned hard. Yer nag's in the scrub with mine. She's a good nag—take care of her. . . ."

Ride hard? The little man hadn't known, till now, what that was. He rode high up on the shoulders of the nag, like a jockey, or like a monkey-on-a-

stick, and he was more blown than his nag in half an hour. But he stuck it out while Ned galloped them down blind tracks in the shifting light of the moon, up the walls of gullies, through a stretch of marsh that tried to bog them. They touched a hard road about thrice in the wild night-long ride. In a spell on the steep shoulder of a hill, Ned drew breath, and seemed to realise that he wasn't alone and riding as he'd never ridden from the troopers.

"He's bad, is he?" he asked.

"Not all that bad, Ned. He—he just lies there and, well, he take it as it comes. Maybe he thinks he's lucky to be dyin' on his bed." The little man tittered.

"Lucky?" Ned looked at the withered monkey face, pale and weary now in the moonlight. "You, you're a hard cruel little beast, aren't you?"

The little cove tittered again. "Maybe," he confessed, "maybe."

"Makin' up that fire, gettin' yer pipe agoin', chattin'—you enjoyed doin' all that while you knew me dad was dyin' an' me standin' there watchin' yer, instead of ridin' for me life to get to him—you liked all that, didn't you?"

"Maybe." The haggard tragic face looked gravely, sorrowfully, at Ned. "I can't help that," he whispered. "We're ridin' now, ain't we?"

Over the shoulder, up into the hill itself and sliding down the other side, the nags as nervous as cats but still full of spirit, full of riding. A long flat sandy stretch and up—up again, shadows, fleet as shadows. Missing the boulders and great loose stones by a miracle, by a hundred miracles; pausing at the gully-heads, down, down to a certain spill and a broken neck. . . . No. Up again and out on to the clearer track on the top of the range. Ned must know that spider-trail like the back of his hand—

Real riding now, throwing the miles behind like bits of paper in a boy's game, riding so that the nag's hearts must burst, or a man's knees and thighs must crumble to dust—only your backbone held you in the saddle, and it was a thousand little bones rattling together—

At last the huddle of the Wangaratta camp deep in the bush. Shadows starting up from the darkness—

"It's Ned. Good. I'll take yer nag, boy."

Ned striding away to the dim-lit hut as if he'd just got out of bed—the little cove slipped out of the saddle and seemed to crumple in the arms of another willing shadow. . . . Take care of the nag, Ned said, didn't he? Well,

she was all right, so far as the little cove could see, before he collapsed at the shadow's feet.

"Well, Ned, I said ye'd get here—I knew ye would. . . ."

"Yes, Dad. I'm here." Was that dad's voice, that shadowy whisper? And that old grey face on the blanket—was that Dad's face?

"This'll be the end o' the track, Ned—is your mother there?"

"I'm here, Red. Close beside ye." Mother came out of the shadow and stood beside Ned.

"Ah well—that's the both of ye, mavourneen, isn't it? That's good. An' I can see the both of ye, forbye the lights gettin' bad. . . ." The voice was the shadow of a shadow now. Ned looked at his mother, who nodded in silence.

"A fine great girl. An' a little shaver with a terrible loud voice. . . . That'll be a while back; an' here it is now again—that's wonderful! Take care of her all ye can, ye little devil—"

The darker grey shadow came swiftly down over the still face on a long quiet sigh. Mrs. Kelly stooped and pulled the bit of a sheet up over the face, her unbroken silence filling the night with lamentation.

CHAPTER V

THE years dragged now, for a space, or seemed to drag. Harry Power's luck went out; there was a big price, five hundred pounds, on his head, and he was nipped in the teeth of one of his spectacular jobs without a chance of a spectacular escape. The reward was paid, and Harry got fifteen years.

Ned, back in the Wangaratta gully now, did some steady thinking before he settled down to work. He was alone now, or near enough to alone. Dad was dead and Harry was as good as dead. It might seem that Dad wasn't so much good in his last few years, but that was wrong. Red Kelly was a raider, a bully-boy of the old clumsy school who were now more often in quod than out of it, and as often hanged as either. The policing of the Colony was more or less keeping pace with the steady growth of settlement, and the old-time chance raiders who banged at farmhouse doors at midnight, or rode into yards in daylight, with their "Hands up!" for the money in the house or a keg of rum, a side of bacon, a pair of boots, had less and less hope of any luck. Naturally, they operated well in the vanguard of general settlement, but it was becoming hard, from the bully-boy's angle, to decide which was the vanguard. New South Wales was creeping down to Victoria, and Victoria up to New South Wales; between the two many an old-timer, many a haphazard gang of old-timers, called the last challenge.

But Red and the safe harbour of the string of Wangaratta gullies was a better second line of defence, than Harry Power's shifting Beechworth hiding-places. Only the raiders and their allies—scouts, telegraphers, harbourers, and fencers—knew anything of these gullies, knew of their existence deep in the impenetrable bush. To all others, the despoiled, the police, the chance traveller, the hue and cry that sometimes formed, all trace of pursued raiders vanished between Glenrowan and Wodonga, a distance of fifty miles. And the policing of the hinterland of that fifty miles was most effectually organised and carried out from the invisible camp many miles behind the front line of the road. The camp was kept as safe as chokee itself.

The raiders were good bushmen; their lives depended on that, and bushcraft was never neglected by the bushrangers who took even partly

seriously their cause of the underdog. The faint tracks to the gullies from north, south, east and west were famed and travelled when the hunt was up, and their end meant safety for all bully-boy underdogs. And that meant that Red, round whom the camps and huts had come into being, was much more than a clumsy old-timer.

But Red Kelly, Dad, that "old colonist" who had laughed in Daddy Quinn's face and nipped his fine daughter out to the roads and hiding-places for life, was dead. And the camps were rough, murderous places for Mother and the girls. Not that Mother or the girls minded that; they were used to it, and would have laughed at him for the thought of taking them out of it, for all Dad's final words to take all the care he could of her. It wasn't that; and it wasn't any tears or softness for the old man's final words—no underdog had time or place for tears. The old man passed on his job, that was all. No. It was deeper than that.

Steady constructive thinking doesn't come readily at twenty-two, when your background is camp, robbery, under arms, and quod. But this was it, as Dad saw it. Mother was safe now, so long as he and Dan and the boys kept away; now that Dad was gone the coppers couldn't touch her—unless she tried a raid or a hold up on her own, which wasn't likely. Well, then, the girls—those new babies that were always cropping up in the old days; there were four of them now, four flashing, heady-looking girls, like Mother and a bit like Dad. And there was the last new baby of all, who was a bit of a kid still; but she didn't matter so much. It was the girls who mattered.

There were other women in the camps, the bully-boys' wives; and others who were nobodys' wives; at times there were plenty of 'em—most times too many of 'em. Mother was quick with her hands and her tongue—she could put the fear of God into you with the daggers in her eyes if you tripped, as he remembered well from the old times. Sometimes there was a deal of rum and music, singing, dancing; and Mother's eyes could knife you until she was black in the face, and her tongue lash you, and her quick strong hands knock stars out of you; and you'd only laugh—he remembered that too from the old times. . . . Well, then, there it was; he might slip on his next job, get copped and put in for a long stretch (he wouldn't, but he might), and Mother would be on her own, with these flashing girls.

And there was this bit of a house up by Greta, well away from the road and the track, comfortable—a good place for four girls and their mother to live quietly and at ease. If he and Dan didn't show up there at all, except to take cash to Mother or the like, and none of the boys did—why, that was what he meant; they'd be alright for good. And for the future.

To make this work out, or to get in on its feet, he'd stick to horse-lifting for a bit, and cattle-duffing when it came his way; he was a certainty at that—all the coppers in the Colony could be after him on a raid and he'd give 'em the slip blindfold. *And* sell the horses or the beef within two days. In hold-ups you never really knew; there was your offsider, for one; a dozen people travelling in the coach, any one of whom might be able to order police-protection at any point on the road; if it was a private party you might find him quicker than you were, or waiting for you, or with an offsider of his own—there were a dozen soft places. A raid was only the cattle and yourself; after a year or two of practise you couldn't miss. Anyway, not if you were Ned Kelly.

He'd do that—play safe—and Mother'd get the house. . . .

This was done, and Ned's personality expanded in its doing. A certain undefined power and vigour in the spirit, a quality which had made even the inspirational flamboyant Harry Power sometimes defer to Ned's judgment and leave the coping with a ticklish job to the boy's command, became defined and stabilised. The fallow times of hiding were not so sullen, not so filled with rum and music now; the vague outlines of a plan began to make itself felt.

A plan of life for a raider, a dangerous underdog bushranger, was silly. Harry, grinding away at his fifteen years, would laugh; Dad, safe in the earth, would have laughed; Mother would tell him not to be wasting his mind with rubbish. You ran to the end of your tether, and then you took the drop, or such a stretch that you came out an old man, half an old man. You couldn't change that, they said.

All right. Perhaps they knew all about it, perhaps they didn't. They took it as a game, as Harry had said: what was there in front of them, they did; and got drunk or starved until something else was there, in front of them again. And of course the coppers won, with nothing but half-witted boozers to fight; even the coppers must win *that* battle in the end.

But supposing you're not half-witted or drunken—supposing you could carry it on until you. . . . What else did the squatters do, but sit down on a bit of land and say "This is mine. I'm going to build a fence around it?" Pretty soon the coppers gave in, didn't they, and answered "Yes. It's a nice bit o' land and you've improved it wonderful. Hope you make a fortune out of it."

There were all these coves who'd never had a chance, not even a dog's chance. The gentry and the coppers were looking sideways at them when they were babies at the breast—underdogs, that's what they were from the start. Well, they were men weren't they, strong and brave, quick—a sight better men than the coppers or the gentry when you were in a tight corner. Why should they huddle in the gullies, travel by night—work, think and live by night? What sort of a plan was that—wasting all these men, spending fortunes on coppers and gaols to waste them?

Dim and shapeless, Ned's own wild plan stirred in Time's sleep. Wouldn't Harry laugh and Dad, and Joe Byrne—all the lot of them?

Well, let 'em laugh. A long way to go, a deal of thinking, a deal of bitter hard work. . . .

But you never knew the luck. They lived on never knowing the luck. If they laughed themselves sick they couldn't deny that. You never did know the luck. . . .

If he kept to the horse-lifting and cattle, he'd dodge murder and the chances of murder—that was the first thing. . . . They never forgave you for murder; besides, it wasn't a fair go. A squatter with a mob of horses or cattle was different; he could spare a couple for some hungry underdogs. Holdups were out, too; they always meant the chance of a murder. . . .

But it would be a long bitter way to the right side of the coppers and the gentry. . . . Full of risk and life-and-death chances all the way. . . . He'd dodge 'em all he could; it wouldn't be his fault if they copped him and stopped him on the long way; he'd work at it, give it a fair go. . . .

The wild plan stirred a bit more in the everlasting sleep.

Two years after this, in April of 1878, the sergeant stopped Constable Fitzpatrick in the corridor of the Benalla Police Station.

"Step into my room a moment, Constable," he said. "I want a word with you."

The constable followed him in. What was it now? More complaints—more township gossip?

"Yes, sir?" he said, standing formally at attention beside the desk.

"You know Mrs. Kelly's house at Greta, Constable?"

Constable Fitzpatrick's eyes were abruptly veiled, inexpressive.

“Yes, sir,” he said again.

He did know that house, and a fine dark-eyed girl in it who hated the sight of him. He knew it was some sort of complaint—the sergeant’s manner was telling him so. He braced himself.

But it wasn’t a complaint.

“There’s a warrant for young Dan Kelly, and I have good reason to believe that he’s at his mother’s house now.”

The constable sighed in relief.

“You wish me to execute it, sir?” he asked respectfully.

The sergeant looked up. He didn’t like this officer, couldn’t feel that he was trustworthy. Too smooth, too needlessly respectful——

“Not exactly that, unfortunately.” And too many complaints about him.

“Yes, sir?” Fitzpatrick waited.

“The warrant is at the Mansfield station—if I send there for it we may be too late. The young man may vanish—for a couple of months.”

“Yes, sir. Very slippery customers, the Kellys.”

“Very. But he’s there now. If we catch him Headquarters will be—pleased.” The sergeant played with a paperweight a moment. “If I had another officer at liberty I wouldn’t send you, constable,” he looked hard at Fitzpatrick another moment, “because you’ll be in the wrong. And I don’t think you’re big enough for that disadvantage. Perhaps you can prove that *I* am in the wrong in that belief; I hope so. I want Dan Kelly in the cell here tonight.”

The constable looked dubious.

“They’re very clever—know the law, sir—”

“The law doesn’t always govern the duties of the police,” the sergeant reminded him curtly. “The capture of a Kelly is worth the risk of a reprimand. Which would never come—” he looked up again—“if we were successful. The responsibility is not yours; it’s mine. There’ll only be a couple of women in the place. . . .”

Constable Fitzpatrick knew that. And she’d hate him worse than ever. Well, he didn’t dislike that fire of hate in her deep black eyes——

“What is the charge in the warrant, sir?”

“Cattle-stealing. No date, I think—make it general: the Queen’s highway during the months of February and March, 1878—it’ll be true enough, I expect.” The sergeant stood up. “I shall expect you—both—tonight.”

The constable saluted. (Too damned formal, this officer)—“Very good, sir.”

She was standing by the gate and the fires of hate and scorn in her eyes were burning strongly. She was a little pale, too, as if hatred and contempt were not the only things in her mind.

“Well?” she said, as to the dirt beneath her feet. “What is it now?”

He grinned and saluted. “Good day to ye, miss,” he said in a hearty official manner. “ ’Tis—’tis a little matter of business this time.”

“That’s a change.”

“No,” he told her blandly: “all my suggestions are, well, they’re good business. D’ye see, my dear. Ye’d find it so, believe me.”

Her eyes burned him again, and he grinned again, and chuckled. “Y’re the beauty of the day and night,” he told her, “and the more you wipe your pretty shoes on me, or think you do, the better I like it. For now.”

“This business, real business,” she said wearily. “What is it? Ye’re a coward behind your uniform, and it makes ye feel brave to taunt an’ bait me. But ye’re a coward and a liar, and ye know it yerself, however brave yer buttons and yer dirty tongue make ye feel. What’s yer business?”

He still chuckled, watching her in great admiration, as her beauty deserved.

“I like to hear you telling it to me at such great length—it proves that you don’t waste a thought on me, doesn’t it?” He chuckled softly again. “Me business is with yer mother,” he added, pushing open the gate and striding into the yard——

“Wait!” She put her hand on his arm and smiled—or her lips smiled. “I’ll tell her you’re here. And I wouldn’t waste the half of a thought on ye—ye know that. Wait here.” Her lips smiled again.

“I will,” he promised as she sped away.

And, being a liar, swiftly and softly, he followed her, was in the kitchen as soon as she was.

Young Dan sitting at the table looked up at their entrance, paled, and half-rose when he saw the constable behind his sister.

"Ye're under arrest, Daniel Kelly," the constable was clad in grim official curtness now. "And be careful what ye say."

Mrs. Kelly wheeled round from the fire. "On what charge, officer?" she demanded.

"Cattle-stealing on the Queen's highway during the months of February and March of this year of Our Lord." Fitzpatrick reeled off the charge, the glib official master of the situation. But friendly, as the master of the situation could afford to be. He smiled at Dan. "Best come with me quiet and easy, lad. It'll pay you in the end."

"It's true, Dan, me poor boy." Mrs. Kelly put the saucepan back on the fire, keeping her face turned from the room. "Quiet and easy's best, and Mr. Fitzpatrick's a pleasant gentleman—he'll make it comfortable for ye."

Young Dan licked his lips, looked at the white fury in his sister's face, at his mother's back, at Fitzpatrick's hearty smile.

"February and March," he said, glancing at his mother's back again. "Well"——he shrugged: "alright."

"Will ye let the lad have a meal before ye take him, officer?" Mrs. Kelly said. "I was just putting it on the table when—" she paused, her averted head still and intent in the silence—"you came. He's not had a bite since yesterday an' it's a long way ye'll be takin' him. It—" she paused again in the silence—"would be a charity you can afford, seeing that ye have him now, without trouble. Will ye do that, sir?"

"Well," Fitzpatrick smiled into the rage blazing in the girl's face: "what do you think, Miss Kelly? I'd be a poor officer of the law if I said 'no' to that, wouldn't I?"

"You would," she whispered, her great black eyes staring at him from her white face.

"I thought you'd agree with me. Well, then, ma'am, we'll say 'Yes' to it, and good luck to his last meal at home for a while."

But Mrs. Kelly's lifted alert head had gone down over the pots on the fire where she was suddenly making a great clatter. The sound she was waiting for, temporising for, had come.

It swelled to a great sound of hoof-beats, which dwindled to a clop-clop in the yard. The constable’s head was lifted and alert now, as he turned and faced the door.

This was thrown open. Ned Kelly stood on the threshold.

His firm cold gaze went from face to face.

“What is it?” he asked, the gaze coming to rest on the uniformed Fitzpatrick.

Dan rose softly from his chair and moved round the table. Mrs. Kelly stood upright at the fire. “Wirrah, Ned,” she began, but he motioned her to be silent.

“What is it?” He asked the constable again.

“Daniel Kelly is under arrest. The charge is cattle-stealing on the——”

“You have your warrant?” Ned put in.

“——Queen’s highway in the months of——”

“Your warrant?” Ned put in again, watching the constable’s face.

This flushed angrily (not big enough to be in the wrong, eh?). “The police don’t need a warrant for such flagrant——”

Ned laughed.

“You can’t take him, officer. You know that,” he said pleasantly. “You’re wasting your time and your horse’s wind.”

“Headquarter’s orders are clear,” Fitzpatrick’s curt voice was loud and hectoring, “and I’m here to obey them——”

“And you’re wearing my patience, officer.” Ned was still pleasant and quiet, but Mrs. Kelly looked suddenly at him, and Dan moved a little away from the constable’s proximity.

“*Your* patience, Ned Kelly! My God!——”

Fitzpatrick’s hand slipped down to his holster. As it touched the butt of his pistol the crash of Ned’s revolver, fired from the hip, seemed to burst the room.

The constable gasped, clutched his forearm as he dropped his revolver, which Dan kicked over to Ned’s boot. Ned picked it up and put it on the table.

“Now, officer,” he said crisply: “you have no warrant and no pistol. And I have myself and my brother, and two men in the yard, watering the horses ——”

Abruptly the girl’s ringing laugh filled the kitchen with undying scorn, a rich, reckless music of mockery which made Ned turn and stare at her.

“Look at the lovely uniform and buttons!” She cried hysterically, pointing a shaking forefinger at Fitzpatrick holding his arm. “Look at the dirty liar and coward and the blood dripping from his fingers! Look——”

“Let be, girl, let be!” Ned ordered.

She choked back a sob and stood silent, smiling triumphantly at Fitzpatrick with her lips and with her eyes.

The noise of the shot brought Skillian and Williamson to the doorway, but Ned nodded them away. “All right, boys,” he said; “I’ll see to it. Best leave it to me.” And they also nodded and vanished.

“Now, constable, we’ll parley. Have ye a bandage, mother, for the officer’s arm?”

“Indeed I have. I’m gettin’ it now, Ned.”

“Good. ’Tis a flesh-wound only, I expect, which I gave ye in self-defence, ye’ll remember.”

Mrs. Kelly brought over the basin of water, unbuttoned and turned back the cuff, was washing the wound.

“But that’s no reason why ye should bleed to death, is it? Can ye get the bullet, mother?”

“I can”—Fitzpatrick gave a sharp cry of pain—“there—that’s it. It’s out.” She bandaged the arm tightly, tied the bandage, and took the basin away. Fitzpatrick looked at Ned.

“ ‘Parley,’ you said, didn’t you?” he asked, glaring at Ned. “It looks as if parleying’s all I can do.”

“It is. And it isn’t parleying, either. It’s my conditions.”

“What are they?”

Ned sat on the table beside the constable’s revolver. He pointed to it.

“Take this, ride back to your station, and keep your mouth shut. Don’t tell a soul how you got your wound, and say you found Dan gone. You were

playin’ with yer gun, an’t went off; a farmhouse woman bandaged it for ye and extracted the bullet. Gimme yer word of honour to say all that, an’ ye can go.”

“And if I refuse to tell those lies?”

Ned got off the table. “There are four of us,” he said, “and one copper less in the world won’t be amiss.”

The constable blanched and licked his lips (“not big enough”. . . .).

“Say ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ ” Ned thundered; “and have done, before I lose me temper again——”

“Yes.”

“Yer word of honour——”

“Don’t trust him, Ned,” the girl cried. “He’s the world’s liar an’ ye can see he’s a shakin’ coward! Don’t trust——”

“Silence!” Ned turned to the officer. “Well?”

“Word of honour. . . .”

As the hoof-beats died away—

“Why—*why*, Ned, for the love o’ God?” Mrs. Kelly demanded.

“Because I lost me temper and slipped—firin’ on the police in the execution of duty is the last straw—they’ll never forgive it—”

“But where are we now?” Dan said. “We are in his hands—he’s got us —”

“And is murder better?—murderin’ the police in the execution of duty? I should have dropped and let ’em fire over me—”

“But need ye—” Mrs. Kelly paused a long moment in thought. “Yes,” she said at last: “ye’re right, Ned. Ye only had the two ways, an’ ye took the better. We can only trust his word—”

“It’s true, mother. I was—no matter. We can only trust him—”

“Fools, fools!” the girl stormed at them. “I warn ye—ye’ll never forget to-day! Fools, fools—” Her voice caught and broke into a fury of helpless sobbing.

CHAPTER VI

LITTLE SCOTTY ADRIAN, the ladylike telegrapher, came mincing to the door of Ned's hut in the lower gully. He nodded to Ned and giggled. "Give us a bit o' baccy, Ned," he said.

Ned handed him his box. "What's the news this time?" he said.

"I always seem to bring you bad news, don't I? I told ye when Harry Power was comin' up, an' he got you your first taste of chokee. They sent me down to ye when Red was dyin'. An' now—" Adrian sucked hard on his pipe and looked dreamily at Ned. "I can't 'elp it, Ned—"

"I know. An' you hate it, don't you? Well what's the trouble now?"

"That copper Fitzpatrick—'e's a dirty dog. There's a warrant out for ye, Ned."

Ned laughed. "That's nothing new. There's generally two or three of them." Something in Adrian's face, smaller and even more wizened and weary now, banished the laugh. "Well?"

"But this one says shootin' with intent to murder an officer in the execution of his duty. An' there's another for Dan—aidin' an' abettin' you. An' there was three more, but they executed them; copped 'em all three—or four, as you might say, countin' the kid. You an' Dan did well to cut your lucky from Greta when you did, an' get under cover back 'ere—"

"Listen, Adrian—all ye've done up to now is chat. Come to the news. Some day I'll knock yer head off for walkin' round and round what ye've got to say."

Adrian tittered. "Maybe, Ned," he said, "maybe. The three warrants they executed was for your mother—an' o' course she 'ad to take the bit of a kid to quod with her 'cos, well, 'cos she is a bit of a kid—and for Skillian and Williamson, all aidin' an' abettin' you—"

"Quod?" Ned's monosyllable stemmed the tide. "Mother?"

Adrian nodded. "Three years, six years, six years." He held up three fingers and counted them.

"Christ!" Ned started to his feet, strode to the hut door and back to his seat. He stood over Adrian, his brown face white as a sheet above his beard. "When was this?"

"Thursday they copped 'em, an' they all got tried an' went in yesterday."

Ned stared at Adrian's monkey-face, through it to the Greta kitchen and himself losing his temper with that dog Fitzpatrick, to Mother's advice to him and Dan to ride for Wangaratta that night—"Me sister?"

"She's all right—over at Mrs. Skillian's." Adrian tittered again. "There wasn't no charge agin *'er*—Fitzpatrick thought it'd be better if she was at large—"

"And Fitzpatrick did this?"

" 'Im an' 'is sergeant an' a few others—but 'e laid the information. . . . You might a known he would, Ned—"

"Yes; but the information was only against Dan an' me—not Mother. . . ."

Mother and the last of the new babies. In quod.

"Well, we can't do anything about it, Ned—"

"Can't we?" Ned filled his pipe and lit it. "Can't we?" he said again. After a pause he added: "On your way down, take word to Skillian's that I'll be in tonight."

Adrian stood up. He knew that note in Ned's voice, though he hadn't heard it for a couple of years now. It meant trouble, bad trouble, and it brooked no chat, no advice, even no companionship. It filled the hut with menace, with peril, and Scotty Adrian left the hut without farewell or one unnecessary word.

In the dim lantern-lit Skillian hut, Ned listened to the dark-eyed girl's story, all her story, watching her white tired face, hearing her broken words of the story before the attempted arrest of Dan, he could feel the wild shapeless plan fall back into the everlasting chaos. This cold fury in his blood defeated all thought, all hope. He was a man driven now, not driving or hoping to drive—

"Dogs, dogs," he whispered when she had done. "There's not a clean one among them. A liar—they're all that an' we could guess it of him—but tradin' on his uniform an' the fear of it, sneakin' round kitchen doors an'

flashin' 'is buttons. . . . And Mother bindin' 'is arm—she knew I'd slipped, but he didn't know she knew it—an' the next time she sees him he arrests her, sends her to quod! With the child she can't leave. . . . Dogs, dogs! They'll betray you while your food's in their mouths, while ye're wipin' the blood from their wounds." He looked up, at the girl's stormy eyes. "Watch it, girl," he barked at her. "Betray you—the whole world will betray you, body an' soul, for a couple of shiners!"

He took her shoulders, stared deep into her eyes. "Watch it!" he commanded again. "When I've taken the drop, and Dan, an' the bully-boys—all the family-kind ye ever had on earth—when Mother's dead—keep on watching it until ye're dead yerself!"

He gulped and fumbled for his pipe, ashamed of the long speech and the long words. It was Harry and his gift o' the gab in the old times—the good old roaring times of death and the devil. He wished Harry were here now, instead of rotting in Pentridge—a good quick man, Harry, for all his flourish. . . . He puffed moodily at his pipe, his eyes on the girl in the half-dark. One of the new babies, she was, that Dad used to laugh at and chuckle over, when he wasn't looking into the fire. . . . It wasn't your temper that tripped you; it was your blood—he could feel Fitzpatrick's eyes on her, back there in the kitchen, though he didn't know. . . . His blood knew. . . .

A dark inviolate anger stirred in his blood. That Pentridge chaplain: "An eye for an eye". . . . All the foolish dreams were water now. . . . if they had ever been so much as foolish dreams, even—and the dark tide of anger swept them away, and took their place. That grip of power he had, that trick of bringing things to his own way—well, here was a use for it, without any more thinking or hoping or trying to work out heavy unwieldy thoughts that were too much for you from the start. This was simple; and he'd taken it in with his Mother's milk. "Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord"—that's what the little chaplain said. All right, that's what the little chaplain thought too.

Dan, and Joe Byrne, and Steve—yes, Steve, Dan wouldn't come in without Steve. No more than four. . . . a big gang was clumsy. . . .

The Kelly Gang.

Well, hadn't they asked for it?

The Kelly Gang'd show them a run, a good run for their money.

He tapped his pipe out in his hand, threw the ashes on the hearth, and stood up, towering above the girl still huddled in silence in her broken chair. One of those bawling new babies of Dad's.

He touched her shoulder, but gently this time, half-caressing it. “I’ll be gone awhile,” he said, “maybe a long while. And Dan also. Take care of Mother when she—when she comes out.”

She nodded. “Of course, Ned,” she said.

“And remember what I said: there’s not a living soul wouldn’t sell ye up if he could see a little amusement in it—”

The girl laughed. “I knew that, Ned,” she said. “What are ye singin’ psalms at me for?”

“I’m not,” he replied. “I’m tellin’ ye the bare God’s truth. An’ I’ll thank ye not to forget it, girl.”

Winter and spring had given way to summer when Sergeant Kennedy rode out to the King River ranges six months later. The sergeant was not happy about this trip; he didn’t like the way the information had found its devious way to Mansfield Police Station, nor the indefinition of the information, nor the apparent impossibility of discovering its actual source. His instructions were necessarily slipshod, too: to proceed in the general direction of the Wombat Ranges with the object of apprehending the Kelly brothers, who had been reinforced by two confederates and were in hiding somewhere in these ranges. He was a good courageous officer to whom duty was second nature, and he accepted his instructions without comment or hesitation, passed them on to the three other troopers under his command—Constables Scanlan, Lonigan and McIntyre, and set out from Mansfield early in the morning of October 25th. That he didn’t like the instructions was entirely his own affair, which had no detrimental effect on his customary thoroughness and sincerity in the despatch of his duty.

The party reached String Bark Creek in the evening, made camp, and spent the night there. They were a long way from where the Kelly’s were supposed to be, and there was obviously no need for any special precaution. Kennedy’s idea was to camp here for a few days, patrolling back into the practically uninhabited ranges for a suitable camp-position there, and then to shift the camp in. Early in the morning he and Scanlan went down to the creek with this general exploratory object in view, and were gone most of the day, leaving Lonigan and McIntyre to put the camp into shape, the latter as cook and camp-boss.

It doesn’t take half a day to put a small temporary camp into shape for even one man; for two, time soon grows heavy in the hand. Prowling about

in the afternoon with his gun, McIntyre had a couple of shots at the parrots before drifting back to camp to make a billy of afternoon tea.

These shots were a bad mistake.

McIntyre and Lonigan were bending over the fire waiting for the billy to boil somewhere about 5 o'clock; the evening silence was beginning to settle down over the small clearing and the bush and the sweep of the ranges beyond, though the light had not begun to fade. Peace was preparing to wrap the closing day in her arms.

"Bail up! Throw up your hands!" tore into this peace and silence, called a flutter of shocked echoes into life.

Four of them, all armed, the guns levelled. Ned Kelly, Dan Kelly, and two the troopers didn't know. All on foot. McIntyre put up his hands; his holster was hanging by the tent-flap—he was making tea.

But Lonigan's hand dropped to his revolver, and the roar of Ned's gun woke the shocked echoes again.

"Christ, they've got me!" Lonigan cried, reeled, and dropped dead, shot through the head.

Ned came closer to the fire and the billy boiling merrily on it. He looked coldly into McIntyre's white face. "Run over 'im, will you, Dan," he said. "You never can tell with these dogs."

Dan's swift light hands searched the trooper. "Nothing, Ned," he said.

"Good. Where's your pistol?" to McIntyre.

"It might be anywhere," the trooper told him.

"Good," Ned said again, his cold eyes mocking now, "we'd better find it soon." He shoved Lonigan's corpse out of the way with his boot. "Dear, dear," he drawled in his echo of Harry Power, "what a pity this little copper resisted me, wasn't it?" he smiled again at McIntyre. "Try the tent, Dan," he said. "He'd have it safe and under cover." He turned to the trooper. "Make the tea," he ordered. "I'm thirsty."

Dan came back with McIntyre's holster as the trooper handed Ned the pannikin of tea. "Thanks, Dan," he took the revolver, "and thanks, copper," he took the tea and drank deep.

"Best tie 'im up, eh, Ned?" Dan said.

Ned patted his rifle. “No. You’ll never get better handcuffs than this.” He put his pannikin down. “Where are the others?” he asked McIntyre.

“What others?”

“Dear, dear,” Ned mocked him. “Ye’ll get it yet—Kennedy and Scanlan, o’course. Where are they?”

“They might be anywhere, mightn’t they?” the trooper said.

Ned laughed. “Ye’re a fool of a copper, ain’t ye? I believe ye like trouble—where *are* they?” he thundered.

“You know as much about it as I do, Kelly. I don’t know where they are—they might be anywhere.”

“Make up the fire, Steve. I believe this copper’s speaking the truth—he don’t know where they are.”

“They’re somewhere at hand,” Dan said. “There are four stretchers stacked in the tent. They’d be back for tea.”

“You tell ’em copper, when they get back that what they do is surrender—” Ned paused, listening intently. “Here they are, boys. Under cover.” He turned to McIntyre. “Two of the guns will be on you, copper, and the other two on your boss and his offsider. So don’t try to be funny.” The Kelly gang vanished into the bush as Kennedy and Scanlon rode into camp.

“Look out, sergeant!” McIntyre called. “Be on your guard!”

Kennedy and Scanlan reined in their horses.

“Hands up!” Ned’s voice boomed from the bush. “Put up your hands!”

“Nonsense!” Kennedy said. “This is a poor jest, Lonigan—where are you?”

A gun roared in the bush, and the troopers slipped out of their saddles. This wasn’t a jest—the first shot had missed, but it was no jest.

Scanlan slipped his revolver out of the holster, and made a dash for cover. A gun roared again, and Scanlan dropped dead at the foot of the first tree.

The Kelly gang came out, watching Sergeant Kennedy, watching Scanlan to see if he were quite dead. Kennedy’s startled horse was rearing and bucking across the clearing; McIntyre seized the chance, caught the horse, mounted, and was away, up into the bush, galloping, galloping. . . . A

couple of shots whizzed over his head, but soon he was deep in the bush. Somehow, somehow, he'd get to Mansfield and make his report. . . .

Meantime Ned, a cold glitter in his eyes, stood over the corpse of Lonigan. This glitter looked from Steve Hart, to Joe Byrne, to Dan. Ned pointed to the corpse.

"Shoot!" he said. "The three of you!"

"But, Ned—"

"Shoot!" he screamed at them. "Blood brothers! And an equal guilt! Then all the Kelly Gang murdered these three!"

They lifted their guns, fired into the corpse.

He took them to Scanlan; "Shoot!" he ordered.

To Kennedy: "Shoot!" he ordered.

The smoke drifted away; the roar of appalled echoes fell silent.

Ned's head drooped suddenly, his rifle trailing in the dust. "Till death and the devil catch us, brothers," he muttered. "Death and the devil. . . ."

CHAPTER VII

MR. BRUCE DUNSANY cleared his throat. This, as Mr. Ellery knew, was no mere physical exclamation of relief; it was a trumpet-call to the many within hearing to observe Mr. Bruce Dunsany. So Mr. Ellery—a little bitterly, perhaps, at being the nearest within hearing of that mighty sound—took his cigar out of his mouth and paid this tribute of observation.

"Yes, Dunsany?"

"Do you remember that young nephew of mine, Jarvis Lorne, Ellery?"

"Jarvis Lorne. . . ." The name was vaguely connected with some dramatic episode or the like—no; he remembered now. A stupid young man from Home, and one of Dunsany's absurd pompous dinners. "Yes. I dined at your house soon after his arrival in the colony. To meet him, I believe."

"An excellent memory, Ellery. I congratulate you. It must be—gracious me it must be eight years ago! Well, well—tempus fugit, eh?"

"I believe so." At times Dunsany was damnable. After a large, protracted, and by no means blameless lunch at his age, and at the break of the Victorian summer, he was one of the products of the times. He, Ellery, had been a fool to drink two wines and now this old brandy in the middle of a summer day; and five courses were criminal. His punishment was the suffering of Dunsany as gladly as possible until the tumult of the lunch had subsided at least enough to let him walk across the club dining-room. Away from Dunsany. His eupeptic eyes—which were choleric now, glared at Dunsany. "What about that young man of yours? Didn't you tell me that he had bought a station in New South Wales?"

"Yes. He said he preferred the climate, the morals, and the manners in New South Wales."

Despite the fiery clamour in the pit of his stomach, Ellery laughed. "The climate, perhaps—a supply of some sort of fortitude is necessary for the Victorian climate. But—morals and manners! Really, Dunsany. . . ." he protested.

“Yes. Quite so.” Dunsany drummed on the tablecloth a moment. “He had the impudence to tell Mrs. Dunsany—she and my eldest daughter have occasionally paid, well, longish visits to ‘Yellowfields,’ his station; he’s very well-to-do—that directness and simplicity, honesty, were obviously the best morals and manners. Which ruled the Victorians out, he informed her. The next generation might—er—pick up, he was kind enough to hope.”

“Good Gad!” Ellery was conscious that this was extraordinarily bad for his stomach. “The puppy, the insolent puppy!”

“Yes, I resented it very much. And I was somewhat surprised at the aplomb with which I recollect it was retailed to me. Every time the ladies return from ‘Yellowfields’ they—well, they seem to me over-confident, if you understand me—”

“I do. Very well.” Ellery’s eyes seemed to boil at Dunsany. “And you do your best to counteract that insult to high heaven?”

“Well.” Dunsany glanced across the still lingering rich smells of the table. “I grow no younger, Ellery—”

“A pity. A man should be master in his house.” Dunsany did not rise to this: “Or a bachelor with no house—”

“Quite so, Ellery.” Dunsany was growing a little testy now. “But we can’t all expect the ability to plan our lives with your shrewdness and foresight, can we?”

Lost in thought a long moment he looked idly round the club’s illustrious dining-room, at the dim glow of the mahogany, the cold meats on the still laden sideboard, Franz the headwaiter with his Dundreary whiskers and vast purple face, the glittering facets of the huge chandeliers. The rich smells of food, wine, sauces, fruit, all blended and hung like a heavy benediction in the air. For a quarter of a century he had known the ever-rising prosperity, the ever-deepening security that all this embodied; he had seen the club grow to its present spaciousness, its present considerable power in the professional and business life of Melbourne; and he had fitted himself carefully and diplomatically into the pattern of the security and growing prosperity.

Now it was all coming to a head. Under the long since departed waves of the gold rush the Colony’s stable wealth was beginning to show. Iron, coal, minerals here, there, everywhere; the unchangeable and increasing wool; all pastoral activities, from grazine and corn to blood-horses and heavy beef.

This year 1878 was the throwing open of the floodgates to a vast tide of prosperity, if he was any judge of the signs and portents.

And yet. . . .

Mr. Bruce Dunsany, highly successful, reasonably rich, confident, only a year or so beyond his fiftieth birthday, glanced round the ponderous room again, and sighed. For more than twenty years he had seen these heavy-faced men at lunch or dinner, their heavy rounded backs arched over their food; for all these years he had listened, at first with respect and later as a colleague with equal rights to their guarded cautious voices profiting (as was expected) by the shadowy hints they so carefully let fall. These men had seemed to him to be the centre of the world. Now what looked like a limitless reward was coming soon, for all their patience and skill.

Yet, the signs were pointing two ways, instead of firmly in the one way, the one possible way—

"Did anything ever come of the, I believe, projected match between your daughter and this Lorne fellow, Dunsany? I knew there was some other point in my memory where his name occurred."

"No." Ellery knew perfectly well that nothing had come of it; wouldn't he have known all about it if anything *had* come of it? Ellery was getting old, becoming acid and spiteful in mind. He had always liked prodding people and watching them squirm; but the liking was fast becoming an unpleasant habit. Both himself and his wife had hoped that Jarvis and Sophia would make a match of it—possibly for differing reasons: somebody had to be practical, he believed—but nothing had come of it, except an apparently deep and lasting friendship. Which was extraordinary and, in the circumstances, slightly reprehensible in Dunsany's opinion.

Ellery was watching him now; his purple face was congested—Ellery had been eating and drinking too much for years. But his mind was still active and keen, if too keen at times. Poor fellow—he was suffering; lunch had been too much for him. A little possible distraction would not come amiss, perhaps.

"I mentioned Jarvis Lorne because of his revolutionary ideas about bushrangers—do you remember his outbreak at your last meeting?"

"Yes, now you speak of it."

"The occasion of that outburst was a boy of sixteen years of age, one Ned Kelly."

Ellery sat up abruptly. “Ned Kelly—so it was. And now—”

“And now we see in our morning newspaper an edifying account of the murder of three officers of the police by an organised gang of ruffians headed by Ned Kelly. I wonder if Mr. Jarvis Lorne would tell us that we, society, had taught him also to do that.”

“I expect he would. You know what the revolutionary mind is.” Ellery was recovering from his lunch. “But Mr. Lorne and his theories are negligible. These bushrangers are not. I had occasion this morning for a short call at the Commissioner’s office, and while I was waiting a young acquaintance there told me—although perhaps he didn’t know he was doing so—a remarkable story.”

“Oh.”

“Yes. Reading between the lines of this story I should say that these three poor fellows were deliberately lured by this—er—Kelly gang out into the bush on this search patrol in order that they should be trapped and murdered.”

“But, my dear Ellery—”

“Oh, quite so—it sounds incredible that a triple crime, in which there was no profit, no loot of any kind, should be systematically planned and carried out by the criminals, however desperate they were.”

“But these people always hold up banks and coaches and travellers they think are wealthy, not—”

“Quite so,” Ellery interrupted again impatiently. “That’s the point of this story. It appears that one of this Kelly’s sisters was at the bottom of the trouble, or probably so—you know how difficult it is to get any real information at the Commissioner’s office.”

“One of the wretched fellow’s sisters?”

“Yes. And a police-officer who was making himself a nuisance to her. It was a longish story, not easy to follow with only the blank spaces between lines to read, so to speak. This policeman tried to arrest one of the gang, and instead was practically captured by them. They released him on condition that he said nothing—”

“What damned impudence!” Dunsany exclaimed.

“Well, it was either that or murder him, and apparently Ned, the leading Kelly, wasn’t fully aware of the extent of his—er—nuisance to the girl at

this time. Or he would have murdered him, perhaps."

"Yes, I suppose he would." Dunsany could see that—it rather astonished himself that he could, but he did see it. His legal training, no doubt.

"The officer didn't keep his word—he was in a difficult position, too. Does your duty or your word of honour come first, Dunsany? You're a lawyer. I put it to you, as you fellows are always saying in 'Court.' "

"If you are compelled to give a promise conflicting with your duty, I should say, except in very unusual circumstances, that you cannot in law be bound by it. Your duty comes first."

"That's what this policeman thought, or preferred to think. At all events, he didn't keep silence, obtained the necessary warrants and, the two Kellys having disappeared into the bush, he caused the arrest and imprisonment of Mrs. Kelly, the mother, a young child, and two male relations, for obstructing the police in the exercise of its duty. Of which I rather think all these four people were innocent. The vanished Kelly brothers were the only actual culprits in law, I should say."

"If the details of the story are consistent with your outline, that is so, Ellery."

"Well, there we are. The men's mother, child-sister, and two relations were all imprisoned when they were, in law, innocent. The murders at Stringy Bark Creek, which we all read of with such horror this morning, were the Kelly brothers' revenge for that legal injustice achieved by this gentleman, on top of his being a nuisance to their sister. And," Ellery paused to light a cigar; he had quite recovered from his lunch, "I don't know what in the world we are going to do about it."

"No." Dunsany could also see the cruel justice of this bitter revenge for what looked like particularly treacherous injustice. Privately, that is. In his office he would have been the very spirit of indignation; in court he would have pumped citation after citation with the utmost fury of outraged society into Counsel's mind and mouth. But privately he could see that these men had used the only weapon that they had to redress the wrong. They also had burned all their bridges in doing so, he reminded both his private and his official self, with satisfaction.

"Of course, I may have read an entirely fictitious story between the lines. It may have been my young friend's laudable intention to save his Department's face in a rather unhappy corner for any department. But there it is for what it is worth: supposed spies gave information to the police that

the Kellys could be captured in that wild country, and the police sent their men into a trap designed and prepared for them by the Kellys, who caused the ‘information’ to be given. With what appalling result we know.” Ellery stood up, pulled down his waistcoat. “Shall we go back to our offices, Dunsany?”

“Yes.” Dunsany picked his napkin off the floor, and also stood up.

Putting on his hat at the top of the steps he turned to Ellery. “Do you really believe your young man’s story, Ellery?”

The mocking light was flickering in Ellery’s eyes as he laughed comfortably. “Of course not, my dear fellow. He was saving his Chief’s face. The Stringy Bark Creek murders were probably no more than a wanton crime.” He glanced at Dunsany and laughed again. “Do you believe the story?”

“Good heavens, no,” Dunsany protested.

But he did believe it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE four silent men in the hut were dull and moody. A month had gone since the Stringy Bark Creek murders, a month of alarms and telegraphers day and night, a month of shifting from hut to hut, ever further back in the ranges, hiding, hiding. . . . All four were for the drop now; capture meant hanging; and the relations and hangers-on, the multitude of lesser underdogs, surrounding the gangs and in great measure living on them, were alert and ceaselessly on the watch. What happened to the Kelly's happened to a hundred unhappy hiding families; if the Kellys were wiped out, they were wiped out; if the Kellys could not "work" they could not work or eat. Hence the flurry of alarms, the furtive army of swift-footed men hurrying by night through the trackless, all but impenetrable bush with messages, with warnings real and imaginary, with word of what the police were doing or hoping to do, of how the forces of the upperdogs were massing for vengeance and destruction.

The four moody men didn't care. This was the first real stretch of the run for their money; all the bellowing and barking down below was to be expected. They needn't worry; they'd get a good run out of the four men before the finish.

But the four men were sick of it, sick of sitting in the middle of the turmoil, listening to hoarse voices with half the truth to tell, or double the truth. It was time the run itself was on.

Joe Byrne had a plan—a good one, he thought.

"Listen, Ned," he said for the tenth time, "tell me where it slips and I'll give in. Four babies could pull it off, if they stuck to the plan—"

"All right, Joe, I am listening. I'm beginning to like it better every time you tell it." Ned's hard handsome face softened in a momentary smile. "We might get a laugh out of it, or even a couple of laughs—an' they wouldn't come amiss, after this last month's lot. Run over it again, Joe."

"The bank always waits for the Melbourne train—it'll be after hours and legally shut but it'll be open. See?"

The three nodded.

“That means it’ll be quiet—what’s going on in the bank’ll be nobody’s business. It’s after banking hours and she’s shut. A couple of rude fellows might even be robbing the safe—you can’t tell—and there wouldn’t be any customers or depositors to run and tell the coppers about the dirty blackguards. Too bad. See?”

The three grinned and nodded again.

“The plan itself’s all right. It’s good,” Steve Hart said, “but it’s them carts, the gettin’ away that stumps me—”

“But we’ve got to sew ’em up while we get away,” Joe explained, “and the carts—”

Ned suddenly chuckled. “It’s the procession at the finish. . . .” He chuckled again. “Run over it, Joe.”

Joe was by way of being a scholar, a sort of scribe who put all the schemes and plans he thought out into writing, poring over the arguments pro and con, and altering the schemes until he was satisfied that they were copper-proof and as nearly foolproof as they could be made. Not until he had reached this point down to the smallest detail did he submit the schemes to Ned. This was the first big plan to which Ned had listened seriously, and Joe was very anxious that it should be undertaken and allowed to prove itself. With steady, quiet patience he began his explanation again, while the three moody heads drew closer round him, listening and memorising.

The first impact of the scheme was felt by Fitzgerald, who was sitting in a shady spot eating his dinner, the time being a little after midday on December 18, 1878. Only a week to Christmas Day, and hot enough to burn your eyes out—his memory went back to other Christmases when he was a boy, with snow on the ground, the trees heavy with snow and maybe a bit o’ skating—

“Manager at home?”

Fitzgerald jumped. He hadn’t believed anyone could get so close to him without his knowledge. A fine-looking, black-bearded man with an air of authority—“No. He’s in the township; he won’t be back till late in the afternoon.”

The man stood over him, looking down into his face.

“Would yer business be anything I can do, sir? I’m the head station-hand and—”

“No thanks.” The man laughed, nodded, was gone as suddenly as he had appeared.

Rum start. . . . Gave him quite a turn, as the missus would say. Fitzgerald went on with his dinner. It *was* hot—too hot to be breaking his back over this bit o’ fencing. His memory drifted away again to those cool Christmases the other side of the world, to the village pond and the other boys making a slide, and Mary a fat bit of a girl like a pudding. . . . and now she was Mrs. Younghusband’s cook and housekeeper up at the homestead—his eyes followed his thoughts to the homestead—

This *was* a rum go. There was that bearded gent and three others, leading four horses, good horses, round the corner of the homestead now! Fitzgerald put the rest of his dinner in his mouth and followed them. Mary’d get a start, with the hands coming up to dinner and four strangers to deal with. He’d better go up.

Mary was getting a start. Four easy-mannered strangers, headed by a distinguished-looking black-bearded gentleman, entered her kitchen. The leader touched his hat and bowed.

“Kelly is the name—Ned Kelly,” he said blandly. “At your service, ma’am—”

Mrs. Fitzgerald dropped the plate in her hands, and the hands flew to her mouth. “Kelly,” she said. “Ned Kelly!”

He lifted a soothing hand. “No cause for alarm. We called to beg a bite o’ refreshment for ourselves, and p’raps a mouthful of feed for our horses.” His bitter eyes watched her while his lips smiled again. “I trust that’s possible, ma’am.”

Mary looked at her husband in the doorway, who looked at the four men and their revolvers.

“Best serve them, Mary. Ye have yer dinner ready?”

“Yes, it’s ready. The men’ll be here any minute.”

Her eyes were on the tall smooth man while she set four places at the head of the table. Who could believe that was Ned Kelly—

“I hope our appetites won’t put them men on short commons.” Ned took off his hat and sat down with the gang. The food was good, and they did full

and rapid justice to it.

Ned wiped his mouth and glanced at the bewildered Fitzgerald. “Show Mr. Kelly where the horse-feed is kept, will you, my man,” he directed as he turned to thank Mrs. Fitzgerald for the meal.

Dan stood up, towering over the now angry Fitzgerald. “I’ll feed ’em,” he said.

Fitzgerald glanced at the revolver, shrugged, and led the way to the feed-room as the first of the station-hands appeared for dinner.

“Well met,” Ned greeted him, “and a merry Christmas from the Kelly gang! You’re all my prisoners—oh, after dinner of course,” he hastened to add at sight of the men’s faces, “after dinner.” He stood in the doorway smiling at the dumbfounded men. “Don’t worry,” he told them—“just eat your dinner as if nothing had happened. Nothing has—yet.”

Mary thought it was a sort of daylight nightmare. As the men finished their meal, Dan and Steve Hart marched them across the yard to an outside empty store-room beside whose door Joe Byrne stood on guard. The prisoners went into the darkness there, and the door was shut. She heard an occasional voice rise in violent protest, and fall abruptly to silence. Presently all was silence; there were no hands in the kitchen. Only herself and Ned Kelly; her husband had joined the prisoners; and Mrs. Macauley was expecting her dinner in the house. . . . If that wasn’t a nightmare Mary didn’t know what was. Ned Kelly and herself alone in her kitchen. . . .

“You and t’other females,” he told her suddenly, “are prisoners in the house. Tell ’em there is no cause for alarm, will you, if they make no attempt to leave the house.”

“Very well, Mr. Kelly,” she said.

He laughed suddenly at the tone of respect in her voice. She glanced in surprise at his fine head—and laughed softly, too. It wasn’t really a nightmare. And there *was* something about him—you couldn’t deny it. The silence settled down on Mr. Younghusband’s homestead again.

This silence oppressed Mr. Macauley, the manager, as he came up from the homestead fence late in the afternoon. Extraordinary thing—the whole place seemed to be dead. . . . Not a sound, not a sign of life. . . . He had walked three miles from Euroa for his liver’s sake; something made him ask himself if he had been wise to refuse Tommy Trantor’s offer of a lift—

“Bail up!”

Just so. He had been a fool; Tommy Trantor would have been—

“Bail *up*!”

Mr. Macauley sighed, and lifted his rather weary arms above his head, keeping a wary eye on the gentleman crossing the yard.

“The Kelly Gang’s in possession,” a hoarse whisper told him from the old storehouse. “Best be on your guard, sir.”

Just so. But the gentleman had reached him now, was impudently and skilfully patting his pockets and his no longer youthful waist-line.

“Ned Kelly, at your service,” the gentleman said with a flourish. “You c’n put your arms down.”

“Thank you. I recognise you from your portrait in the—Police-Station rogues’ gallery—How do you do?”

“I do very well——”

“And what do you expect to steal here? The owner is away; there’s no money in the house; and your horses are probably much better than anything we could afford—”

Ned laughed pleasantly in his face. “You do it passably, Mr. Macauley, but you ain’t had enough practise to know that courtesy is the backbone of the flourish—that’s what Harry Power said. I was telling you I did very well, and you were so rude as to cut in. I’ll go on as if you hadn’t.”

The manager glared at him. “Gracious me, fellow, are you giving me lessons in manners?”

“Yes. You need ’em. Another thing.” Ned’s statuesque face was clear of all laughter now, “One o’ my prisoners just told you to be on your guard.”

“Well?”

“Well, do it.” Ned watched Mr. Macauley’s heavy face for a moment. “About turn, and step lively, you dog!” he roared, as to a felon in a prison yard.

Mr. Macauley jumped, turned, and stepped lively to the homestead. The fellow was dangerous.

Mary Fitzgerald’s nightmare went on. The Kellys marched about the homestead when they were not eating meals or drinking tea, while Joe

Byrne and Hart took turns in patrolling round the store-room so that no prisoner escaped. At intervals Mr. Macauley demanded the meaning of this outrage and was invited to choke himself, and at intervals Mrs. Macauley said the world had unquestionably come to an end. A hawker called, and the Kellys stole a new suit each from his cart, some firearms and plenty of ammunition, and finally the horse and cart itself. They put the hawker in with the other storehouse prisoners for impudence.

Nobody knew what the Kelly gang was doing all this for, which increased the tempo of the nightmare. They had decided to stay the night, they were so comfortable, they told Mary Fitzgerald, who would have liked to swoon comfortably at the news and bring the dreadful afternoon to a satisfactorily unconscious end. The Macauleys, who seemed to think the whole affair was her fault, kept her too busy to allow of any such pleasant weakness; she was forever running in and listening to them, running out and listening to the storehouse prisoners (which was far from edifying), or standing still and listening to Ned giving orders.

At last the house settled down into uneasy slumber. Ned and Dan took turns of guard in the homestead, and Steve and Joe Byrne at the storehouse. Mary surprised and shocked herself by falling abruptly to sleep on the drawing-room sofa—at least that's where she found herself in the morning. She glanced fearfully at Mr. and Mrs. Macauley snoring in the armchairs, and crept out to the kitchen to get the fire going.

The new day was as bad as the yesterday. No prisoner was allowed out of the homestead or the storehouse on pain of death, and they all, including the Kellys and the persistently impudent hawker, had to be fed, which was a full-time job for Mary. The Kellys spent a good deal of time wandering about the yard and the stables, with so much weighty discussion that Mr. Macauley, watching them from the drawing-room windows, began to wonder if they hadn't stolen the station just as it stood and were not re-planning the homestead buildings. If only there was a "Times" in the Colony that he could write to it to ease his bursting heart. . . .

Even the apparent end of these outrages was not much good, because Joe Byrne was left in charge and all prisoners in close confinement when the Kellys went into Euroa. They stood over Mr. Macauley while he wrote them a small "bearer" cheque on the Euroa bank—"Forced me to write them a cheque on my own bank, sir!"—thanked him profusely and went away. They

paused a space to cut down two telegraph-poles, and to tear out and chop up some telegraph-wires, before they set off for Euroa in some style, Ned driving the impudent hawker's cart, Dan the homestead cart, and Steve Hart mounted. Gay, careless fellows in their new suits, their debonair departure had a holiday air which nearly killed Mr. Macauley on his own hearthrug, from which he could just see the two carts and the laughing horseman going through the gateway.

This air of slightly raffish gaiety still rested lightly on Ned as he stepped briskly into the Euroa bank and closed the door behind him.

Mr. Bradley, the accountant, looked up. Unusual thing for a customer to close the door—and surely that soft sound wasn't the bolt—

"Only a small cheque, sir, if you'll excuse me presenting it after hours —"

"Certainly." Mr. Bradley leaned over his cash drawer. The customer had an air—the door was probably just habit—

Ned took a deep breath. This was the moment, the peak. The moment was as much an armour as an inspiration; in it he felt, he was immune from all assault. Nothing could touch him or halt his intention in this moment. Dan and Steve were watching the back of the bank; and here he was, holding up the front, the front of all these fat upper dogs' greed and cruelty. The telegraph-wires were cut; the train had gone through; Euroa was asleep —all its inhabitants were asleep save Dan and Steve, and himself here, savouring this splendid moment—

"Bail up!" he called softly over the counter.

Mr. Bradley looked up from his cash-drawer into the blue ring of a revolver-barrel, as Mr. Scott the manager, came out of his room. Ned levelled the revolver in his other hand on Mr. Scott.

"Bail up!" he said again. "That's both of you." Mr. Scott glanced at the door. "This bank is closed—I just closed it," Ned cautioned genially. "You shouldn't keep it open after hours," he shook his head at the two pale men holding their hands up. "The cash!" he added abruptly.

Mr. Bradley looked at Mr. Scott who was looking indignantly at Ned. "I fear you have us in your power. But I will not give you any cash if you shoot me down in my own office. You must take it—by force." Mr. Scott made a little bow. "You are at liberty to thieve from two helpless middle-aged men. The notorious ruffian, Ned Kelly, I presume?"

Ned laughed. “The same, windbag. Lift that flap,” he directed Mr. Bradley who did so, lowering one arm for the purpose. Ned came through the counter as Dan appeared at the house-entrance of Mr. Scott’s room. “Cover them, Dan. The stumpy one’s just given me the bank—”

“Stand over by the wall there,” Dan ordered viciously, “and step lively! Go ahead, Ned.”

Presently Ned looked up from the drawer as he slipped two canvas bags into his pocket. “Three hundred pound—that’s the small change. Where’s the safe, the strong-room?”

Mr. Scott shrugged his shoulders. Mr. Bradley was silent.

“Where is it?” Dan demanded, pressing his revolver barrel into Mr. Scott’s chest.

“Stand away a little,” the manager’s precise voice told him. “You’re too near me. And you smell—”

Ned laughed. “He’s good, that stumpy one, Dan—don’t kill him yet. That’s twice he’s made me laugh. Where’s the strong-room?” he thundered.

Mr. Scott glared at him. “Go to hell,” he said, but it sounded like a parson saying it.

Ned laughed delightedly, “Isn’t he prime? I told you he was good, Dan. All right, Stumpy—we’ll come to that later. I’m going through to your house now, to see your family.”

This pierced the manager’s stoic contempt. “My—my family?” he faltered. “Aren’t they to be spared this—insult?”

“They’ll *like* it, Stumpy. It’s a little—a jaunt out into the country I’ve arranged for ’em. I want ’em to get ready.”

Mr. Scott peered shortsightedly at Ned. He’d always imagined that these people must be mad. “I’d—I’d better come with you, I think,” he said.

“Oh, you do, do you? Well, p’raps you’re right—you might make me laugh again.” Mr. Scott prayed silently to God for patience, for the strength to keep his temper just a little longer. “Hold it in here, Dan. I’ll be back presently, and Stumpy’ll show us where the strong-room is. Lead on,” he said to Mr. Scott. “I like you better in front of me. And you can lower your white hands now.” He smiled into the manager’s expressionless face. “You might want to pick your teeth with one of them, mightn’t you?” he added courteously.

Mr. Scott made that silent prayer again and led the way into the living-room of his quarters behind the bank.

Here a maid had just put a huge laden tea-tray on the table; she stood aside for the master and the other gentleman to enter the room.

Mrs. Scott looked up from her knitting, and the subdued chatter of the children round the table ceased.

“My dear,” Mr. Scott took the floor, “let me introduce our most prominent murderer and thief, Ned Kelly.” He gave Ned a short venomous little bow. “Mrs. Scott.” Ned bowed gravely. “He has the bank and all the premises in his power—one confederate is in the bank now with his revolver levelled at poor Bradley, and I suspect that another—or perhaps more than one—is keeping guard at the back.” He looked at Ned. “Am I right, felon?” he asked.

Ned bowed and laughed. “I thought you’d do it again, Stumpy; I hope you’re enjoying it as much as I am—” he remembered his manners: “Your servant, ma’am,” he added to Mrs. Scott.

“A hold up? Like the romances?” Mrs. Scott put aside her knitting and rustled over to the table. “You must let me give you a cup of tea—you’re a better-looking man than I thought, Mr. Kelly. Your portraits don’t do you justice.”

Ned gulped, but recovered almost instantly. “Thankee, ma’am. I get my desserts from *you*—your husband can’t lay his tongue to a clean word for me.”

“Oh well,” she handed him his cup, “Mr. Scott is so dramatic, you know.” The manager glared at them in speechless rage. “Say how d’ye do to Mr. Kelly, children.”

Seven small voices said “How d’you do, sir,” which Ned acknowledged with a comprehensive bow, while Mrs. Scott poured cups of tea, mugs of milk, and handed plates of bread and butter down the lines.

Presently she looked up at Ned. “What do you want in here?” she asked, her voice as curt and definite as his own when he meant it to be.

“The pleasure o’ your company on a short drive to Younghusband’s station,” he said with his flourish, or Harry Power’s flourish. An abrupt glimpse of the two rows of heads at the table seemed unaccountably to take the edge of laughter off this encounter. He was silent a moment.

“Well?” she prompted.

“The life o’ the bushranger is hard,” he began, his eyes smiling at her. “If I left you here, you’d be chattering or your servant would, or Stumpy, or the—”

“Stumpy?” she interrupted.

“Your pardon—Mr. Scott, I should say—”

Her ringing laugh brought the encounter up to its romantic level again. This lady was the best of the lot.

“Well, then, to take the hard edge off the bushranger’s life it’d be better if we drove you to Younghusband’s station and you spent an hour or two there, while we got away. That’d give us a good start.”

“You’re very candid,” she said.

“Oh, I am,” he assured her. “I can afford to be, ye see.”

“And if we refuse to go?”

“Ah no,” he protested sorrowfully, as he tapped his revolver-butt, “Stumpy tried that—”

“Stumpy!” Her laugh filled the room again, and again her husband glared at her in stupified surprise. Was *everyone* mad? “And my part is to wash and dress my children, tidy their noses, and get them and us ready for your jaunt?”

Ned nodded.

She sighed. “You’re an absurd man, Ned Kelly, with your little popguns and things. Why don’t you try something real for a change—a large family for example? Ah, well.” She stood up. “I suppose we must humour you. I can have everyone ready in ten minutes. You won’t let the children see the popguns in action, will you?”

“No one shall see ’em in action if I can help it,” he said, looking down at her kind strong face.

She patted his arm. “You are absurd, you know, and George thinks we are both raving mad. Perhaps that alone is worth all the trouble you are giving me—that and ‘Stumpy.’ Ten minutes. . . .”

She and the children were out of the room in a moment, and Ned turned to Mr. Scott.

“About turn—back to the bank!”

“What were you and Mrs. Scott laughing—”

“Back to the bank, Stumpy. You’re not the only one who can make me laugh. Don’t flatter yourself.”

Quite speechless now, Mr. Scott led the way to the bank and Mr. Bradley standing against the wall watching Dan’s swift searching of the bank for the safe or strong-room. If only he could get to the drawer in Mr. Scott’s desk and the loaded revolver in it. . . . But he never did get to it; Dan saw to that—

“Ah!” Dan’s exclamation synchronised with Ned’s return to the bank. “Got it, Ned! Behind that curtain and the key’s in the door! Beautiful. Go ahead.”

Swift as a striking hawk, Ned was across the bank and in the strong-room almost before Dan’s mouth was closed. Dan stood at the door, revolvers in hands, a distant smile on his lips, like a mocking shadow; Mr. Scott and Mr. Bradley stood by, helpless, listening to the chinking of coins, the rustling of papers. Presently these ceased and Ned stood in the doorway of the strong-room.

“About two-thousand—a bit less, maybe, Dan,” he said. “And what feels like a couple of pounds of gold-dust. Slip out to Steve and give ’im the word to stand by—I’ll take care of all this lot in here.” He handed Dan the neat larger canvas-bag, and turned to Mr. Scott. “Tell your lady we’re ready, Stumpy. This bank is closed now, and empty.”

If it had been designed to attract attention (which it very definitely was not) Ned’s procession would have been impressive. Dan, Mr. Bradley, and one servant led the procession in the impudent hawker’s cart; Mrs. Scott, her mother, and seven children followed in the Scott’s buggy (“you drive without escort, ma’am, ’cos I trust you,” Ned warned her. “But larks and popguns in action go together.” “Larks and seven children and their grandmother *won’t* go together, you ridiculous man,” she explained); Ned, Mr. Scott, and the other Scott servant in the homestead cart made the third equipage; and Steve Hart on horseback brought up the rear.

It should have been funny. Ned had looked forward to watching its solemn progress out of Euroa into the country in the evening, looked forward to seeing the passers-by wondering why the Scotts were going on such a wholesale picnic and who the three handsome strangers were. But now that it was in being it was empty. Worse than empty. There was Mrs. Scott just ahead, driving and chattering soothingly to the wondering children

and the scared old woman, keeping them all in trim. The children's faces—whenever he looked at the cart, the children all seemed to be looking at him. Which wasn't funny. Old Stumpy trying to sulk and be dignified at the same time in a jolting farm-cart ought to have been funny. The servant-maid glancing at him from under her eye-lashes—you can generally get some fun out of that, especially if her boss is bouncing on your knee while she is doing it.

But a sombre shadow on Ned's face drove all these chances of laughter up into the wind. It was empty—dry and useless, like dust in your mouth. Glad to go; glad to go and be done with it all. The dark bitter thought was haunting him again, while the children's round faces looked back at him, and their mother's firm gentle voice came back on the breeze. She would have laughed with him, but for the job she was doing. But for the job. . . .

At the homestead the sombre shadow became a glittering energy driving him, driving the gang, driving the imprisoned household, somehow driving the night itself to action.

"Step lively," he snarled, and bundled Mr. Scott and Mr. Bradley into the storehouse.

The others he marched before him into the homestead to join the prisoners there. He strode into the drawing room, stood over Mr. Macauley.

"We're goin' now. But," the glitter seemed to light up Ned's haggard face, "there are a dozen murderers watchin' this place from the bush. They'll be watchin' for three hours from now. If any fool, male or female, tries to leave this place before three hours are up, there'll be another murder done."

Mr. Macauley backed away. Looking into this face he could believe that murder was paddling in blood in every corner of this room. "Very well," he said. "No one shall leave till then—"

"*I* don't care when they leave," Ned said. "Only they'll be dead tonight if they do." He looked round the room, at the huddle of women peering fearfully at him from the corner, at Mrs. Scott and the huddle of children ignoring his presence. She was busy. . . . "Joe!" he thundered. "Bring round them horses and them damned bushrangers! I'm sick o' this hole. Let's go!"

The hoof-beats roared on the road a moment, dimmed, were silent.

CHAPTER IX

JARVIS LORNE smoothed out the sheets and read Sophia Dunsany's long letter again.

My Dear Jarvis Lorne:

Papa was so indignant and abusive about bushrangers and you (as if you were one of them!) at dinner last night that I feel that I ought to write to you, as a tacit apology.

It was very amusing. Papa is more angered and upset over the Euroa episode than ever he was over the much more serious Stringy Bark Creek. He did not speak much of that terrible tragedy. But what he calls the 'colossal impudence' of Euroa has, I think, embittered his life. He snorts and puffs and blows about the house, snaps Mama's head off and has quite decided that the Colony has gone to the dogs. He says that the whole city is up in arms about this colossal impudence and something really drastic is going to be done about it very soon. Which is good news, isn't it, for all of us. All the gentlemen at the club are equally indignant, in fact, so the protest is virtually illustrated with thumb-nail sketches of elderly gentlemen of a full habit capering wildly about the rooms of a stuffy club to celebrate the Colony going to the dogs. I wish Ned Kelly would come burgling to the club one night and catch them at it; I'll wager he'd laugh his handsome head off.

There! Now I feel better! I have been thoroughly impertinent to Papa (in writing too—that would really shock him) in exchange for his petulant abuse of you in his tirade about bushrangers. So the score is paid off and I can start with a clear conscience again.

What the connection between you and the bushrangers was was not clear at first, but after listening dutifully to the tirade and then settling down to discovering what it was all about, I find you had the temerity, when you were only a ten-minutes' old Colonial, to attempt to defend the poor wretches the Colony has been

trampling on since Captain Cook. Fie, fie, my dear Jarvis, how could you so forget yourself? Didn't you have time to remind yourself that a community's cruelties are its most sacred possession, like the madman's bag of marbles that are diamonds, or the murderer's knife? They are our touchstone, our magic, the dried toad's tongue that makes us gods with life and death and bloodstained whips in our easy hands—how dare you recall to us that we are only grimy half-developed sinners? You tampered with our alchemist's stone, the stone that turns everything to gold, especially our view of ourselves. And it is a very good thing you are buried in your splendid bush; if you were here and not extremely careful in your speech you would probably start a war. How many of the little wars in medieval Europe had their source in the Inquisition's tearing to pieces of the underdog who thought differently? Abraham Lincoln had the effrontery to say that the white population of America's Southern States was not entirely composed of demi-gods whom no laws governed; that bondage is the hardest of all cruelties; that the cruelty must cease if all the free walk in blood year on year. It is a terrifying responsibility to tamper with a nation's cruelties, and I am glad you are in the bush, far away from any tubs you might be tempted to thump. We know that if we had had no convicts we would now have no bushrangers to steal our money and make our old gentlemen caper in clubs; in our hearts we know that. But we can't confess it for two reasons: we thrust ourselves into the wrong for one, and for the other we disclose (and therefore banish) our dear secret sin —or alchemist's stone, whichever you prefer.

And I am here talking like an ill-educated George Eliot—bringing my tub-thumping into the home or into my correspondence. But I don't apologise, my dear Jarvis; you will, I hope, write me your own kind of tub-thumping in reply, and we shall both feel that at least we know if we cannot do. And I am certainly not going to put you in the position of feeling that you ought to apologise for that pleasure.

How is your splendid bush? Are the noondays still that glorious concentration of fire and gold? And are the nights still black and quiet like the grave?

I really hadn't anything to write you about. But I felt pettish with Papa and his absurdities. And I wanted to pay him back.

Goodbye,
Sophia.

Jarvis Lorne folded the letter, put it back in its envelope, put the envelope on the table of his office. He sat looking thoughtfully at it while he slowly filled his pipe.

Outside the lilac distances were beginning to creep up in the vanguard of the dusk. Peace, coming slowly with the sure feet of the darkness, would soon be lord of all those miles. For Jarvis the day was done. He would smoke this pipe, change his clothes, have dinner, smoke two or three more pipes, and go to bed. An hour before breakfast to-morrow Sally, his dancing grey mare, would take him to the Twenty-Acre, where three of the men were felling the heavy timber before the clearing could begin. In spring the Twenty would be flat, green with the young corn breaking through to life. Sally would dance him back to breakfast, and that would be about half-past seven; in another half-hour the real work of the day would begin and burn its way to the lilac distances heralding the dusk again; except for lunch he would be in the saddle all day, a man at work in the splendid tawny heat ("concentration of gold and fire," she called its climax of noon), a man free as air and bound with unbreakable chains to his freedom.

An Australian. Not by birth, but by undying love.

Eight years ago he had hardly known that these miles were part of earth. Now they were bone of his bone, blood of his blood. They could not break faith with you, nor starve six-years-old factory hands, nor draw a smug veil over indescribable infames perpetrated in the name of Progress or Commerce—they could not lie, in fact. Work, harvest, rest, work, harvest, rest—year in, year out. That was clean, clear, simple, Australian; undefiled with centuries of bowing and scraping. . . .

He stood up, put the letter in his pocket, and tapped out the pipe in the bowl on his table. Time for a bath and a change. . . .

Uncle Bruce and the massed forces of society were busy closing in on those bushranging chaps; four thousand pounds reward—a lot of money to tempt a traitor. But they hung together, broken and worthless as the ranks might seem. Eight years ago he worked out a theory that they were the only true Australians, the founders of the new nation to come into being. Because they had picked up the torch from the convicts, who had suffered and died in this land, peopled first for their suffering and dying.

Rubbing down his hard limbs and torso with the rough towel, he remembered some of the details of the theory's pattern. The blood was a fertiliser as well as a spirit that would enforce a fair chance for all dogs, but especially for the underdogs who were brothers of the blood. The land would demand hardy men who would work hard by habit, and they in their turn would make a pattern of society wherein the hard underdogs would gradually rise to their just place, the upper d ogs being gradually forced down to the same just place, because for long there would be no need for the things the upperdogs thought were important. In the van of all this the convicts marched in chorus with the bushrangers behind; they were the first shot down, of course, the martyrs, as in the history of all causes, land, nations. Where they had sowed in blood the others marched over their bodies and reaped. . . .

He knew a hell of a lot eight years ago, didn't he? Brushing his hair he grinned at the brown face in the mirror. Those two old buffers he had so horrified—Uncle Bruce and that pink chap Ellery; if they'd heard the whole of the theory they'd have choked him at the table and carted his corpse up to the ladies—presented it to Sophia with the highest indignation. Sophia. . . .

The dim boom of the gong at the other end of the house made a music behind her name; in the hall her grey level eyes watched him from under her calm level brow; in the twilit dining-room she seemed to be standing just beyond the lit island of the table, waiting for him to pull out her chair.

Strong, simple, heroic—she gave him the same feeling of a surging potency that the country, these dear miles gave. How old Bruce—

But Bruce—Uncle Bruce: he begged his pardon—gave you a vague impression that somewhere—pretty deep down, perhaps—he was sound. He was probably a trickiesh lawyer but no trickier than the fellows he had to wrest business from; that, alone, would make him negligible—just one more stubborn slightly unscrupulous man in a herd of tediously similar men. But you couldn't help feeling that there really was something more than that in him, that somewhere he used, or would use his mind to think, instead of to go through his tricks.

Damn Uncle Bruce! He wasn't going to waste his spell of rest in wondering whether that shrewd gentleman was more gentleman than shrewd or vice versa.

Tony Carter and old George could join the gang at the Twenty-Acre to-morrow. The creek fence was done, and they could begin grubbing the undergrowth at the Twenty-Two where he'd been trying to get that rich

patch into cultivation, but there had always been more to do than the men could manage; every season some urgency had to push the Twenty back again. Well, now it was being done; in the spring it would be flat and green, an olive green, like a bloom on the warm earth.

Sophia was really a blue-stocking. But that didn't work, because she was a beauty too. Or did that prevent its working?

Out here in the dark with the heavy cool stars miles above his head and yet on the verandah-rail at his elbow, he wished she were in the other deep chair. Her mind was like his—a thousand times more better than his in many ways, but like it. She had the same way of looking at things, trying to find the theme, the theory in them. And she had twice his patience, for all his work on the land; she knew that tub-thumping was only waste of time and energy. The tub-thumpers—the spiritual convicts and bushrangers—men who liked it and could do it, would come; and if they didn't, the blood-soaked earth would do the trick without them. . . .

He grinned again in his darkness under the cool stars. He was at it again. Why couldn't he keep to his job, now that he had found and learned it, and forget these melodramatic theories?

This man Henry Parkes was a good hard fighting man. Full of guts. . . . He was a maker, with all the equipment—or want of equipment—that fitted into the theory.

Damn the theory. Parkes probably never wasted ten minutes on a theory in his life. It was the job—you had to keep to your job.

And he was tired, dog-tired. He tapped out the last pipe on the verandah-rail. The hall looked dim and lonely in the light of the turned-down lamps.

He was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

CHAPTER X

"BUT listen, Joe—"

"Why should I listen?" Joe Byrne snarled. "You're not the boss, Steve, and—"

"All right—don't tear each other's livers out." Ned was sick of this bickering. "Shut your mouth, Steve; it's Joe's idea, not yours."

Steve laughed. "I'll take me oath it's not mine, nor any other sane man's. It'll land us in chokee in ten minutes, an' to the drop in a week—"

"Why don't you get a job as nursemaid, Steve?" Dan's face and voice was full of loving interest in Steve's future career. "Yer c'd get a sojer to walk out with an' look after ye if ye fainted, an' you'd look well in a cap an' streamers—"

"Shut yer mouths, I tell ye!" Ned's voice was quiet, so he meant it. Steve choked back his rage and Dan his laughter, and they shut their mouths. "Go on, Joe. It's a tall order, but go on."

"Why is it so tall, Ned?" Joe asked. "When I told you Euroa—"

"Euroa was only a bank, not a township—"

"It was a bank and a station and a family of kids and grandmothers," Joe said indignantly. "A bit of a township's only a couple more—"

"An' there's a thousand each on our heads—four thousand's the price o' the gang—"

"Yes, we come high—we ought to justify the high price of crime."

"Justify?" Ned blinked at Joe, who laughed.

"Give 'em a good run for their money is the English of it, Ned." His voice lowered persuasively. "Listen, Ned. This tuppeny township's a hundred miles from where they think we are; it's well into New South Wales, miles in, and it's the Victorian coppers who can't sleep o' nights for that dreadful Kelly gang; and the little dump's no bigger than the back of

your hand—no bigger than Euroa. We get the coppers first—shove ’em in their own chokee, and—”

“I like that bit of it,” Ned said. “But we’d never break away, Joe, wi’ the cash—”

“Did we break away at Euroa?”

“Yes. But. . . .”

Joe sighed patiently. Probably every good general had to put up with this sort of thing all the time. “We sewed ’em up properly, and got away, didn’t we Ned? We got the carts to shift the family, shifted ’em, and tied the whole boiling up so that there wasn’t a whisper—couldn’t be—until we were three hours up into the ranges on better horseflesh than Euroa ever saw. I didn’t leave a hole the size of a pinprick anywhere in the scheme, not one. And we got a lot of fun and a hatful o’ cash, didn’t we?”

“Yes, we did that. . . .” Ned’s voice was softening, and Joe got seriously to work.

“Well, look at the fun in this. One time you say ‘Give ’em a run’ and another ‘The mouthful’s too big.’ For one thing no mouthful is too big for us—we all know that, don’t we?” Joe waited for the answering gleam in Ned’s eyes before he went on. “And Jerilderie is not so much of a mouthful after all—so long as Steve doesn’t kiss the sergeant and queer the game at the start—”

Steve Hart opened his mouth but Ned spoke first.

“Save yer breath, Steve. No mouthful *is* too big for us. And there’s a job of work ahead of us, in Jerilderie. Go on, Joe, word by word, until we *can’t* slip, like you did at Euroa. . . .”

Senior Constable Devine, Officer-in-charge of Police at Jerilderie, was a poor sleeper, but tonight it didn’t feel as if he was going to be any kind of a sleeper at all. It was a Saturday night, which was always a bit busy at Davidson’s and the other pubs; but tonight had not been special—a couple of awkward customers in drink but nobody bad enough to take in. One or two commercials a bit noisy inside the Davidson pub, but they were staying there, and it was a well-conducted house—a quiet night really. Hot, naturally; it was February, and only the eighth of the month—a good long stretch of the hot weather yet to go—but a touch of heat was nothing to keep a man wide awake for hours. It felt like hours, anyway—

What was that? The snap of the gate—

A steady knocking began on—it sounded like the floor of the verandah. . . .

Constable Devine slipped out of bed, glanced at the placidly snoring Mrs. Devine, and went out to the verandah. The door of Constable Richards's room opened and he, too, came down to the front—

"Sergeant!" A peremptory voice hailed him—

Three, and one at the gate with four horses, Devine's mind subconsciously registered. "Yes, sir?"

"There's bad trouble at Davidson's—looks like murder pretty soon," the three crowded the two constables a bit on the verandah-edge, "You'd better step along there. I think—" like a dark flash in the moonlight a sack slipped over Senior Constable Devine's head and another over Constable Richards's—

"Got 'em, Dan?"

"Yes. . . ." Dan grunted. Richards was like an eel, an eel made of whipcord and steel. . . . "Yes. Got 'im now, Ned."

"Good. Jam it down tight an' slip the line round 'im. Mine's like putty—maybe the shock 'as killed 'im." Ned whistled softly, and Joe brought the four houses into the yard, round into the shadow of the watch-house, where they vanished. Dan held his hand hard on Richard's mouth through the sack—"Dodge into the office, Steve, an' get the keys—they're always in the same place—clever coves, these coppers—hangin' under the desk-ledge."

Jerilderie was fast asleep. If it had been promenading *en masse* past the Police Station, there was nothing for it to see or hear. Ned and Dan held their prisoners' mouths through the hessian, and held the men as still as any other shadows in the moonlight. Ned's curt whispered orders were only a shadow of sound, too soft to break even Mrs. Devine's tranquil snoring.

"Down 'ere an' close to the house—the chokee's at the back," Steve's whisper came out of nowhere, and all the shadows huddled a moment and moved into the darkness. Dan kicked Richards's bare shin to emphasize the folly of resistance, but there was no real need for this precaution—Richards was suffocating, and wanted nothing under heaven save a chance to get his head out of this bag.

Steve tried two of the keys. The third did it. Softly he opened the doors of the watch-house cells. "Chuck 'em in, boys," he whispered.

Ned and Dan did so, slipping off the bags. “Kelly is the name,” Ned murmured, “which means quick an’ sudden shootin’. One of us is on guard at the door here. A word or a squeak out of either of ye begins the shootin’. See?”

Senior Constable Devine glanced down at his long nightgown and bare feet in the moonbeams, at the dirt-floor and log walls of the cell, at the revolver in Ned’s belt. He sighed. It wouldn’t matter what kind of a sleeper he was for the rest of the night. “I see,” he said wearily.

“All right. No harm’ll come to ye while ye remember it. Good night.”

Sunday was quiet; as Joe Byrne pointed out, it was a day of rest and no good bushranger could think of it in any other way. He elaborated this theory to Mrs. Devine in her kitchen, while her still bewildered eyes watched him in one of her husband’s uniforms and her mind wondered if she could ever wash the taint of crime out of the suit when all this was over. The wakeful frightened night spent with the wondering children would have seemed bad enough yesterday; this morning, looking at this hard debonair youth with the good manners and the good quiet voice, in that uniform, knowing that her husband and poor Mr. Richards were still locked up in their own cells—well, anything might happen, mightn’t it, to make a sleepless terrified night look like nothing at all. It was a waste of time to try to foretell the next moment, as you might say.

But she always *had* put the church to rights of a Sunday morning before the service; for years it had been the job she liked best of all the week. And the Vicar would be wondering—Still, the children—

“Mr. Kelly says you are on no account to neglect your little Sabbath duty in the church, ma’am.” Joe’s dominant gaze gave her the feeling that he thought she was a fool and Mr. Kelly another. “I am to escort you, in my uniform. If anyone accosts us, he says, I am a visiting officer from headquarters.”

“Very well,” she said primly. The “visiting officer from Headquarters” was rather like a sort of blasphemy, perhaps, but she was grateful for the permission to do a familiar solid job in this crumbling world.

Joe stood up as Steve came into the kitchen. “Mr. Hart will look after the children in our absence. You’d be surprised how gentle he is with children. There’s a good deal of the mother, the nurse, in our Mr. Hart, Mrs. Devine.” Joe watched the black rage rise in Steve’s face, nodded amiably to him, and stood aside for Mrs. Devine to leave the kitchen.

They were making her go; she could feel that. If she didn't, the people at the church might wonder and even send over to enquire. She wished she hadn't said anything about it now. But it did look like a chance—

"Naturally," Joe's dominant eyes were on her, "you wouldn't want to start any alarm or any such folly at the church, ma'am, while we hold the children here as securities. That would be," he smiled at her, "fatal. . . ."

Her heart was suddenly water with terror. But she wasn't going to let this cocky boy see it. "Very well," she said again, a little more primly.

But can a Sunday be called quiet, with four hard bony-looking bushrangers in troopers' uniforms in the house and your husband locked in his own cell? If bushrangers are all bullies, too, and spent the day ordering you about here, there, and everywhere, so that you don't know whether you are on your head or your heels—can that be called quiet?

And poor Constable Richards!

They dragged him out of his cell, stood over him as if they were going to murder him outright.

"You're taking us, for a walk, copper, us two coves from Headquarters—see?" Joe Byrne barked at him. Joe's smooth manner had vanished; the undercurrent of violence was coming to the surface under the strain of restlessness and inaction. These men were murderers, savage criminals who would stick at nothing; you could feel that in every room in the distracted house. There was peril, peril in every moment. "Well, what do you say?" Joe barked again.

"It's you that's saying, isn't it?" Richards said. "For now—"

"By God it is!" Joe's snarling face was close to the constable's. "Orders—my orders! Clean yourself up and put on yer coat; ye're walkin' out with yer betters—"

Richards hauled back, put all his weight of whipcord and steel into one punch to Joe's chin, where the punch landed like a sledge-hammer. If it was the last thing he did on earth—

The room seemed to fall on him as Joe and Steve both leapt on him like tigers. But Ned's voice from the doorway cut across the confusion.

"Get off 'im!" he ordered. "This is a job of work, not a free-for-all for boys. Get up, constable. I don't blame yer—I'd 'ave tried one meself for that

talk. But," Ned flourished the revolver in his hand and stared into Richards's face, "this is better than yer fists. If it has to speak, it will. An' the four good horses in the yard'll do the rest for *us*. *Your* funeral will be all that's left in Jerilderie. See?"

Richards breathed deep. Somehow, sometime, he'd get these swine, or help to get them—"All right—I see," he said.

"Good. Get on your coat an' go for a walk with these other troopers. Show 'em all the sights: the pubs, the telegraph-office, and that." He turned away. "And the bank," he added over his shoulder. "We've got business there to-morrow."

Outwardly, three troopers strolled round the township, while the local Constable Richards showed the two strangers from Headquarters the sights of the place. Inwardly, these two strangers were taking careful mental notes of the lay-out of the bank back and front, of the telegraph-office, of the big pub, of the church and vicarage, even of the school. Inwardly, one of the strangers was enduring a dull pain in his chin and jaw which he occasionally rubbed tenderly, vowing a bitter vengeance. And inwardly the local man rejoiced at this tender rubbing; if he got a fair chance of another good smack at one of these swine he'd take it, and damn the result.

But he never did get that fair chance, any more than the township of Jerilderie did. On the Monday morning he was ordered to take the four new men from Headquarters into the business part of the township.

Mr. Gill, the editor of the local paper, passed the party on his way to the police station. He found this closed, and was going away when Mrs. Devine whispered to him from a partly opened window.

"Mr. Gill! Mr. Gill!"

He looked at her white face. "Good morning," he said. "And why are you whispering, Mrs. Devine?"

"I can't tell you," she said distractedly. "I—I feel as if I'd never speak above a whisper again. . . ."

"But," Mr. Gill was distressed, "is there something wrong—"

"I can't tell you anything," she broke in in that haunted terrified whisper. "Run, run for your life! You—we are all in terrible danger. Even now, down the town—" she smiled stupidly, pitiably, at him, and softly pulled the window shut.

Remarkable. . . . Mr. Gill looked at his boots, at the sky, at his finger-nails. The poor woman—

Down the town she said. That was trying to tell him something, perhaps. Yes, that was it. She was frightened out of her wits, but that was it.

Breathlessly he hurried back into the town, picking up Mr. Rankin, the magistrate, on the way. They made for the bank, as the central point of danger, any danger into which trouble at the police station could come.

But they were too late.

“Bail up!” was their greeting in the main office of the bank.

In a trice they were being herded out by an armed and bearded ruffian dressed as a trooper, and were thrust unceremoniously into the big waiting-room of the Royal Mail hotel, which backed on to the bank.

Here they found the bank manager and his accountants, together with other important residents, all staring at each other in consternation. The bottom had fallen out of the world.

Constable Richards, his heart black with rage, had the dirtiest job of his life. He stood in the hall of the hotel, under the mocking eye of Ned standing at the bar. As each morning customer entered, Richards’s duty was to buy him a drink and introduce him to Ned Kelly! Joe had taken a peculiar delight in thinking out this little bit; he knew he could leave it to Ned to make the most of it. The landlord himself was detailed to serve the drinks behind the bar; as each customer finished his drink he was solemnly escorted to the waiting-room and the growing group of prisoners there.

What with the bank and the hotel, soon all the important residents were prisoners there.

Satisfied that this was so, Ned made his entrance into the waiting-room, bowed with his flourish, and indicated the revolvers in his hands and those of Steve’s at the other door.

“Your keys, Mr. Tarleton,” he said peremptously to the bank manager.

Mr. Tarleton looked at Ned’s grim face, at his revolvers, at Steve at the other door—

“You’ve no option, Mr. Tarleton,” Mr. Rankin the magistrate said. “It’s suicide to refuse. Your fellow-citizens realise and sympathise with your situation.”

“Thank you, Mr. Rankin.” Mr. Tarleton with a firm and unexpected dignity handed his keys to Ned. “Under protest,” he said, “against a dastardly outrage.”

“Good.” Ned took the keys and walked round the group. “You, I think,” he pointed his left-hand revolver at the schoolmaster’s tired face.

Mr. Edwards jumped. “Me?” he cried. “Why?”

“Oh, not for murder yet,” Ned told him casually. “Only to hold the bag—I can’t do *all* the work on me own, can I?” He turned to Steve. “I’ll leave this lot to you now. Come on, schoolmaster.”

Past Joe Bryne watching with a stilled malevolence the equally malevolent Richards in the hall, past Dan on mocking guard inside the bank-doors (“The place is full of coppers, isn’t it, schoolmaster. A decent bushranger’d be a change.”), to the door of the strong-room.

“Here y’are,” Ned threw an empty canvas-bag to Mr. Edwards. “Hold it open down here.”

Mr. Edwards endured the one great shame of his uneventful life. Ned stacked, counted, and threw gold coins and notes into the bag, and Dan’s sensitive young face watched them with its fixed thin smile. In a hundred years from now, perhaps in a hundred days from now, it wouldn’t matter that he had stood here like a fool watching these other fools. . . .

“Good,” Ned said at last. “Tie up the neck o’ the bag, schoolmaster. She’s done.” They came down to the counter. “About twenty-one hundred, a bit more, Dan. Might be worse.”

Dan’s thin smile became a grin. “Might be, Ned. We didn’t reckon on a lot o’ cash in the little dump, did we?”

“No.” Ned paused at the counter, eyeing a little pile of blank paper. “Those poor kids in your school,” he said to Mr. Edwards. “They ought to have a holiday.”

“Pardon?” asked the startled Edwards.

“A day’s holiday, in honour of my visit to the township.” He flourished a revolver towards the little pile of paper. “Write ’em an order givin’ it to ’em.”

Mr. Edwards smiled palely and politely at the joke.

“Write it!” Ned thundered.

Mr. Edwards shuddered and seized a pen.

" 'By order,' " Ned began, " 'whereas, in honour of the unexpected visit of Ned Kelly to'—well, you know how to say it. You're a schoolmaster."

For a long moment Mr. Edwards, under compulsion of the revolver, wrote swiftly, and put down the pen.

"Now sign it. Pin it up in yer schoolroom when I let ye go there. Leave it up for a week. It ain't often Ned Kelly visits a township, schoolmaster. They ought to remember it."

"They do," Dan said wearily at the door. "Let's go."

"Well, Ned, there's your township in your pocket." Joe Byrne flicked a speck of dust from the sleeve of his trooper's coat. "How d'ye like it?"

"Good. Ye done, well, Joe."

"It was a good scheme. Devine's locked up in his cell; Steve's got Richards and all the big-wigs in the pub waiting-room; we've got all the cash out of the bank; and here's you and Dan and me with this bit of a dump in our pockets. What do we do with it?"

Ned swelled with pride. "Well, let's look it over first, Joe—them telegraph-wires ought to be cut. We might choke the postmaster with 'em for a start."

"All right." Joe laughed. The tide of excitement was beginning to flow again; as a good general whose job was practically done he could afford to relax a bit with the gang and taste the fruits of his careful work. "We'll begin with the post office. Then I'll come back and kill that copper, I think. Me chin's as sore as a bear's hind leg."

"Dan said 'e was tough—ye shouldn't 'a' riled 'im, Joe."

"Riled 'im. . . ." Most of Joe Byrne's fun since babyhood had consisted of riling them and seeing what they would do; Mother, father, schoolmaster, and now Steve Hart, and any copper he could *get* in his power. It didn't seem much of an amusement when you come to think of it. "Oh, well, damn him—what's a copper, anyway? Come on, Ned."

And this looking over your township wasn't so much of an amusement, either, after all. When they had broken all the telegraph communications at the post office, cut the wires outside in the street, and added the postmaster and his assistant to the prisoners in the waiting-room, there didn't seem so much vivid excitement left in their township. They ordered cool drinks all

round for the prisoners and went back to the looking-over, leaving Dan in charge at the hotel and taking Steve with them.

Steve began by introducing himself to the astounded Vicar and stealing his watch. Ned was virtuously indignant and ordered him to return the watch at once—that was no way to treat the inhabitants of his township.

They picked up a few oddments of supplies and clothes in the township shops, and went back to the police-station and stole a horse to carry them. And that—well, that was all.

They went back to the hotel, where Joe gave Constable Richards a final resumé of his character as he, Joe, saw it. Constable Richards kept his temper to Joe's bitter disappointment and the admiration of Ned, who was laughing heartily at them both—

"Ned—a word!"

Ned bent his head. "Yes, Dan?"

"There was a bit of an editor cove—I've just had the office that 'e cut when we took the beak, Rankin, in. 'E got a horse—I know that—and—well, it's runnin' a bit stale, ain't it?"

"Yes. If it wasn't we'd cut, anyway. Four thousand shiners is a big price—any cove'd work an' take risks for it. Joe!" Joe came over. "Round 'em up. We'll go."

The afternoon's level shadows were lying on the tracks up into the hills as Ned and Joe took the lower steeper track, leaving the easy one for Dan and Steve with the pack-horse.

Joe reined in his horse on a jutting bluff. Ned, wondering, did the same. Joe pointed to Jerilderie asleep in the afternoon sun.

"Look, Ned." His voice was quiet, empty of all expression. "There it is. That was ours for an hour or two—body, soul, and trouser-buttons, that belonged to us. We'll remember that."

Ned's short laugh mocked the afternoon, the shadows, and the little town asleep in the hollow. "And how long do we get to remember it, boy? Tell me that."

"That isn't the point. It don't matter if we get a thousand years or only a month to remember it. The point is that we *did* it." Joe was quite firm in his faith in the achievement itself.

Ned wasn’t so sure. And, he asked himself in a rare introspective moment, did he care?

CHAPTER XI

"WHERE did ye get this, Adrian?" Dan's voice was as bitter as his thin-lipped smile. Both had the shadow of murder in them.

But Adrian, thus far along the furtive journey of his life, wasn't afraid of (or unused to) the shadow of murder. "Oh, here an' there. Got a bit o' baccy to spare Dan?"

"Listen—sit down there an' listen to me." Dan stood over him while he filled his pipe. Still little Scotty Adrian wasn't afraid or even unhappy. He liked seeing these big bushrangers all worked-up into mystified excitement that only he could dispel. It was really his only chance with them. His smile up into Dan's urgent face was therefore bland. "Yer windpipe'll crack for good inside five ticks if ye don't give it mouth." Dan's wiry hand grabbed his shoulder and shook it.

Adrian eased the shoulder out of the hand without any difficulty. "Well, five ticks—that's not too long, is it, Dan," he giggled. "But I'll try to oblige ye."

"Ye'd better," Dan warned him.

"I know that. Ye hinted at it before, if ye remember—"

Dan growled like an infuriated dog—

"All right, all right." Adrian settled himself more comfortably on the log. "You begin with Mrs. Byrne, only she won't split."

"Listen, you little scut—my temper's not so good as Ned's—"

"I don't care what yer temper's like, Dan," for once Adrian was firm and direct. "Ye won't get any further in this than I 'ave. Ye're up against a brick wall. There's a leak somewhere—eight thousand pound is a lot o' money: two thousand each for the Kelly gang—an' the leak's after it. But 'e knows it's sudden death if 'e slips. So 'e don't slip."

"But what's the good o' talkin' about Joe's mother—"

"I didn't say she was the leak, did I?"

“No. But—”

“Ye’re better at shootin’ ’em down an’ cuttin’ ’em out o’ the mob than ye are of thinkin’, Dan. Thinkin’s *my* line, see? An’ wot I say is this: no one’s goin’ to tell us ’oo the leak is, ’cos that’s dynamite that’ll go off in two directions: the leak’ll get ’is sudden death in first before we kills *’im*.”

“Well, wot do we do?” Dan was looking at Adrian for almost the first time with something like respect. He was a poor little scut who was all wrong in a dozen ways, but he was a good, cunning, and rapid telegrapher, and Ned and the rest of them put up with him for that reason. But now he was putting the case of this leak firmly to Dan and telling Dan what he could do and what he would be wise not to do—he was boss of this talk, so that Dan had to ask him what they did.

Someone had turned dog. Two horse-lifting raids that couldn’t have got beyond the gang had not only failed but had also meant hard and desperate riding for mere escape. That could only mean a leak; the coppers couldn’t have had any reason for being on that track that night. Only information could have taken them there.

“I got an idea, Dan—”

“Well, spit it out!”

Adrian laughed. “I should be a fool, shouldn’t I? Didn’t I tell you it was dynamite in all directions—”

“That’s all right, Adrian. But how do we get anywhere?”

“This way, Dan: You and me’ll do a bit o’ patrollin’, like the coppers do, and we’ll begin at Mrs. Byrne’s. She won’t split, even if she knows, which I doubt. But she’s got *something* on her mind. . . .”

But Mrs. Byrne’s shanty was unproductive. For four tedious nights Dan and Adrian scouted round, listening, watching every shadow in the silent motionless bush—making silent, motionless, almost unbreathing shadows of themselves; but to no purpose. Aaron Sherritt came and went to the little house; he was after the daughter, and he was practically one of the gang; many a time he’d put the gang on to some very neat things. Joe would have staked his davey on Aaron; he laughed at Dan.

“He’s courting my sister; they’re getting spliced—no one can have a better alibi than that, Dan.”

“Eight thousand’s a heap o’ cash, Joe.”

“And what a hope he’d have of getting away with eight pence of it, wouldn’t he? You’re letting yer imagination run away with you. No; we’ve got to look somewhere else.”

They did this. Little hungry haunted men were awakened at dead of night, the threat of death held over their heads, and their minds raked fore and aft with a broadside of searching questions; furtive men were seized in the bush and dragged to the Kelly camp for their brains to be tortured by a ceaseless rain of accusations; all the bushranger areas were painstakingly and faithfully covered in an intensive search for the leak.

To no avail. In the end Dan and the gang came to the conclusion that Scotty Adrian was wrong and that they had been fools to waste so much time on his misgivings.

But Adrian only tittered. They were right in one thing, he said: they were fools. For his part he thought a good place to hang about when he hadn’t anything better to do was Mrs. Byrne’s little house in the front of the Beechworth camp. You never knew, he said. Dan and the others laughed at him; it had been a general idea all his life to laugh at Adrian (or to run from him as from the plague) and the Kelly gang were not sensitive as to other people’s feelings. Nor was Adrian, for that matter; he giggled companionably while the big men laughed, his bright mirthless eyes watching them steadily. But he clung to his idea that you never knew, while he hung about, day and night (particularly night), in the conveniently thick scrub surrounding Mrs. Byrne’s house.

Adrian knew a lot about Mrs. Byrne, much more than he ever told anybody. He knew, for example, that Joe’s joining of the Kelly gang had probably been responsible for his father’s early death and the consequent abandonment of Mrs. Byrne and her daughter to the far from tender mercies of a world wherein the name “Byrne” had become more than a suspect. He knew that the Byrne household had been very different from the amenities of a shanty on the edge of a bushrangers’ camp; that all the Byrnes were educated—gentry in a way; and that Mrs. Byrne was still bewildered and amazed that she had only Joe’s luck in thieving to stand between her and starvation. She was content to call the thieving the retaliation of the underdog in the only manner open to him, because that seemed to be the fashion at Beechworth and Wangaratta; her general disillusionment prompted her also to look with a not unfriendly eye on Mr. Sherritt’s advances to her daughter. In older days it may be that she would not have

looked twice in Mr. Sherritt's direction, much less have him in mind for one hour as a possible son-in-law; but these days were not those other days, and the future was very problematical and probably surprising—as witness this present on the evidence of that past of other days. Mr. Sherritt was *a* son-in-law.

All this made Mrs. Byrne determined above all things to keep her own counsel. You could never tell what she was thinking. And Adrian, who on one or two fugitive occasions *had* been able to tell what Mrs. Byrne was thinking, thought it was a very good idea, to keep a general watch on Mrs. Byrne's little house.

This gave him no result for quite a while. Night after night he saw Mrs. Byrne's white weary non-committal face at the window or in the doorway; he saw Joe ride up, heard his quick nervous speech about the place, saw him mount and ride away like a flash of lightning; he saw Aaron Sherritt ride up, his square face and narrow eyes quite impassive; he saw Sherritt's sister, Mrs. Barry, and her daughter, come and spend the evening and go away. And all that was very dull and quite useless for his purpose.

But one night he heard Mrs. Byrne giving Aaron Sherritt a piece of her mind. He crept closer in the hope that some details of this piece would disclose themselves but only the sharp slam of the little house's door rewarded him—that and the sight of Aaron's sullen square face as he mounted and rode away.

The news that Sherritt and Ellen Burke's girl had suddenly got married and gone to live in a shanty Aaron "owned," not a mile from Mrs. Byrne's house, seemed to fit with this piece of mind somewhere, though for the life of him even Adrian's cunning couldn't tell where.

Until the two troopers passed him on the lower track. They didn't know they were passing him. He was a permanent lifeless part of the scrub when their first faint hoof-beats sounded a furlong away. He watched, motionless, and listened; if must be, he would follow to listen. If he broke his neck at it he must hear what he could, and take it back to Ned or Dan. No trooper had ever got so near the camp before; he was certain of that.

"You know, I don't trust this cove too far. What *d'you* think?"

The other trooper laughed. "Set a thief to catch a thief—they say it's a good method."

“They say so. But Sherritt said they were going to bust Goulburn wide open. And what did they do? Cleaned out Jerilderie which is about as far from Goulburn as you can get. If that ain’t false and misleadin’ information —”

“But ’e must ’ave known false information’d do ’im no good. They must have meant to go to Goulburn. Eight thousand’s a lot o’ money.”

Adrian crept through the scrub, a silent shadow. He was getting what he wanted, what he’d been so patient for.

“I know it is. Well, he’ll give this certain information on Thursday week in his own shanty here. If he can ’‘e’ll get two o’ the gang to capture at once —” they reached the flat stretch of the track. The first trooper shook up his horse, they broke into a canter, vanished.

But Adrian had all he wanted now. Now he knew what it all meant. He turned and sped up through the undergrowth into the big timber and the camp beyond. He must get all this to Ned and Dan, tell ’em to laugh the other side of their silly faces, and then tell ’em to sit tight for an engagement to be made for Thursday week at Sherritt’s house. The swine, the foul traitorous swine. . . .

The engagement was made. Quite casually, it came out in Aaron Sherritt’s usual impassive reticent way, that there was a rather good easyish thing he’d heard about, a certainty; if a couple of them would come down to his place on Thursday they could hear the lot without being forced to trust *his* word for it.

“But we do trust ye,” Ned said, that glitter flickering in his eyes as he smiled at Sherritt. “Ye’ve been one of our best mates for long enough. Yer information’s always been good; we’ve all made a tidy bit out of it. What makes ye think we wouldn’t trust ye, Aaron?”

Sherritt’s narrow eyes glanced at Ned. “I don’t think ye wouldn’t trust me, Ned. But there’s no harm in being sure of a thing, is there?”

Ned laughed, the soft quiet laugh that made even his brother, even his mother, stand away from him. “No. There’s never any ’arm in bein’ sure—dead sure—of a thing. All right, Aaron Sherritt, we’ll be there. . . .”

Sherritt paused in the doorway of the shanty. “I believe a couple’d be better than the lot, Ned. Give more confidence, like.”

Ned laughed gently again. “More confidence, eh? All right—just a couple of us it shall be. . . .”

“He’s *mine*, Ned!” Joe pounced on the silence in the shanty after Sherritt had gone. “He’s *mine*—”

“No, Ned,” Dan cut in. “Adrian told me six months ago—”

“Adrian be damned!” Joe glared at Dan. “Isn’t he springing a trap almost on the Byrne ground here—”

“What’s that got to do with it? I got the first word of it, Joe, and he’s mine—what the hell does it matter where he springs it?”

“A fair go!” Joe stormed at them. “Gimme a fair go, Ned! He’s—”

“Shut it, both of ye!” Ned’s quiet voice ordered. “Ye can both ’ave ’im—’e said a couple of us, didn’t he? Well, you’re the couple. An’ good luck to ye!” He stared into the fire a silent moment. “The coppers an’ the banks knew a bit when they made it eight thousand, didn’t they?” He kicked the fire together. “Ye’ll find some coppers waiting there for ye—dodge ’em and get away out when ye’ve done. We’ll run Glenrowan on the top of it. Steve an’ me—listen, Joe. They’ll send a train of coppers—those you leave behind’ll give ’em the office—”

“That’s true.” Joe’s rage subsided. “We’ll have to alter the plan, Ned. Better dodge it for now, I think and nip back under cover—”

“No.” Ned was very quiet. “No,” he said again. “We’ll dodge nothing now. It’s neck or nothin’. Glenrowan’s the plan, an’ Glenrowan it’s got to be—”

“But, Ned—”

“Death an’ the devil—ye must’a forgotten, Joe.” Ned was almost whispering. He spat into the fire, and looked up, the bitter smile glittering from face to face. “You ’aven’t forgotten, ’ave you, brothers?” he whispered. “Run over the plan again, Joe, an’ change the first of it for a train load of coppers before we can get to work.”

So Adrian, watching from the scrub, saw Joe and Dan ride up to the Sherritt’s shack. Aaron Sherritt was there, he knew, and Mrs. Barry and the wife of Aaron Sherritt, all sitting round the fire against the cold of the night. Too, there were four troopers hidden in the house—this also Adrian knew.

Joe banged on the door. Aaron Sherritt opened it—Adrian could see his square stolid face and narrow eyes in the firelight for one glimpse before

Dan’s shot rang out across the night. Sherritt clutched his heart and fell, stumbling on the threshold. Joe Byrne fired another shot into the corpse, before he kicked it back into the room.

The last thing Adrian saw as he turned to vanish into the night was Dan’s thin young smile in the firelight. This became a sudden short laugh as he and Joe leapt for their saddles and were away. Far away, long before the stunned troopers fumbled out into the room with only a traitor’s corpse and two wildly weeping women for their months of patient work. That and one small withered telegrapher, tittering with effeminate joy as he fled through the big timber to the Kelly camp.

CHAPTER XII

Mr. Dunsany was never at his best at breakfast. One did not expect it, of course; gentlemen had weighty matters on their minds; in the sacred mystery of business there were so many things impossible for the female mind to grasp, so many things that, indeed, were far beyond it—that it was, perhaps, unfair for the female mind to criticise. But really Mr. Dunsany this morning was being quite impossible—Mrs. Dunsany was quite firm about that; she was always being quite firm with him when she called him “Mr. Dunsany,” although it had been the pleasant fashion for years to call your husband by his Christian name—

“Pshaw!” Mr. Dunsany crumpled up the newspaper and hurled it—literally hurled it to the floor; a quite savage exhibition before the poor children. “It’s—it’s too *Damnable*! I can’t—”

“I think, children,” Mrs. Dunsany had the temerity to interpose, “we can say that breakfast is over. Say a word of thanks and go to the schoolroom. If Mademoiselle has not yet arrived, no doubt she will not keep you waiting long.”

The children bowed their heads over their empty plates and regretfully filed out of the dining-room. They were really all too big for a governess now; Mrs. Dunsany sighed. Even in her indignation of Mr. Dunsany’s unwarrantable behaviour she could spare a sigh for the passing years. Jane was nine now, and the three little steps above her were, well, quite big steps. Then came the gap of Philip and Donald at School at Home. And Marjorie and Agnes were both young persons now; she smiled an early-Christian-martyr smile at their carefully inscrutable young faces. And Sophia—well, Sophia was twenty-six; one couldn’t deny that, even if one had wished to do so. And Sophia at the moment was laughing. Oh, quite so—no doubt poor Papa losing control because of the weight of worry in his mind was an amusing spectacle to the ultra-modern young woman. It was quite possible that one ultra-modern young woman would find herself on the shelf if she were not careful. . . . Mrs. Dunsany sighed again as her own expression became carefully inscrutable also—

“Oh, Papa! You’ve frightened all the poor children away!” Sophia was having the effrontery to, yes, to ogle her Papa! “And what is it that’s so—”

“*Sophia!*” Mrs. Dunsany’s horrified cry of warning was just in time.

“—Angered you, dear Papa?” Sophia continued with a bland smile for Mamma and another sideways glance for Papa.

“Eh, what—what.” Mr. Dunsany’s puzzled gaze went from Mamma to Sophia, to Marjorie and Agnes, and back to Mamma. There was some female mystery going on here; those two young minxes had both eaten a brace of canaries; Mamma was enduring her lot in picturesque patience; and Sophia—well, Sophia was playing the fool, as usual. Had *he*, by chance, made a *faux pas*, as the French put it?

“I beg your pardon, my dear,” he said innocently to Mamma, “but I fear I was remiss enough to lose the thread of the conversation—”

“Papa dear!” Sophia’s affected laugh positively tinkled. “You *were* the conversation!”

“Was I?” He looked a shade apprehensively at Mrs. Dunsany.

But Mamma looked down her nose into a limitless space; she was completely, unutterably withdrawn from this occasion.

“Of course you were, dear! Don’t you remember? You were using stable language, and Mamma nearly fainted and sent the children packing and—”

“I think,” Mrs. Dunsany rose out of limitless space and stood before them beside her chair, “we can say that breakfast is over for *all* of us. We will say a word of thanks.”

They bowed their heads and did this, Mr. Dunsany not so completely absorbed in his orisons that he could not watch Mrs. Dunsany a little more apprehensively while he made them.

“My dear, will you—er—see me off the premises?” This infallible quip evoked no smile to-day; that was bad. Better get it over. “I am in something of a hurry this morning—a considerable pressure at the office demands my —”

In the hall she looked icily on while he made considerable play, finding his cane and his hat, his cigar case. When there was nothing left but his newspaper he went back to the dining-room and rescued, straightened, and refolded it, despite the pressure at the office. Finally there was nothing at all left save the facing it. This he found, as usual, extraordinary difficult to do—

not for lack of courage to face it but for the customary sudden evanishment of anything to face.

"My dear, I am afraid I was a little, shall we say hasty this morning—"

"Were you? Hasty?"

"Yes. You can understand—"

"I did not observe it. Didn't you say that on account of pressure at the office—"

"Oh damn the pressure at the office! I—"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Oh, really, my dear. I apologise—"

She opened the front door in the usual pointed manner, managing to make the chain rattle to drown his apology. Safely out on the "Salve" mat he began again, and she accepted the apology promptly.

"Not at all," she told him pleasantly. "You are the master of the house, and I suppose if you wish to use the word 'hasty' in place of 'unutterably coarse' you are within your rights." The door was gently closing. "Dinner at seven—try not to be late—it so upsets poor cook." The door was gently closed.

Mr. Dunsany stared down at the damned mat. *When* would he learn that it was hopeless to take the initiative, that the only course was a "masterly inaction?" At fifty-two to start the working day in this futile rage, after twenty-seven years of matrimonial experience—he ought to be ashamed of himself.

Indeed, he was. Which added a further heavy weight to the considerable pressure at the office when he arrived there.

Meantime Mrs. Dunsany at her stateliest went slowly upstairs to the sewing room. That was where Sophia would be—oh, not sewing, that would be too much to expect—reading or possibly writing one of her interminable letters. At least one *had* the authority in Sophia's case, however difficult it might be to impose it. At the moment Mrs. Dunsany felt that she could impose her authority on a range of mountains.

Sophia was not either reading or writing; she was sitting in the old nursing chair at the window, staring out into the street.

“Hullo, Mamma!” she said in the casual modern manner, and with hardly a smile.

Mrs. Dunsany paused at the wire skirt-frame. “I beg your pardon, Sophia,” she asked. “What did you say?”

“I said ‘Hullo, Mamma,’ ” Sophia replied, with out even turning round this time.

Mamma decided on the frontal attack; evidently any finesse would be a mere waste of time. “I am glad I find you alone, Sophia dear,” she began maternally, “because I have been wanting for some time now to know the exact situation between you and Jarvis Lorne.”

“There isn’t any,” was Sophia’s prompt reply. “What made you think there was, Mamma?”

This was going to be very difficult. “Possibly my maternal solicitude for your welfare, my dear, and the, I think, rather faint chances of your establishment in life. Possibly,” Mamma paused here, in the manner she had learned from Mr. Dunsany, “my desire that you shall be in *all* ways a good example to your younger sisters.”

“Do I threaten to be a bad one?” Sophia asked with the same infuriating indifference.

“Perhaps not quite that. You, perhaps unconsciously, misunderstood me, dear. Let me go over the events to which we can refer. On four separate occasions you and I have spent long, and very pleasant visits at ‘Yellowfields’ by quite pressing invitation.”

“Well?” Sophia broke the pause. What was the matter with Mamma this morning? She’d never bothered about Jarvis or “Yellowfields” before—or she hadn’t seemed to. Papa and she had tried to throw her at Jarvis’s head eight years ago so blatantly that she and Jarvis had made a tacit alliance against the fatuous indecency and had quarrelled and argued and been boon companions ever since. Mamma knew all that. Or did she? Anyhow, the family had quite soon stopped throwing her at his head, thank heaven. What was this?

“Sophia dear, surely your knowledge of the world must tell you that your sisters, to say nothing of our large circle of friends, will ask quite promptly what those visits are to lead to.”

“More visits, I hope. I like ‘Yellowfields’ and I like fighting with Jarvis. His mind is all muddled up but underneath he’s real and worth fighting with

—but that wasn't what you asked me, Mamma, was it?"

"I don't know that I *asked* you anything, Sophia. I pointed out what your sisters might think of, well, a young woman and a young man virtually playing fast and loose with the most sacred—"

"Listen, Mamma," Sophia interrupted firmly, "if you are only trying to make me angry because a squabble with Papa is not so exciting as it used to be, you can do that quite easily without insulting me."

"Really, Sophia, sometimes you have the most, well, brazen way of putting things!"

"I like the truth. If that's brazen—well, that's what it is." Sophia's grey gaze was hard and firm on her mother's angry face. "Now, do you really want to know anything about Jarvis and me?"

Mrs. Dunsany capitulated. Sophia was outrageous in her view of life, her ignoring of the delicacies of society's traditions, her contempt for the subterfuges the traditions had made; but there was about her always the shining certainty of the truth. Mamma had tried her strength against that weapon before now, and had lost; so far as she was concerned—

"Because if you do, and are asking me to tell you, as my mother—well I'll do my best to tell you what little I know myself. If you are content in your realisation that it is no business of yours, well, will you please stop baiting me. Or trying to stab me in the back."

That was it. If you tried to corner Sophia she was out in the open at once with a flaming sword at your heart—her capitulation had come too late. . . . "Sophia *darling*—" Mamma's firm mouth trembled—"is that the way to talk to me? No business of mine. . . . You were my first baby, dearest—"

Sophia was across the window and Mamma in her arms before the words had left her lips. A comforting croon, heroic and potent, was in Sophia's throat; for this moment Mamma was the only baby in the world, Sophia the only mother.

Poor Mamma—she couldn't help the muddle and the foolery she lived. Poor baby, poor baby. . . .

Slowly but surely the tears, the hard desolate tears of middle age, lessened, and at last ceased. The croon fell silent. For a moment more Sophia rocked her baby gently in her arms.

"I don't want to pry into your secrets, my dearest." Mamma was nearly herself again. "Perhaps they are, as you say, no business of mine—you make

us all feel that nothing of yours is any business of ours. But—" Mamma wiped her eyes; the tears, difficult as they were, had been a relief; she was quite herself again now—"do you love him?"

The rocking ceased, and Sophia was looking out of the window again. That was the blood, telling Mamma the truth though all her life and tradition and mind had buried the truth for her deeper and deeper for half a century of living.

All right. The blood was as true as any other thought, it was a fair clean question.

"Yes, my dear, I do," Sophia said, still watching the busy street, if with unseeing eyes.

CHAPTER XIII

Mr. Curnow liked his job; he liked its official, Civil-Service security; he liked its implication of the direction of the Australian mind of the future; and he liked its pleasant pastoral setting here in the village of Glenrowan. Adventure had passed him by, perhaps, which was just as well—adventure had no place in a schoolmaster's life, and thus he was free for the great adventures of the mind, which were the spirit of his job as a director of the mind of the future. Quite so. He should be grateful, sensible of the great advantages, the privileges of this sylvan quietude of Glenrowan—he was constantly reminding himself of this duty of gratitude and appreciation, constantly insisting upon this duty. He had to, because he didn't feel any of it.

He was a good conscientious man who took his duty seriously; he knew he ought to like everything about his Glenrowan post; so he told himself that he did like it. Liked the noisy schoolroom, the only thing that wasn't dead with quietude; liked his room and the hours, days, weeks of work on hopeless exercises and home-work; liked the week-ends, with their deadly solemn meals at his sister's and their heavy air of self-satisfied piety; liked the solemn drive in the family trap and after the stifling solemn meal; liked the unending weariness, the ceaseless sameness of life dragging on year after year, without any hope of change, let alone adventure. Winter and summer, autumn and spring; one year, two years, ten years, fifty years. . . .

It was winter now, and he had eaten too much, as he always did on Sunday; Miss Curnow was sitting beside him in the driving-seat, gay in her new crimson shawl; and old Dobbin was plugging along the road in his trot that just wasn't a walk, his walk that could just be called a trot. They would plug along like this for a couple of hours, and plug along back to a ponderous tea; they would yawn at each other for a space, and he would put the cat out—

"Bail up!"

The high calling voice stormed into his dreary thoughts, together with Minnie's sudden gasp and little scream, together with Dobbin's sudden willing halt. Could this be—

“Stick ’em up, you fool!”

Mr. Curnow dropped the reins and put his hands up. “My dear,” he turned to Minnie, but her hands were already up, making a red banner of her shawl.

The wild figure in the road, which looked as if it had been drinking, came round to the wheel.

“Hop out, you,” it said peremptorily to Mr. Curnow, “and you, too, ma’am,” less peremptorily to Minnie.

“Oh, my goodness—” Minnie was out and on the road beside her brother, still gasping.

Looking at the wild figure Mr. Curnow was conscious of a dim glow stealing through his blood. If this, by the grace of God, were adventure, however narrow and shortlived it proved to be, let him acquit himself—

“Get into the pub—Mrs. Jones’ll look after yer. All the drinks are on the Kelly gang’s account.” Dan laughed at their shocked faces. “Glenrowan’s been stuck-up since 3 o’clock this morning—Steve!”

Steve—who also had been drinking, Mr. Curnow thought—swaggered out of the inn-yard, touching his hat with exaggerated politeness to Minnie.

“Take this trap and the old corpse in the shafts, will yer, while I go buy the lady an’ gent a nobbler apiece.”

“All right, Dan.”

Steve nodded, took Dobbin and the trap into the stable-yard of Mrs. Jones’s Glenrowan hotel, and left Minnie staring at the yard-gate as if the disappearance of Dobbin were the end of the world.

“My dear,” Mr. Curnow touched her arm, “I don’t think we have anything to fear. And if we have we needn’t do so until it faces us, need we? Remember, this is the year 1880, not the Dark Ages—”

“I needn’t run over ye for weapons, I s’pose?”

“Search us?” Mr. Curnow lifted his head and Minnie blushed. “Of course not—why should we carry weapons on our Sunday-afternoon drive?”

“Right y’are, bully-boy!” Dan slapped him heartily on the back. “Why should ye? I’ll risk it—ye look harmless enough. Come in—ye’ll find most of yer friends ’ere already. But there’s plenty of good drink left—don’t

worry." They had reached the bar and Mrs. Jones, flushed and tremulous, serving drinks behind it. Dan turned to Minnie. "Give it a name, ma'am."

Minnie shrank back. "Oh, I don't think," she began, "I—really, I—"

Dan turned to the schoolmaster, his bonhomie changed to a pallid bitter hardness, a determination which looked as if it were on the verge of wild fury. "Tell yer lady, bully-boy, that the first rule of the house is—everyone drinks with the bosses." The cold young voice fell a tone as Dan touched the revolver-butt in his belt. "*We* are the bosses—the Kelly gang. See?"

Looking at the young man's desperate eyes Mr. Curnow felt that strange glow steal into his blood again. "I think, my dear," he said to Minnie, "we ought to accept—a sip of brandy would do you no harm in this—this encounter, and I could—"

"Three nobblers o' brandy, old girl!" Dan cried, his feverish bonhomie back. "Make it lively now—me friends are thirsty. An' you make yourselves at home, bully-boy," he said to the schoolmaster. "Ye'll be here till to-morrow. Drink hearty, an' call for more. . . ."

He bowed with his grotesquely exaggerated politeness, and swaggered away.

Minnie's shaking hand carried her brandy to her lips. "I think, Jack," she said after a small sip, "that young man is intoxicated. And he's too young to drink to that excess."

Too young. . . . Jack Curnow stared at her, while the story of Kelly gang's exploits in murder and robbery by violence ran through his bewildered mind. Too young. . . . He gulped his brandy, set down the empty glass. Yet, if you only heard his voice, and looked at his head and his carriage, and forgot his desolate weary eyes! dates began to shuffle in the schoolmaster's memory. . . . Dan, the other had called him: Dan Kelly, he would be . . . . Why, Dan Kelly was not nineteen years of age yet! Not nineteen. . . . Mr. Curnow absent-mindedly pushed his empty glass a little forward; and Mrs. Jones seized it feverishly, half-filled it with brandy, and planked it down before him. A foreboding lurked in her tragic, half-hysterical eyes, in her heavy toneless voice.

"Drink up, Mr. Curnow. You're welcome. And God knows what to-morrow'll bring—"

Minnie touched his arm. "I think, Jack, I'd better sit down," he looked at her white face, took her arm. "There are some chairs over there, and some ladies. . . . if you could get me there. . . ."

Mrs. Bracken, the constable's wife, was there, very pale and distressed, and Mrs. Reardon, old Mrs. Cherry—all the few ladies in the village seemed to be there—

"I believe, Mr. Curnow," Mrs. Reardon whispered, "that we are to be sent back to Mrs. Stanistreet's house soon. We *were* there, but these—men came and ordered us to come here. Poor dear lady," she helped Miss Curnow into a chair. "I'll look after her—and you can see Mr. Bracken and the other gentlemen and find out if you can do anything for us. But I don't think you can." She lowered her voice still more, glancing fearfully right and left. "It's my belief," she whispered, "that *all* these four desperados are intoxicated, and that the sooner the ladies get back to Mrs. Stanistreet's the better."

Mr. Curnow went back to the bar.

Was he afraid, he asked himself, in this adventure, the first lone example of another life to come his way?

No. He didn't think he was afraid. He felt that he ought to be, must be, very careful, both for Minnie's sake and his own. And that was all he felt, which was a great relief to him.

He looked round the familiar big room of Mrs. Jones's quiet hotel in these most unfamiliar circumstances. There seemed to be forty or fifty people here, most of them known to him. The stationmaster, Stanistreet, was there; Bracken the constable; Reardon and a few other men from the railway, platelayers and linesmen; the storekeeper, the butcher—all, or practically all the small community of Glenrowan. They were all prisoners here, like himself and poor Minnie and the other ladies, for some unknown scheme of this outlaw gang, some outrage to be perpetrated on the morrow. In his theory of being careful, these, he told himself, were the facts as he saw them.

The possibilities were impossible to assess. The bushrangers were all in, well, in drink; they were not drunk, but they had been drinking heavily. Some of the township men had been drinking with them, too; young Delaney was not at all himself, and others had been administering Dutch courage to their nervous systems. The rest of the prisoners were morose and watchful but resigned to the inevitable; with four desperate criminals, each with two conspicuous revolvers, in command of the situation, resignation is obviously the only course. The ladies were quiet and controlled, which was very creditable in the atrocious circumstances; Mr. Curnow admired their

fortitude. Looking at the situation with what judgment he could summon in his own shock and surprise, it was his opinion that drink would prove to be the touchstone, that drink and its effect would have a large part to play in the destinies of this gathering of unfortunate people. And that meant that anything might happen. Anything at all. He must be very careful.

Having put the case to himself in his slightly didactic schoolmaster's logic, Mr. Curnow was relieved to see that Mr. Stanistreet, the stationmaster, and one of the bushrangers were taking the ladies out of this distinctly squalid and loose atmosphere. Presumably they were going back to Mrs. Stanistreet's care, no doubt under the watchful eye of an armed member of the gang.

That part of it was all right, then. Or as nearly all right as it could be made.

And now this tall bearded man with glittering haggard eyes, striding down the room to Mr. Curnow. This would be Ned Kelly, the desperate leader of this little gang of desperate men. Was he afraid, Mr. Curnow asked himself again. No; there was nothing but that dim glow stirring in his blood again—

"Ned Kelly at your service. Have a drink?"

Mr. Curnow pointed to his brandy. "Thank you, no. I already have one."

"Good. I'll have one, old girl." Mrs. Jones hastened to put the bottle and a glass on the counter. Her hysterical eyes watched him fill the glass with neat spirit; without speaking she corked and took the bottle away. "Ye're the schoolmaster?"

"Yes."

"Good. I like schoolmasters—the cove at Jerilderie gave the kids a holiday in honour of my visit there. You better do that too, when we come to it. Can ye sing?"

"Sing?"

"Yes. We're goin' to 'ave a bit of a sing-song in a minute. I'm goin' to sing." He gulped his drink and put down the empty glass. "Come on into the back-room in a minute an' we'll sing 'em a dooet, eh?"

"But I can't sing."

"Oh, well," Ned banged Mr. Curnow heavily on the back, "I'll teach ye before we begin. Don't worry."

Mr. Curnow watched Ned's swaggering, half-lurching back across the room again, his pause to say a word to Dan at the door. Dan was holding a revolver in one hand and a glass in the other. They both burst into boisterous laughter as Ned went through the doorway. Dan on guard at the door seemed to sway a little as he winked heavily at Mr. Curnow. Drink, the wayward unpredictable dangers of drink would be the ultimate touchstone.

At first a strange schoolboy foolery settled down upon the Glenrowan hotel. Grown men, bearded, fat, thin, prosperous, poor, fathers, bachelors, grandfathers—all manner of men danced jigs, sang songs in chorus, sang songs in solo, wrestled in the stable-yard, recited stirring and sentimental poetry in blurred voices, told each other maudlin stories of past prowess. The winter shadows of the afternoon of Sunday, the 27th of June in the year 1880, coming early in the winter manner, found Mrs. Jones's inn a childish pandemonium of noise and feverish hilarity, of fugitive quarrels, of bearded boys boasting with flushed faces, of silent stupid-looking boys playing cards in corners. Mr. Curnow, watching it from his corner of the bar (his second brandy still rested intact before him on the counter but he didn't think it would last much longer) marvelled at this wholesale disintegration of his fellow-citizens. One man half-seas-over (or even two or three in a group under the influence of liquor) was no great matter; but the whole village, the Church committee, his own board—that was dreadful. He was glad when the swift winter shadows thickened and became the merciful darkness; at least some of this could hide itself in the darkness.

And now this shambles of the mind and spirit began to assume for Mr. Curnow a gradual dark horror. Under this slipshod animal foolery a savagery was stirring, the desolate savagery of the hunted who were in the last ditch and didn't care . . . . Ned was bawling an interminable song of the Kelly gang's defiance to the world; his white contorted face and sunken eyes made his head look like a bearded drunken skull. Round him Delaney and some others were stupidly beating time with their glasses, the steady tap-tap sounding like a distant evil drum. Mrs. Jones watched Ned steadily from her place behind the bar; her eyes were no longer hysterical but steady and burning with implacable hate. Young Jack Jones, her son, was drunk and supine under the table; young Reardon, who was only a little better, was trying with a grim silent persistence to drag young Jack out. Old Martin Cherry was nodding over his broken pipe on the floor. Dan Kelly swayed in

the doorway, and Steve Hart screamed with maniacal laughter drowning Ned's everlasting unintelligible song. Nobody bothered with anyone else; no one seemed to notice his neighbour, save perhaps Mrs. Jones in her pallid baleful watch upon Ned Kelly's face; but such faces as were not sottish and lost were full of that last ditch desolation. Abomination was lord of this place.

"Don't move, Mr. Curnow, or give any sign that you hear me. Go on looking at Kelly singing."

"Yes," he whispered without moving his lips. It was Constable Bracken's voice, speaking behind and below him, as if he were on the floor.

"Don't answer me any more. These devils are leaving you alone, as if they trusted you, or thought you were harmless. Make a chance to come out to the yard—somehow—soon. At the stables corner. A score of lives are riding to certain death. We—we must find some way. Soon. . . ."

Bracken's voice ceased.

Mr. Curnow continued to look idly at Ned Kelly swaying on his chair, singing his endless song. Presently Mr. Curnow turned, idly, picked up the remainder of his drink and casually swallowed it. He glanced round his corner of the bar, behind him, at the floor. He was alone.

Once more that faint glow stirred in his blood. Here was something to *do*. . . . Thank God Ned Kelly had forgotten that he was going to teach him to sing. . . .

He braced himself, strolled idly across the room, and smiled into Dan Kelly's face.

"Hullo!" Dan blinked at him. "It's the cove wi' the lady wi' the red shawl. Want another drink?"

"Thank you. I should like one in a few minutes. At the moment I—well, I want a breath of fresh air."

Dan blinked again. "No larks?"

Mr. Curnow laughed. "Of course not. If I'd wanted larks I'd have tried them long ago, wouldn't I? Besides, I've got to get back for a lesson in singing your brother promised me."

Dan laughed loudly. "Ned promised ye, did he? Well, isn't he the—" a fresh paroxysm of laughter seized him.

“Yes. And I thought—”

“All right, bully-boy.” Dan stood aside, still laughing. “But don’t forget yer singin’ lesson.” The silly laughter followed Mr. Curnow out into the fresh moonlit darkness.

Here he braced himself again and slipped across the moonlight to the black shadow of the stables-corner. Two blacker shadows were here waiting for him, the stationmaster and Bracken.

“Maybe it’s hopeless,” Bracken was whispering rapidly, “but this is it: the Kellys have been here since last night. When the first batch of ’em broke in and collared Stanistreet’s place word was got through—never mind how—to Headquarters, who’ve been layin’ for ’em, all ready, since Sherritt was murdered with four officers lookin’ on. That means for a certainty a special train and a detachment of police for Glenrowan. When the second batch of Kellys got in, with Reardon and the other railway fellow as prisoners, they brought word that these devils had stood over ’em with guns and forced ’em—Reardon, I mean—to cut the railway line, telegraph, the whole bag o’ tricks—there’s a gap wide enough to wreck any train, a mile back from the station.”

The schoolmaster caught his breath. What a diabolical slaughter. . . .

“Byrne, who’s guarding my place,” Stanistreet took up the rapid, whispered tale, “is sober an’ he’s watching me like a lynx—I’m supposed to be gettin’ a drink over here—and Steve Hart’s got the same eye on Bracken. We’re pretty well all right, I s’pose, so long as we don’t try to get away from the pub an’ my place—but if we try any more than that—”

“They’d shoot us down like rabbits,” Bracken put in, “an’ that would start God knows what. It’s my job to know the kind of mood they’re in, an’ that’s it. But how to warn the train—is there anyone here, Mr. Curnow, that you think has a chance of gettin’ away to do it? The train may have left, it may be half-way, it may be a yard from the cut in the line. . . . D’you think Reardon—”

“No. Drunk or sober they’d watch ’im every minute.” The stationmaster paused a moment in thought. “I wonder if Delaney. . . . he’s a youngster and he knows the line—”

“At the moment he’s part of the chorus to Ned’s song; in another ten minutes or so I should think he’ll be fast asleep,” Mr. Curnow told them. “What is the, er, task involved, constable?”

“To get to that train,” Stanistreet answered vigorously for Bracken, “an’ show it a red light for danger before it gets to the gap. To run along the line an’ meet that train—she may have a score aboard her—

“Yes.” The glow was suddenly warm, definite in Mr. Curnow’s blood. “A red light”. . . . He thought hard a crowded moment. “Go back to your house and borrow Miss Curnow’s red shawl for me,” he directed Stanistreet. “Bring it to me here—you want another drink: any excuse that occurs to you —*now*. *I’ll* warn the train. . . .”

He turned to Bracken. “Go in and have a drink with Steve Hart and, if possible, Dan Kelly, both together. Hold them in talk as long as you can.”

“But—”

“Do as I say. There’s not a moment to be lost or wasted in talk.”

“Very well, Mr. Curnow.” The two officials were suddenly respectful as the one went into the hotel, the other across the street.

Mr. Curnow found his buggy, slipped the offside lamp out of its bracket, shook it to test the amount of oil in it, and put it under his arm. He stood far back in the shadow of the stable, until Stanistreet brought him the shawl.

“Be on your guard, Mr. Curnow, crossing the yard and on the line. It’s bright moonlight an’ any one of ’em’ll shoot you down—”

“It’s a risk I must take,” the schoolmaster interrupted him crisply. “Have a care for Miss Curnow when these ruffians find I’m gone—if they do.”

“I will that, Mr. Curnow. Good luck.”

Mr. Curnow nodded, tucked the shawl under the other arm, and sprinted out into the moonlit yard. His heart in his mouth Stanistreet watched the small determined figure climb over the fence, vanish, appear again toiling up the steep embankment with its double burden, stand, a perfect target against the moonlit sky, on the permanent way—at last vanish again. Every moment of that run was certain death—and Mr. Curnow, the dry stick of a schoolmaster! Who’d have thought it. . . . but thank God for brave men, however they come—Stanistreet the stationmaster turned and crossed the moonlit road to the tune of Ned Kelly’s bellowing voice. If only Curnow could catch that train in time. . . .

CHAPTER XIV

MR. CURNOW was relieved to find that he was still not afraid. The glow in his blood had become a deep throb, driving him on. It had to be a rapid business; speed was the main essential, of course. Mary was wrong when she said the trap and old Dobbin were better than your two legs when you were in a hurry. Poor Mary! But she and Minnie—

Was that a faint sound? A whistle in the distance?

He pressed forward. By making an ungainly sort of jumping stride from tie to tie one could make a good pace on the permanent way. The possibility of confederates of the Kelly's lurking in the undergrowth beside the line had to be considered, naturally; but it was astonishing how relatively unimportant all the dangers became if you kept the central idea in mind. He knew that he was storing something now for his memory, something that would last him all his life; he knew that he was for this one time on adventure, that the monotony of life was broken for this one radiant hour, before the grey hours closed in again; but only his subconscious mind was concerned with that. This job was to signal this train, to leap grotesquely from sleeper to sleeper until he met the train. And stopped it.

He came to the gap, the cut in the line, stared in horror at the ruin which could cost so many lives, and skirted it in haste. That distant whistle again, and nearer now. . . . The sleepers again forward, forward. The moon was bright, but clouds were racing over the sky. He paused to light the lamp, to wrap Minnie's red shawl round it. Forward, forward—a bell was clanging in his ears. He held the red danger light aloft, stood still in the permanent way, in the path of the engine. He waved his danger signal frantically.

"Stop! Stop!" he cried. "Danger—danger! . . ."

The driver saw the little figure on the line and his waving light, pulled his heavy engine to "slow," to "stop."

"What's the rumpus?" he asked the little figure. "I'd 'a run ye down if it 'adn't bin for the moon an' yer bit of a light—"

“I know,” Mr. Curnow broke in briskly. “The line’s cut and the Kelly gang—this *is* the police train, isn’t it?”

“It is. Line’s cut, ye say?” The driver’s face was suddenly white under its grime. “My Gawd, sir—”

“Yes,” Mr. Curnow broke in again. “The officer in authority—”

“Bill,” the engine-driver turned to his open-mouthed fireman, “slip back an’ tell Superintendent ’Are about this gentleman—”

“I’ll come with you.” Mr. Curnow tucked his lamp and the shawl carefully under his arm, and strode down the train with the fireman to make his report to Superintendent Hare of the Melbourne Metropolitan Police.

A slow bell was chiming, tolling in Ned Kelly’s brain. Glad to go, seemed to be its tune. Glad to go. . . . Maybe it was a faint far-off echo, or maybe just a tune. Ned didn’t know and didn’t care. It was soothing, in a way, to listen to, as if it was a sort of lullaby and you were a kid again. He’d had a lot to drink but he wouldn’t have any more now. Just sit and look at the old man and his broken pipe on the floor. A point came when you were sick of drink and there wasn’t any more fun in it for you. Too much drink was never any good . . . . Glad to go—there was that old tune again. Or was it old?

Ned lifted his head. There was a good deal of row going on in the place—why didn’t that damned woman stop staring at him?—but his bushman’s super-sensitive ears. . . . Yes, there *was* a sound, a new sound, out beyond the verandah there.

What was that—a sharp clicking, as if—

Ned started to his feet as the crash of the point-blank volley tore the night asunder. “Dan! Joe!” he roared. “They’re on us! They’ve dodged the gap somehow! Quick! At the back here!”

For a stunned moment the room was stilled. “Mother of God, pray for us sinners,” came softly to break the silence—one of the women praying in the corner beyond the bar. Mrs. Jones looked round the room, at her boy half-asleep, at the white faces of the huddled women where the murmured prayer was sounding, and at Ned striding across the room to the startled Dan and Joe Byrne—

“Ye swine!” she screamed at Ned. “Ye devil! Ye brought all this on me house an’ there’ll be murder done an’ some’ll die in their blood—And you!”

she shrieked, pointing a trembling finger at Dan and then at Joe, "*you* will be some of them! Because this great—" she winced and mouthed, "because this great criminal thought 'e'd like to make a shambles of a decent woman's house—"

"Put out all the lights," Ned told her very quietly. "We'll save what we can, if they'll let us—the women, at least. Over here, Dan—bring the rifles. And you there, Joe, at that window." He turned again to Mrs. Jones. "All lights out," he said.

"Ye cur!" Her voice was heavy with scorn. "I'll put the lights out for yer murderin'—"

"Let be, mother, let be," he told her gently. "It isn't me ye should be cursin'; it's them out there."

Another volley crashed in the yard outside; bullets went tock-tock on the wooden walls of the room; a woman moaned as a picture fell with a crash to the floor. Swiftly the lights went out one by one; the terror was all in darkness now.

From his angle at the window Ned could see in the moonlit yard a line of police drawn up, not twenty yards from the verandah—six, seven, eight, nine of them. . . . They were re-loading. . . . He took one long and careful shot at the leader, fired, and saw him drop his rifle and clutch wildly a broken wrist.

Ned licked his lips and smiled. So much for Mr. Damned Superintendent. And there'd be more for him, too—you could do a lot when you were in the dark and they were out in the bright moonlight.

Steve Hart touched his elbow. "Good," Ned said. "You got over, then. By the door, Steve—push it a mite open—ye'll get a good sight from there."

Steve crept over to the door with his rifle.

But the police had retreated into the shadow behind the moonlight. Two of them were—it looked as if winging their boss wasn't so clever; shadows were shifting in all directions, some into cover, some swiftly across the yard far back, some behind the stables. . . .

Ned peered out into this moving moonlight and shadow, fired into what he thought might be a clump of police, heard Dan's fire, and Steve's, and Joe's. And knew that not one bullet found a mark. There *were* no marks—only shadows and moving bits of moonlight. They could stand and stare out here all night. For nothing.

The lullaby bell seemed to toll once more in his brain. Glad to go. . . .

A sudden sharp burst of firing in the yard—gun-flashes in all directions. They must have got reinforcements from somewhere. But each man would shift his position the moment he fired; Ned fired at where the flashes had been, and Dan and Joe and Steve, but they all knew it wasn't any good. None of it was any good. . . .

Suddenly the quiet that the first volley had shocked into being in his mind vanished; the long day's drinking surged up again in a monstrous anger. He fired shot after shot into anything, into nothing—what did it matter so long as he could hear the roar of his gun, feel the kick in his shoulder, know that if there *was* a mark at the end the mark would be dead. Dead, dead—a dozen times dead. . . .

A sharp stabbing pain burned into his arm. He laughed—what the hell did *he* care? He reloaded, pumped the useless bullets into the shadows and the moonlight, and laughed again.

And Dan laughed with him, and the new babies grinned at him. And that shapeless dream. . . .

But his heart was black with anger; he must pull up this pub by the roots. It wasn't big enough to hold him. And the night was going hour by hour, and there was nothing done; you kept on pumping lead into nothing and they wounded you in the arm and shoulder, and still there was nothing done. . . .

He'd slip back, get a bandage on the wounds, and get into his armour.

"Cease fire!"

Steve Hart heard the curt order from his niche beside the door on the verandah. What now—were they going to get a chance?

"We'll surround the house, men. There are enough of us now with the Benalla men; and the Wangaratta contingent'll be here any minute. Take up commanding positions in open order. Fire at windows and openings when I give the order. There'll be forty or fifty police here before long—we can't fail to take this gang at last. Hold all positions until daybreak."

Thus the officer in command, very official and businesslike with his force of half a hundred to capture four bottled up in a wooden house.

They were not going to get a chance, Steve realised; not a ghost of a chance. He glanced back into the darkened room, where the pallid moonlight

was making it just possible to see.

Where was Ned? Got another peephole, maybe. He beckoned Joe, whispered the new police order to him.

Joe snarled. “All right, damn ’em. They’ll get a run, never fear. Come and have a shot o’ rum.”

“No. Where’s Ned?”

“Dunno. On the job, though, I’ll bet.” Joe’s wild eyes flickered over Steve’s face in the livid twilight of the room. “Come and have that shot o’ rum, Steve,” he half-pleaded.

“I tell ye I won’t,” Steve snapped. “I’m sick o’ rum. Where the hell’s Ned got to? Go an’ ’ave it on yer own, Joe.”

The woman burst into her wailing prayer in the darkness. “Holy Mary, Mother o’ God. . . .” and subsided to a dreary weeping.

At the bar Joe found young Delaney, so he didn’t have to have it on his own, after all. “Two shots o’ rum, missus,” he said to Mrs. Jones, who turned in silence to fumble for the square bottle.

The crash of a heavy volley tore into the livid room. Delaney, looking at Joe’s face, saw it abruptly slip out of focus, as it were; his eyes were spent, dazed, full of a wild pain; suddenly he stood on his toes, his back bent like a bow; and as suddenly crumpled to the floor at Delaney’s feet, pawing feebly, stupidly, at his hip.

“Christ!” Delaney stared down at Joe. “Here—hold up! You aren’t—”

“Catch ’old of ’is arms,” Steve’s voice was curt as he took what was left of Joe by the knees, “No, under the shoulders, damn ye! Gawd,” he looked at Joe’s greying face, “I wish I’d ’ad that rum with ’im! ’Ere, be’ind the bar—’ow are ye, Joe, m’lad?”

“Dying. . . . Ned’s pigheaded, Steve—you only get a run: the coppers have got the drop on ye all the time. . . But ye needn’t walk into their arms, need ye. . . .”

Steve bent lower to catch the dry failing voice.

Big Joe pushed himself up on his elbow, lifted his other arm above his head, shook the clenched fist to heaven. “God’s curse on ’em!” His voice was round and full now. “They’ll always have the drop on us, and they’ll never know, the fools, where the rights of it are . . . . What’s the difference between them murderin’ me and me murderin’ ’em? Fools, fools . . . .” His

voice faded again. “We had a good busy time of it—for a couple o’ years, didn’t we, Steve—kept ’em goin’ all the time . . . .”

His wavering smile was full of bitter everlasting scorn. “The bloody fools. . . .”

A gasp; Joe’s head fell back into Steve’s arm as death took possession. Steve laid the head gently back on the floor, sighed, and stood up.

“I’ll have that rum now,” he said tonelessly to Mrs. Jones, who was staring open mouthed at the shell of Joe. “The one I missed ’avin wi’ me mate. ’E’s dead.”

“I know.” She looked down at the young body another moment. “I know,” she whispered again. “And that’s not the end for us. . . .” She turned for the square bottle again as the firing outside began to snap and crackle.

This was not so heavy but was more continuous now. The windows were long since broken, but occasional shots picked off the still-adhering jagged edges of glass, making sudden small crashes. The women huddled in their corner prayed steadily now in a subdued murmur. Old Martin Cherry was still sitting dazed in his chair; young Jack Jones was awake, glaring wildly round the room. He started up nervously, began to walk over to his mother, crossed the line of the window, was suddenly still in the middle of the room, looking vaguely over at his mother’s face. He screamed, clawed at his throat, fumbled in a crumpled heap to the floor. Blood poured from his mouth on to the carpet. Mrs. Jones moaned once, was across the room and gathering the small body in her arms, was glaring tragically at the window. No words, no ready curses came to her aid now; there wasn’t anything now, save this little body and the poor fires of implacable hate. Presently a faint croon sounded in her throat as she rocked the body to and fro. The night was dawn—who knew? The next bullet might find what was left of her own heart. . . . And that would straighten everything out.

Old Martin Cherry got up out of his chair at last, stood a moment before he stumbled forward, spun round, and dropped to the floor. He patted the carpet feebly beside his broken pipe a moment, and was still. . . .

There was nothing at all now, save the sound of desultory firing and the steady murmur of the prayers in the corner.

At daybreak the police force drawn up at the rear of the hotel slipped suddenly, one by one, into what cover it could find. An extraordinary figure

walked coolly across the yard—what looked like a nail-drum on its head, heavy flapping clothes—

"It's Ned Kelly!" a trooper cried out.

The figure laughed and fired his revolver in the trooper's direction. "Yes, it's Ned," he said sombrely.

The whole force turned and fired at the grotesque figure. Ned staggered, but marched steadily, heavily on. "Ye can't do it, bully-boys," he taunted them. "I'm in me armour. Fire away; the bullets'll only bounce back."

This was true. He had some sort of iron armour on, and the bullets had no effect.

Presently Sergeant Steele stepped out of cover and fired twice into Ned's leg.

Clanking, Ned fell. His savage voice roared out of the nail-drum. "Done for, damn ye! I'm done for. . . . At last ye've got me, ye swine!"

Stripped of his armour, sorely wounded in five places, he was carried, silent now and spent, to the station and Doctor Hutchinson.

It was very quiet. Two troopers, two journalists taking notes, the stretcher with Ned's weary face at its head. The curtain was down.

"I c'd 'ave got away," he muttered. "Ye're not so blasted clever. I did get away, out of the pub and into the bush—ye're not so blasted clever. I c'd 'ave got away fer good but. . . ." Ned paused a long silent moment and sighed, almost as if he were at rest. "I—I wanted to see it end. I was in the bush most o' the night—I c'd be fifty mile away be now. But I come back—to see it end. . . ." He sighed again and smiled at the reporters and the doctor. "Well, it *'as* ended. . . ."

Evening was thickening the sky behind the Glenrowan Hotel, or behind the blazing ruin that had been the hotel. Civilians had all been ordered out hours ago, and to bring the dead; the fire had started, leapt high in glee, had made a blazing banner against this sky. And soon little sullen flames were licking the ground beside the glowing embers and charred fragments of the house. In these ruins two score police were seeking two corpses, now that the flames had died down.

These they found presently. Not corpses, but skeletons, the flesh being burned away from the bones. The skeletons of Stephen Hart and young Daniel Kelly.

CHAPTER XV

"I THINK, my dear," Mr. Dunsany looked up from the letter in his hand. "I think we shall be having a visitor. He will probably arrive during this afternoon."

"He, Bruce?" Mrs. Dunsany, though occupied with the far more important matter of coffee-pouring, was conscious of her duty as a wife. Her voice held just the right amount of interest due to a remark from her husband.

"Yes, my love." Mr. Dunsany's voice was almost roguish, his smile almost arch. "He—a young man whom I am sure you and—er—the family will be pleased to welcome."

Something was suddenly there in the room. Something intangible, and yet as real as the big silver coffee pot in his wife's hands. It was between Mr. Dunsany and the other people gathered around the table, making him feel a stranger in his own breakfast-room; making him uneasy in his rôle of bantering good-fellowship. He cleared his throat and tried again.

"In fact, my love, our friend—our mutual friend—Mr. Jarvis Lorne, will probably arrive in Melbourne to-day. And as he himself expresses it, 'will give himself the happiness' of calling upon Mrs. Dunsany and—er—the young ladies."

Overacting in this strained silence, he gave a sidelong smile at Sophia that was positively a leer. The intangible something in the air grew stronger, more vibrant. It enveloped Mrs. Dunsany, changing her from a pleasant, dutiful wife, to a vigilant stranger whose cold eyes were on guard against a menacing world.

Why? In heaven's name why? Mr. Dunsany's bewildered mind demanded. What has young Lorne done that the mention of his visit should cause this—this tomfoolery? They were ready enough to go to stay with him at "Yellowfields," and to have him here, too, until now. Or was he mistaken—was this female nonsense nothing to do with young Lorne? He glanced again at his wife and then at the girls. Marjorie and Agnes were looking like demure kittens, though it was doubtful if they knew what it was all about;

for this business in some extraordinary way seemed only to concern Sophia and her mother. Sophia often played the fool, of course, but her fooleries were less baffling than her mother's, as a rule. Now, for the first time that he could remember, his appealing glance brought no answering glance from Sophia, no smile, warm and companionable, even though it held a laughing mockery.

Sitting there like a damned picture on the wall! thundered Mr. Dunsany in his troubled mind.

"Marjorie, my dear, a room must be prepared. Please attend to it this morning. Your cousin may be spending the night with us."

"May be—of course he will! Stay a week at least. Remember what your mother has said about the room, Marjorie."

This was better. A man was on safe ground giving orders in his own house.

Breakfast was over, thank heaven, and now he could go to the office; to his man's world where there were no inexplicable silences and general tomfooleries to make a man unsure of himself.

"What do you suppose has happened?" Marjorie's duster flicked over the already speckless furniture. "Do you think Jarvis has said anything—written anything, I mean?"

"I think he must have. As soon as she heard his name Sophia sort of went inside and pulled down the blinds." Agnes giggled at her own joke. "And Mama! It was easy to see that she was guarding her chick with both wings spread out, like a—a bird!" The giggle became a subdued hoot of laughter; she had almost said "a hen" and, really, that did sound too disrespectful! Poor Mama!

"And yet, why should they?"—the duster hung limp in Marjorie's hand. "I'm sure Sophia cares for him; and as for Mama, she has wanted it to happen for years!"

"My dear, don't you see—that was all right while it was only in their minds, hers and Papa's, while it was only their plan for their daughter's future. Now it's in his mind—if it is—it has become a sort of threat, something she must guard Sophia against." Agnes loved to argue, to work things out in her mind; Mama said it was a regrettable habit which must be controlled; that there was nothing gentlemen disliked more in a woman. Of course, Mama must be right, but—oh well, bother gentlemen! She could leave all that to Sophia and Marjorie for a long while yet. "Perhaps," she

went on, “perhaps she has said something to Mama, about caring, I mean. If she has said she cares for him, then, of course, Jarvis would become a sort of enemy in Mama’s mind.”

“Hadn’t you better attend to some of your duties, Agnes?” Marjorie, remembering that she was the elder, tried to look like Mama. Really, Agnes was putting on airs, talking about things she didn’t understand; she had the most absurd ideas and talked altogether too much, she should not be encouraged. Sometimes the child confided in her the most ridiculous things about wanting to do something interesting with her life, and wishing that she could be a lawyer like Papa. Marjorie gave an elegant little shudder and succeeded in looking very like Mama.

In the sewing room Sophia was reading one of the more serious periodicals, Mrs. Dunsany noted, that Papa subscribed to but seldom read. At her patient sigh Sophia looked up.

“I’m sorry, Mama, have I been rude? Did you speak?”

“No, my dear, I didn’t speak. I was just thinking.” Answering the question in Sophia’s eyes, she continued, “I was thinking how people—or rather, human nature, changes.”

“Oh, Mama,” Sophia laughed softly, “and that thought made you sigh? Are you turning cynic?”

Mrs. Dunsany was plaintive now. “I was remembering how we girls used to enjoy our mornings in the sewing room with Mama. We were so merry, with our small jokes and our confidences—I’m sure the old-fashioned ways were best. You modern girls with your reading and—and independence—I can’t understand you!”

“Poor Mama, I’m sorry! But comfort yourself with the thought that in another thirty years or so I’ll be telling girls how much better my ways were than theirs are! I’ll belong to the old-fashioned days then.”

Mrs. Dunsany stitched busily for a few minutes.

“Sophia.”

“Yes, Mama?”

“Will you be going out this afternoon?”

“Why—I don’t—yes, I think I will, Mama.”

“I think you should visit your friend Alice; her mother is not at all well, I hear. It is a pity they live so far away, but you can take Marjorie, and old

John can drive you; I shall not be needing him."

"Thank you, Mama, dear."

Mrs. Dunsany stitched on and presently Sophia returned to her reading; but her eyes travelled slowly down the page, and sometimes they were raised to re-read a paragraph as though she found it difficult to keep her mind from straying.

Presently her mother put away her sewing and left the room.

Sophia stopped reading.

Poor Mama. Were the mornings in that other sewing room, in another land, always so happy, so full of laughter and pretty confidences? Did no foolish girl ever read because she was afraid to think; and fail to read because of a face that seemed to look at her from the printed page? Did no frightened girl turn pale because of the voice of her own heart; a voice that said, "You were so sure that you wanted nothing but a friendship filled with laughter and argument and a stream of words, so scornful of parents who hoped for other things! Perhaps that is all he will ever want now—from you. Perhaps he will go to some other girl for tenderness and foolish, whispered words; for the dear hum-drum of years lived together."

She went to the window and looked down into the street. . . . Listen, she told herself, if all Jarvis wants from you is a comrade, a good friend, then a friend you are going to be, my lass, even if it means going to Yellowfields as an old maid, to visit his wife and keep an eye on the children! And now go and dress for your visit to Alice, so that you can put off seeing him for another few hours!

It being late when she returned she was able to go straight upstairs to dress, so that she didn't see him until they were all going in to dinner. The evening was full of talk; of other voices, other faces. A large gentleman, a colleague of Papa's, was holding forth on the subject of Ned Kelly. He was very large and had begun the evening a rich shade of pink; since dinner he had become a deep purple, which, as he talked, threatened to become black round the edges.

This man Kelly, of course, was in prison, where he should have been years ago; he was, very properly, under sentence of death, a fate he richly deserved. And yet there were people so crassly stupid, so wantonly, criminally sentimental (yes, the edges were distinctly black), that they were signing petitions, parading the streets, giving addresses in and out of public buildings, in an effort to obtain a reprieve! A reprieve for one of the worst,

the most hardened and shameless murderers in history! Such people, stormed the large gentleman, who by now was a study in royal mourning, were unworthy of the honour and privilege of living beneath the British Flag! They should be packed off to some lawless foreign country where dastardly villains like Ned Kelly did as they pleased and went unpunished. That, said the almost bursting gentleman, would teach them!

The roar subsided, leaving a roomful of overfed people sitting in stunned silence. Several other largish gentlemen swayed their heads in approval. That was all they could manage.

Sophia looked at Jarvis standing a little in the shadows, his head thrown back and on his face such scorn and contempt that her heart leaped. In a moment someone else had seen it. The large gentleman, blinking into the half-shadows, seemed to doubt his senses. At last a roar began again.

"I take it, sir, judging by your expression, that you are not entirely in accord with the sentiments I have just expressed. Am I—er—correct in my supposition?"

Roughly twenty pairs of eyes turned to Jarvis, who stepped forward into the full light.

"You are entirely correct, sir."

"And in what particular, might I ask, do you—er—disagree with me?"

"In no particular, sir. In everything that you have said concerning the unfortunate man Kelly, and the situation generally."

"This is inconceivable," gobbled the large gentleman; but Jarvis went on: "If you had a piece of ground and ploughed it and fertilized it and planted it with corn, what would you expect to reap? Corn, of course. We have had this country, sir, to sow as we would. And what we have done is fertilize it with blood—the blood of haunted, tortured, fellow-creatures. We have sown tyranny and cruelty and have expected to reap corn! Instead, we are reaping hatred and defiance, and, in my opinion, it serves us right!"

There was a moment's silence, broken by the large gentleman.

"Good Gad! This is treason! This is preposterous! Dunsany, what have you to say to this—this outrage committed in your own house?"

Mr. Dunsany joined the little group standing under the lights. His face was rather white and strained but his voice was quite firm.

“Gentlemen,” he said quietly, “for some years I have given this matter a great deal of very painful consideration. I have listened to my nephew’s opinions, in the beginning with contempt, I admit. But my own reason, my own sense of right and wrong, has forced me to change my opinion; I agree, with Mr. Lorne, gentlemen, in all he has just said.”

“Papa!” It was softly spoken, but Mr. Dunsany heard it—saw the look of pride and love shining on his daughter’s face and felt the glow of youth touch his spirit. Jarvis Lorne heard it, too, and all anger and strain left him, for here in Sophia was all he wanted from life, shining in her brave eyes and proud face. He took a step towards her . . .

CHAPTER XVI

STANDING here in this dock, with all this bowing and scraping and going on, the mystery was thicker than ever. Ned supposed that if you couldn't get a line on it while it was going on, while it was all happening round you, you hadn't much chance when you came to this sort of end. Not what the chaplains called this sort of an end; many a good man had found himself here; but all the fuss and feathers, and this big cove rolling his voice, and McIntyre in the witness-box telling them for the twentieth time that he Ned, had murdered Lonigan and Scanlan at Stringy Bark Creek on the evening of October 26th, 1879, giving them the length and depth and width and colour of it all until Ned, for one, was sick of it. Why didn't they try the age of it, say, for a change?

Of course he'd murdered Lonigan and Scanlan—everyone in the Colony knew that. And who denied it? Kennedy's ghost?

That wasn't the point. . . .

Ned sighed. What *was* this point? The point had slipped beyond him once again.

This was the Melbourne Criminal Court. All mahogany and ushers and wigs and the beak sitting up there in his robes and all those women staring at Ned from the gallery.

They thought he was a killer. That was what they were staring at. Damned fools. *He* wasn't a killer—he *knew* he wasn't, no matter what the evidence said. You got shoved out of your course by your feelings, and before you knew where you were. . . .

Once more the point slipped away.

But it didn't matter. They'd go on with all this flummery for a bit, and in the end they'd hang him.

All right. He wasn't afraid of that. He'd tell this beak so, if he got a chance.

And when it came to murders, work it out. They had the drop on him for two; well, what about that old cove Martin Cherry and the kid Jones at Glenrowan—who murdered them? About fifty coppers was the answer. You couldn't work it out. Maybe it wasn't worth trying to.

"And you were boiling a billy of tea at the time?"

That was Mr. Bindon. He was a smooth one. He'd had this copper McIntyre squirming in the witness-box once or twice. McIntyre was never sure what he was getting at. But it wasn't any good; you couldn't shake this Scotch copper—

"Yes."

"That was part of your duty in patrolling wild and broken country for a band of reputedly armed and dangerous outlaws?"

"Of course it was. We were camping—"

" 'Yes' or 'No' are the answers I require. Your opinions or urgent desire, to, shall I say, tell us a tale only waste the Court's time, which is valuable. Was it also part of your duty to have your arms hanging up inside a tent instead of on your person on this presumably dangerous patrol?"

"It wasn't a regular patrol—"

"You're trying it again." Mr. Bindon shook his head sadly. "Whatever your personal contempt for the Court's time I assure you it *is* valuable. 'Yes' or 'No,' if I may remind you."

"No."

"Then why did you do it?" Mr. Bindon's voice was a trumpet of indignation. "Is it a fact that as a guardian of the public peace, at the public expense, you think so little of your charge that you leave your arms lying about the camp while you fool about making yourself a cup of tea—"

"I don't think, Mr. Bindon," the beak interposed mildly, "that any good purpose is served by this close method of cross examination—"

"I stand corrected, m'lud." Mr. Bindon bowed. "This witness virtually had my client's life in his hands, and his reliability or otherwise should be established for the Court's guidance and protection." Mr. Bindon bowed deferentially again, and immediately plunged once more into the same method.

"And these parrots—is a strict attention to duty exemplified by an officer wandering off to shoot parrots when he is left in charge of the police camp?"

“No,” Constable McIntyre replied stolidly.

“I am inclined to agree with you. And furthermore, this defection from duty, the firing of two shots—at parrots—was a highly dangerous thing to do, was it not?”

“Yes, as it turned out.”

Mr. Bindon paused to straighten his glasses. “ ‘Yes’ or ‘No’?” he prompted gently.

“Yes.”

“Thank you. The firing of those two shots did, in effect, cost this Colony three valuable lives—three, at that juncture, most important lives, did it not?”

“Yes, in effect.”

Mr. Bindon straightened his glasses again, glared balefully over them at the witness, but decided to let it pass this time.

“Very well, then. Now we come to. . . .”

No, they didn’t. They didn’t come to anything. It was all only part of the flummery and wasn’t meant to come to anything; its job was only to make the point slipperier than ever to catch hold of. And McIntyre was just as hard as Mr. Bindon in his way; he’d keep on tacking bits on to his yeses and noes all day, with his face like a wooden idol’s, until he tired the big cove out, instead of being tired out himself. He was just the same at Beechworth, you couldn’t shake him.

Beechworth. Yes. . . . An abrupt vision of the camp in the big timber swept between his eyes and the Court. Quiet and big and calm, for all the little coppers and their antics down below.

And the Beechworth Court—that was a silly sort of a go.

One cell was much the same as another, of course—you couldn’t tell any difference, after a bit—and there was some sense in shoving a cove in chokee if he was liable to lift your horses or duff your cattle. If you could catch him. But at Glenrowan he was wounded five times, and they carted him off to the Melbourne gaol hospital to be patched up; when he *was* patched up they carted him back to Beechworth for his trial; when he was tried and committed, they carted him back to Melbourne here for his Criminal Court trial; and when it was all over, they’d patched him up, got

first-class doctors and nursing for him, to hang him! *You* couldn't make any sense out of that.

And yet there was something behind it all, if you could only get at it. Or was there?

Harry used to say they were not riding for a fall; that nobody was; that the Archbishop of Canterbury was the same as any bully-boy. But some coves did have to ride for a fall; there wasn't anything but a fall *for* them. . . . what was he to do—stand by and say "Thank'ee, sir" to Fitzpatrick for shenaniging around Kate and shoving Mother into Quod? And if he did that, wasn't it the same as any other fall he was riding for?

He'd choose his own fall, thank'ee—any cove would have chosen the fall *he* chose. If it brought him here—well, here was the place it brought him to.

The point was. . . . But the point, which had seemed to be under his hand, had vanished again. He sighed. You couldn't do anything with it.

Here was this Court again, the wigs and the mutterings, those staring women—what would they all do if he stood up and told them that once he'd had a sort of dream after Dad died, a dream that mightn't have needed any mystery or flummery? A dream where the bully-boys were working instead of hiding, happy instead of starving and haunted—

No. He wouldn't tell them that. He'd never tell anyone that, to be laughed at and called a liar. No. That was his own. He'd die with that his own.

Let them see if they could find any place in all this mess of evidence where the gang had been rough with women, or with any poor men—that was a little bit of the dream. But no one would look for that—why should they? What they saw was a criminal, a murderer to be hunted, starved out, caught for all this flummery and the drop at the end—would these hungry-eyed women or that dry beak be looking for dreams?

Ned sighed again. It was a poor show, all this, and he was sick of it—Dan and Joe and Steve had the best of it—to go out on the jump, glad to go—

That was an echo. Glad to go. . . . That old tune that was always cropping up, since Mother's house at Greta and Kate and Fitzpatrick—a thought stormed into his weary mind—

That wouldn't be the point, would it? Some coves, well, there wasn't much of any place for them in a way. And so—well, they were glad to go.

It could be a good part of the point, that it could, when you started to work it out. . . . The jury were filing out now. Well, this bit of a verdict wouldn't take them long.

Nor did it.

"Have you considered your verdict gentlemen of the jury?"

"We have. . . ."

"And that verdict is?"

"Guilty of wilful murder . . . ."

A stir of little gasping, half-chuckling sounds from the women in the gallery; the rustling on the floor of the court, the sudden shifting of papers on the tables, the sudden turning of all heads to stare at the doomed prisoner—all these proclaimed that a verdict of guilty had just been pronounced in that Court. A flurry of animation stirred at the press-table, among the hardened ushers and police officers, at the solicitors' table, by the doorway—the very dust rose up with fresh vigour at the words "Wilful murder."

The only part of the Court that was apparently unmoved was the prisoner. At the sound of the judge's voice he turned his tired impassive face towards the bench.

"Edward Kelly, the jury's verdict is guilty of wilful murder. Have you anything to say before I pass the sentence upon you?"

"It's too late for me to speak now." The sound of the doomed prisoner's voice made another little flurry in the court. The prisoner watched the women's craning heads a moment, his hands idly shifting to and fro on the ledge of the dock. "It—it's not that I fear death; I fear it as little as the drinkin' of a cup o' tea." He looked down at his hands, and up at the judge again. "But—well, it's too late now."

"The verdict," the judge's patient voice was slightly puzzled, "is one that you must have fully expected."

"Yes. Under the—the circumstances."

"The circumstances were all exhaustively and fairly demonstrated in your trial." The judge was still puzzled.

“Yes.” It was a tough job trying to get this out; and it wasn’t any good, anyhow. “But—well, I b’lieve I could ’a’ cleared, well, some o’ me character. . . .”

The judge waited patiently.

“The day’ll come,” the prisoner was apparently speaking to himself, “and in a bigger court than this, when we’ll see which is right, an’ which is wrong. No matter how long a man lives,” this doomed prisoner was surely speaking only to himself, “ ’e comes to judgment somewhere.” The prisoner lifted his head and stared round the Court, at the judge, the ushers and the lawyers, the breathless women—even the dust seemed to get its share of his defiance, his scorn. “And as well here as anywhere,” he told them lightly.

He looked easily, carelessly, at the flummery of the black cap. Quite impassively he listened to the solemn words.

“. . . . to be hanged by the neck until you are dead. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul!”

“I’ll go further than that.” Horrified, the Court turned to this appalling prisoner. Such a—a sacrifice had never—“I’ll see *you* there,” he was speaking to the judge!—“where I go.” He paused, and spoke again in a low voice to himself. “Where I’m—glad to go. . . .”

And now it was all quiet. All he had to do was wait. The chaplains seemed to think that was a tough job; but it wasn’t, not nearly so tough as they thought it was. Much the same as waiting in the scrub with Harry Power and trying to keep your horse silent.

Mother and Kate and the others came in, and Mother said “Mind ye die like a Kelly, Ned!” with a sort of smile in her wet eyes. Of course he’d die like a Kelly—he *was* a Kelly, wasn’t he?

The quiet and the waiting began again when they’d gone. It wasn’t any good trying to work anything out; it was too late, as he’d told the beak; and it got a bit dreary at times and a bit on your nerves. The irons were heavy to lug about, too, what little lugging about they let you do.

They brought him all the talk about a reprieve, and thousands of signatures, processions, and what-nots. But he was indifferent; he could have told them at the start that that was no good. He wouldn’t have wanted it to be any good, now that he’d got as far as this on the way. Who wanted a lifetime in chokee?

And at last the day came. They knocked off his irons and took him to the condemned cell, marched him with the governor, a sheriff and a warder from there to a platform.

He looked at the trap-door, the dangling noose of the rope.

“It’s come at last,” he murmured.

They put the hood down over his head; the rope was hard and cold against his throat; he walked on to the trap-door, which dropped from under his feet. The bottom fell out of the world.

THE END

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE STARK FACTS ABOUT THE KELLY GANG

From the thousands of columns published in city and country newspapers about Ned Kelly, his forebears, his parents, relations and associates, the stark facts about the Kelly clan have been here collated. Some of the newspapers from which the reports, telegraphic despatches, articles and interviews have been collected, have ceased publication: others are still behaving like a well-known brand of whisky. To mention every newspaper from which the extracts have been taken would be a superfluous job of work; for in the ’seventies, the journals copied from each other more freely than they do to-day. For instance, the first mention of the Kellys in a city newspaper was copied from a country newspaper—“The North-Eastern Ensign”—into the Melbourne “Argus” on 4th April, 1878, four days after the wounding of Constable Fitzpatrick. Many of the reports in the following pages have been condensed from columns into paragraphs; headings (never more than a single column in breadth) have been eliminated: but the compressed story, extending from the year 1878 to 1880 inclusive, now, the editor hopes, gives the correct atmosphere of the whole sorry business.

CAREER OF THE KELLYS

An opportune occasion presents itself for glancing at the principal events in the Kellys' career of crime. The police records show that the two Kellys, Ned and Dan, at any rate manifested their marked tendency to crime and lawlessness at a very early age. The record of their lives was a record of a constant succession of lawless acts carried out in most cases with such impunity and success that the criminals became emboldened, defied the authorities, and grew more and more reckless and daring in their exploits.

It is not generally known that there was another member of the notorious family who threatened to become scarcely less dangerous than Ned and Dan, had not the police of New South Wales put a check on his career almost at its outset. The individual in question, James Kelly, was the first to fall into the hands of the police. In 1871 James, who was quite a boy at the time, was arrested and taken to Beechworth, on two charges of cattle-stealing. The offences were proved, and the youthful cattle-stealer was convicted and sentenced to two years and six months' imprisonment on each charge. After his five years' imprisonment he was released at Beechworth, whence he appears to have gone to New South Wales. Resuming his career of crime, he soon fell into the hands of the police of New South Wales, was tried again, convicted and imprisoned in Deniliquin. James Kelly was, at the time of the Mansfield murders, said to be 22 years of age and two years older than Daniel Kelly, and at the time of the Mansfield murders was still in gaol at Deniliquin. In the same year which saw his brother James's committal for five years, Edward Kelly was brought up at Beechworth on the charge of receiving a stolen horse, knowing that it was stolen. Edward, who was 15 years of age, described himself as a labourer, was convicted on 2nd August, 1871, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. He was discharged in 1874. Three years later the youngest of the brothers, Daniel Kelly, was arrested on the charge of "wilful damage to property." Such is the charge on which he was proceeded against for the historical housebreaking adventure with his relatives the Lloyds, in the earlier part of 1877. On the 19th August of that year he was convicted at Benalla and sentenced to three months' imprisonment, while one of the Lloyds was sentenced to a similar term of imprisonment for a violent and indecent assault on a woman at the place thus broken into. In the early part of April, 1878, warrants were issued for the arrests of Daniel Kelly and John Lloyd on six separate charges of stealing horses from J. G. Farrell, James Farrell, James Whitty and Robert

Jeffrey. The warrants were issued on the 7th April, and the police were soon on the track of the thieves. The gang, however, were not to be so easily caught as on the occasion of their first ventures. They had already earned a reputation for their daring, and had inspired many of the residents of the district with a dread of them. They were but the leading movers among a nest of thieves. Their house had become noted as a meeting-place of criminals, and the extent to which they carried their crimes showed that they had numerous active confederates, beside their hosts of sympathisers. It was stated by those in the district who knew something of the doings of the gang that they stole horses wholesale from all parts of the district, and in some instances crossed the Murray to dispose of them, and it was found a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain evidence, to say nothing of arresting the gang, owing to their being surrounded by a perfect network of sympathisers, who frustrated the efforts of the police for a long time.

The biggest offenders were two brothers named Edward and Daniel Kelly, for the arrest of whom warrants were issued for various offences, the most serious being a murderous attack on Constable Fitzpatrick. The Kellys were well-known as notorious criminals. When their father died, the remaining family consisted of two brothers, their mother and four young sisters. Edward, at 22 years of age, was 5ft. 10in. high, medium build, with a fresh complexion, dark brown hair and hazel eyes; whilst Daniel, at 19 years of age, was 5ft. 6in. high, medium build, with a fair complexion and blue eyes. The former was arrested in 1870 on suspicion of being the mate of Power, the bushranger, but was discharged owing to the evidence of identification being insufficient. In February, 1874, he was discharged from Pentridge, after serving a term of three years' imprisonment for receiving a stolen horse. The younger brother was discharged from the Beechworth gaol in January, 1878, where he had been imprisoned for three months for wilful damage to property. They lived between Winton and Greta, on the Eleven-mile Creek, and their house formed a convenient rendezvous for criminals of all classes. Soon after the younger brother's discharge a warrant was issued for his arrest on a charge of horse-stealing, and Mounted-constable Fitzpatrick, of Benalla, proceeded to the Kellys' house to apprehend him. Finding him, he at once placed him under arrest, but unfortunately for himself consented to allow his prisoner to take supper before leaving. Whilst standing guard over him, the elder brother, Edward, rushed in and shot him in the left arm, two inches above the wrist. A struggle followed, and the two brothers, assisted by their mother, and two men named Williamson and Skillian, soon overpowered the constable and he was beaten to the ground insensible. On regaining consciousness, he was compelled by Edward Kelly

to extract the bullet from his arm with a knife so that it might not be used as evidence; and on promising to make no report against his assailants, he was allowed to depart. He had ridden away about a mile when he found that two horsemen were pursuing, but by spurring his horse into a gallop he escaped. On regaining safety he no longer considered the promise which he had made to the criminals as binding, but reported the affair to his superior officer. The result was that a number of policemen from the surrounding districts set out for the scene of the outrage, and arrested Mrs. Kelly, Williamson and Skillian. The brothers Kelly escaped. Vague reports as to their being seen in different parts of the north-eastern part of the colony were received, but the police for a long time could obtain no tangible trace of them.

What Might Have Been.

At the time that Edward Kelly accompanied Power on the trip that that desperado took via Malmsbury to Little River and back Superintendent Nicolson, who was then at Kyneton, saw Kelly, and was so taken with his appearance that he had a serious talk with the lad, and got him to listen favourably to a proposal to leave the bad company he was in and go to a station in New South Wales. Kelly had not then committed any offence, and seemed somewhat eager to go, but one of his relatives got hold of him, and took him back to Greta. The opportunity to save him from a career of crime upon which he subsequently entered was thus unhappily lost.

A Significant List.

October 14, 1878.

The Beechworth Assizes Court lasted four days, and there is one more case to be heard. It was the heaviest calendar for years. Mr. Justice Barry presided, and Mr. Chomley prosecuted for the Crown. The following sentences were passed: Emile Villars, horse-stealing, Beechworth, three years' imprisonment; William Williamson, William Skillian and Ellen Kelly, aiding and abetting in an attempt to murder Constable Fitzpatrick at Greta. The two firstnamed six years, and the woman three years; Rowan Lochhead pleaded guilty to embezzling moneys from the Wodonga Building Society, and was sentenced to imprisonment for 2½ years. . . . W. G. Baumgarten and Samuel Kennedy, horse-stealing at Moyhu. This case excited great interest, as twice the jury had disagreed. The prisoners were now found guilty, Baumgarten was sentenced to four years and Kennedy sentenced to six years. . . . (*See summary dated August 10, 1880.*)

A Contemporary Portrait.

(*From the "Benalla Ensign," November 1, 1878.*)

. . . This criminal (Kelly) appears to be a man of a most vindictive and bloodthirsty character. His threats of murder have been so numerous that it would be hard to recount them. When crossed by the officers of justice, or by anyone, in fact, it was his invariable custom to threaten what in bushranging parlance is called "colonial law." He is said to have stated before the late Beechworth Assizes that he would wait to see if his mother was convicted. If she were not, he would give himself up to answer the charge of horse-stealing preferred against him, whilst if she were, he would shoot every man concerned in bringing about the conviction. Mrs. Kelly was convicted, and Kelly appears to be taking his revenge on the force. . . .

Power's Cave.

The police have heard privately that the Kellys, for whom they had been looking for months past, were in the ranges at the head of the King River.

CHAPTER II.

BUSHRANGING IN VICTORIA

Two Constables Shot and a Sergeant Missing.

October 28, 1878.

A terrible encounter, almost without parallel in Victoria, has taken place near Mansfield between the police and four bushrangers. The particulars to hand are but meagre owing to intelligence having been received at Mansfield yesterday evening, but they are of such a character as to show that four most unscrupulous ruffians are at large in the colony, and that no effort must be spared to secure them immediately. . . .

It appears that Constables Lonigan and Scanlan have been shot dead by four bushrangers at Stringy Bark Creek, about twenty miles from here. Constable M'Intyre, who escaped, has just arrived with the intelligence. His horse was shot from under him. Sergeant Kennedy is also missing. Sub-inspector Pewtress, Dr. Reynolds, Collopy, and others left now on horseback to scour the country, and bring home the dead bodies. The bushrangers are supposed to be the notorious Kellys' party for whom the constables were in search.

For some months back the Government has been offering a reward of £100 for the capture of Edward Kelly on the charge of shooting Constable Fitzpatrick. If the Kellys are concerned in this Mansfield affair, as there seems little reason to doubt, they must now be in league with at least two other ruffians as desperate as themselves; and four such characters make a formidable gang of outlaws. Sergeant Kennedy, who is reported as missing, was stationed at Mansfield under Sub-inspector Pewtress. The two constables who have been shot were both efficient members of the force. Scanlan was well-known in Melbourne when stationed there, but that was a good many years ago. At one time he acted as orderly for the Victorian Chief Commissioner, and was subsequently told off for duty at the Theatre Royal.

Up to an early hour on this date Melbourne police authorities had received no intelligence of the affair, a circumstance which is perhaps to be accounted for by the probability that Sub-inspector Pewtress, of Mansfield, on learning of what had taken place from Constable M'Intyre, hastened off immediately to the scene of the encounter, and was unable for want of time to telegraph to Melbourne.

The Kelly family live at Greta, 50 miles from Mansfield, and the brothers were understood to be in concealment where Power once hid himself. . . . The ranges are infested with a brotherhood of Kellys, Lloyds, Quinns, &c. They occupy land amongst the hills, and ostensibly carry on the occupation of cattle-breeders.

"Wild" Wright Arrested.

October 30, 1878.

. . . It is pretty certain intelligence of the departure of the police was carried across to Kellys' headquarters. . . . Two friends of the Kellys came into the township of Benalla, viz., Isaiah (or Wild) Wright and his brother, a deaf and dumb man. Isaiah underwent imprisonment about a year ago for horse-stealing. He stated in the hotel bar that he meant to go out and join Kelly, and in somewhat bravo style warned one or two persons to stay in the township to-day unless they wanted to get shot. He said he believed Kelly would torture Kennedy, and he was only sorry for Scanlan. Though a good many of Wright's remarks only amounted to his customary bluster, yet the police thought it prudent to lock both brothers up. They were about the streets when the party started, and had their horses ready, so it was not improbable that one of them meant to ride straight off with news to Kelly. The arrest of "Wild" Wright was made so hurriedly that he had no time to resist. . . .

M'Intyre's Escape.

Mr. Tompkins, President of the Shire, and one of the members of the search party has just returned to Mansfield. . . . The short exploration made by the search party enabled them to say that M'Intyre's escape was miraculous, for he seems to have galloped recklessly down the creek. It is expected that his horse will be found. The wombat hole in which he hid was a mile from the place where he unsaddled the horse.

THE POLICE MURDERS

Finding of Sergeant Kennedy's Body.

Friday, November 1, 1878.

A general feeling of regret was expressed throughout when it became known that any hopes which had been entertained with regard to the safety of the missing Sergeant Kennedy had been dispelled by the discovery of the dead body of the unfortunate officer. It appears that the search party, consisting of sixteen volunteers and five constables, arrived at Stringy Bark Creek at half-past seven on Thursday morning, and renewed the search. Shortly afterwards, their labours were rewarded by one of the volunteers named Henry Sparrow, an overseer at the Mount Battery Station, finding Sergeant Kennedy's body within half a mile of the camp where Constables Scanlan and Lonigan received their death wounds. The body presented a frightful spectacle, and from the manner in which it had been mutilated was scarcely recognisable. The unfortunate sergeant had evidently attempted to escape from his murderers by the same track as that taken by Constable M'Intyre when he jumped upon Kennedy's horse and rode off, as bullet marks were visible on some of the trees in the line of the track. He had been shot through the side of the head, the bullet coming out in front, and carrying away part of the face, while several other bullet wounds were found on his body, one of which had penetrated the lungs. His jacket was singed as if a bullet had been forced into his body from very close quarters, probably after the unfortunate man had fallen. The remains were placed upon horseback, and conveyed into the township, where the excitement over the deeds of the outlaws appears to be increasing. Sergeant Kennedy was a vigilant officer and generally well liked, and much sympathy is expressed for his widow and five children, who, however, are believed to be in tolerably good circumstances.

THE MURDER OF SERGEANT KENNEDY.

In the course of this conversation (*between the prisoners at Faithfull's Creek Station and the Kellys, when the outlaws let them out of the store-room for a little fresh air and for a smoke*), the Kellys referred to the Mansfield murders. Ned Kelly said he was d—d sorry that Sergeant

Kennedy was shot; he had no intention of shooting him if he had surrendered. Kennedy fired five shots at them as he was escaping, some of which grazed Kelly's clothes, and one hit in the sleeve of the coat. Kennedy was making for a tree, and was partly sheltered when he was first hit in the eye. This caused him instinctively to move his arm up, and Kelly, thinking he was taking aim at him, shot him in the side, and he fell, for which he (Kelly) is very sorry. As for M'Intyre, he was a d——d coward. When Kennedy rode into the camp and was ordered to bail up, he dismounted on the offside, so as to keep his horse between himself and the levelled rifles, but directly he was out of the saddle, M'Intyre jumped on the back of the horse and rode away, without even looking round to see whether he could give his comrade any assistance. They also referred to Constable Fitzpatrick, whom Ned Kelly stigmatised as an infernal liar, as he could prove he was 15 miles away at the time Fitzpatrick was shot in the wrist.

SERGEANT KENNEDY'S LAST MOMENTS.

The particulars given below were related by Kelly himself personally to a confederate some time after the murders were committed. Kelly is reported as follows:—

M'Intyre's evidence, as given in the "Mansfield Gazette" is, in the main, pretty correct. Upon seeing M'Intyre gallop away, Kennedy continued to fire at us without effect, as we sheltered ourselves. We let him fire about five shots from his revolver, he remaining nearly in the one position, and standing. A shot was fired by one of my mates, after which he started to run, followed by my brother and myself. After running about a quarter of a mile, and apparently seeing no chance of escape, as we were making upon him with our weapons, Kennedy got behind a tree, and as I came within pistol shot he fired his last remaining charge. As I saw him levelling fair at my head, I suddenly fell on my knees, and as I did so I heard the bullet whiz just over my head. I then fired at Kennedy, who fell wounded at the foot of the tree where his body was afterwards found. The other two men, Hart and Byrne, who were coming up to us, seeing that the sergeant was secured, turned and went in pursuit of M'Intyre, who had escaped on Kennedy's horse. The sergeant never moved from the spot where he fell, but complained of the pain he felt from the bullet wound. I should say we were with him nearly two hours trying to get what information we could out of him. He always endeavoured to turn the conversation in the direction of his domestic affairs, his home, his wife and family, and very frequently of the

little one he had recently buried in the Mansfield Cemetery, to whom he seemed very much attached, evidently knowing he would soon be by his side. I could not help feeling very much touched at his pitiable condition, and after a little I said, “Well, Kennedy, I am sorry that I shot you. Here, take my gun and shoot me.” Kennedy replied, “No, I forgive you, and may God forgive you too.” He then wrote as much on some slips in his note-book as his fast-failing strength would allow him. After he had written what he could with his pencil, he handed the paper to me, and asked if I would give it to his wife. I took the paper, and promised that when I had a safe opportunity I would do so. The sergeant then appeared to be suffering very much and in great agony. I could not look upon him so, and did not wish to leave him alone to linger out in such pain, so I suddenly, without letting him see what I intended, put the muzzle of my gun to within a few inches of Kennedy’s breast. When he saw that I was going to shoot him he begged of me to leave him alive, saying, “Let me alone to live, if I can, for the sake of my poor wife and family. You surely have shed blood enough.” I fired, and he died instantly, without another groan. We then took his cloak and covered it over his body and left him to be buried by those who might find him. I did not cut off his ear as reported; it must have been eaten away.

Rats’ Castle.

November 5, 1878.

The report of Superintendent Nicolson that the gang of bushrangers who are believed to be lurking in the ranges of “Rats’ Castle,” near Indigo Creek, was acted on promptly, and if the ruffians are really concealed in that quarter, the probability is that they are by this time surrounded by a cordon of police. A special train was run from Broadford to Chiltern yesterday morning with reinforcements to Superintendent Nicolson, consisting of mounted constables called in from outlying districts. . . .

Two Scanlans.

On Sunday Father Scanlan, at the Roman Catholic Church, called upon all rightminded people to help the police and maintain the authority of the law. He said that numerous friends had condoled with him on account of the death of Constable Scanlan, whom they had heard was his cousin. There was no relationship between them, but the manner in which the deceased trooper had conducted himself in the district would have made him (Father Scanlan) proud to call him a kinsman. The reverend gentleman was bestirring himself about the monument in the Mansfield Cemetery.

The Sherritt Family.

November 8, 1878.

The house to which the police paid an unceremonious visit was that of a man named John Sherritt, an ex-policeman from England, who was well-known to have been long connected intimately with the Kellys. The house and immediate vicinity were closely searched, but with no success. The birds had evidently received warning and had taken their departure. Of course the man Sherritt put on a virtuously indignant air, and asked whether he ought to be suspected for harbouring such persons after having been in the police at Home. As it was evident that nothing was to be got at this place, a push was made to another selection some little distance off, belonging to Sherritt Junior, a son of the last-visited individual. . . .

(*Of course, nothing was found. Then they pushed on to the hut occupied by Mrs. Byrne. This is the first mention of the name of the mother of Joe Byrne. It is noteworthy that up to this point no newspaper mentioned either the name of Joe Byrne or Steve Hart.*)

Outlaws All.

Wangaratta, November 11, 1878.

. . . In order that the provisions of the Outlawry Act may be known all over the district, those clauses of it relating to harbouring the gang or giving false information to the police, have been printed as a handbill, and circulated in every direction. The convictions recorded against the Kellys and the Quinns is a long one, although a much longer one would, no doubt, be obtained at Benalla and Mansfield, which are nearer their stronghold. The senior Quinns are brothers of Mrs. Kelly, and consequently uncles of the two outlaws, while the Lloyds are also uncles, and there is an immense brood of cousins. Another portion of the same clan are the Gunns. It is said that the originals of these three families were all sent out at the Government expense. The Lloyds and the Kellys were outlawed from Ireland, while the Gunns were sent out from Scotland. Against Ned Kelly there are only three convictions recorded here, and they are as far back as November, 1870, and April, 1871. The two first cases were for assault and threatening language, for which sentences of three months were recorded; but as soon as that was over, in company with "Wild" Wright, he was charged with horse-stealing, and subsequently convicted at the Beechworth Assizes. The most prominent of the Quinn connection is Jas. Quinn, who is now in Beechworth gaol undergoing a sentence of three months' imprisonment for violent assault on a man at the recent Benalla Agricultural Show. His first appearance at the Wangaratta Court was in January, 1864, when he was arrested at

Donnybrook on a charge of horse-stealing, and having been committed for trial from here, was subsequently convicted and sentenced at Beechworth in August, 1870. He was sent to gaol for three months and six weeks cumulative for assault and resisting the police and threatening language respectively. On the 16th January, 1872, the same man was arrested, in company with Wm. Williamson, on a charge of cutting and wounding and doing grievous bodily harm, for which they were sentenced at Beechworth by Judge Hackett—Quinn to three years' imprisonment and Williamson to eighteen months. This man Williamson is now in Pentridge, undergoing a sentence of six years' imprisonment for aiding in the attempt to murder Constable Fitzpatrick. Against Patrick Quinn, another uncle of the Kellys, there are only two entries, one in 1865 for wife desertion, and again in 1870 for unlawfully wounding, on which charge he was committed for trial to Beechworth. Against John Quinn, another uncle, who is now known to be closely watching all the proceedings of the police, there are several convictions for assault commencing as far back as 1865, while similar convictions are numerous against the junior branches of the family. These are the only convictions against them at this place, which is at some considerable distance from the principal haunts of the tribe, but it shows how widely extended are the ramifications of the three families, which have continually been intermarrying, so that all over the district the four desperadoes now in the ranges have people connected with them by blood and marriage, and who are willing to give them every aid and assistance. . . .

A Formality.

November 13, 1878.

The Mansfield Courthouse has been kept open all day for the purpose of permitting the Kelly gang to surrender in accordance with the Felons' Act. Mr. Sub-inspector Pewtress with a constable have been in attendance, but none of the party have put in an appearance. . . .

November 16, 1878.

An application was made yesterday afternoon to the Chief Justice by Mr. Gurner, the Crown Solicitor, for an order adjudging the Kellys and the two unknown men to be outlaws for not having surrendered at Mansfield on the 12th inst. as required by a former order. After these orders shall have been published in the Vic. *Government Gazette*r and the newspapers, the men may be shot without being summoned to surrender, and that by anyone

whether a constable or not. These orders, proclaimed by the Governor-in-Council, were published in last night's *Gazette*.

Wild Wright Goes Wild.

November 26, 1878.

There was considerable excitement in Mansfield last night, just as the people were going to church, occasioned by the threats of "Wild" Wright, a relative of the Kellys. A body of police, numbering about thirteen, including a black-tracker, had just arrived, and some of them were standing at the corner of the street. Wright called them dogs, curs, and many other opprobrious names. He told them to follow him, and he would lead them to the Kellys, as he was going to join the gang. He was mounted on a good horse, and just keeping a short distance between himself and the police, he then asked the police to come out with him in the bush a little way and he would pot them. Four of the police made toward Wright, but he rode away out of their reach, and still threatened them if they would come a little distance out of the town. He said, "All the —— police in Mansfield can't take me." Sub-inspector Pewtress then ordered two troopers to mount and arrest him. They pursued him for about two miles, but Wright was too well mounted, and gave the troopers the slip on the Benalla road. This morning Mr. Pewtress has sent a constable with a summons to Wright's house for him to appear for using threatening language. It is to be hoped he will not be let off as easy as he was last time.

This afternoon and evening the police are busy making preparations for another start with the black-tracker, but where they are going it is not advisable to reveal. That they have good and certain indications is beyond all doubt, but to mention their movements at this moment would be inadvisable.

Wright Brings £1.

December 6, 1878.

The irrepressible "Wild" Wright appeared yesterday morning at Court in answer to a summons charging him with abusive and threatening language to Constable Allwood on Sunday evening, the 24th ult. Wright said: "I suppose I must plead guilty." Mr. Sub-inspector Pewtress said that the language was used on Sunday evening just as people were going to church, and without the slightest provocation. . . . The bench . . . fined the defendant £1 and also ordered him to be bound over to keep the peace for six months.

CHAPTER III.

OUTRAGE BY THE KELLYS

Euroa Bank Bailed Up

December 11, 1878.

Telegraph wires were cut to-day three miles from here. The National Bank was robbed, and the manager, his family, clerks and servants taken away at half-past 4 p.m. They were driven in two vehicles by the Kellys to Mr. Younghusband's Station, and there locked up with about twenty others until 11 p.m., when they were all liberated without injury.

The Kellys stuck-up Faithfull's Creek Station about 2 p.m. yesterday, and have been about the vicinity since. One of them dined at DeBoos's Hotel to-day. They brought in a vehicle belonging to Gloster, a hawker, for the purpose of removing the occupants of the bank. They are supposed to have gone in the direction of Violet Town.

NARRATIVE OF THE BANK MANAGER.

December 12, 1878.

Mr. Robert Scott, the manager of the National Bank at Euroa, came down to Melbourne yesterday, arriving here by the afternoon train. He proceeded at once to the head office in Collins Street, and had an interview with Mr. Smith, the general manager, and several of the directors. After he had given them a narrative of the affair, several members of the press were admitted, to whom he related his adventures as follows:—

"At about five minutes to 4 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon a man came to the bank door and told the accountant that he wanted a cheque cashed. He entered and, presenting a revolver at the accountant's head, ordered him to bail up. He then forced his way into my room, and I found that it was Ned Kelly. Taking his stand at the end of a table at which I was sitting, he

presented his revolver at my head, and called upon me to bail up. He was followed by another man named 'Steve' or Stephen Hart, who had a revolver in each hand. I did not bail up at first, and they called on me again to do so. I had a revolver, but it was lying on the opposite side of the table from me, and I could not reach it without placing myself in the certain danger of being immediately shot. On them again ordering me to throw up my arms, I said, 'It is all right,' and raised my arms to the armpits of my vest. Hart then kept guard over me, and Kelly ransacked the bank, and took possession of what money we had in use, which amounted to £300 or £400 in notes, gold and silver. Kelly next proceeded in the direction of my private apartments, where my wife, family and servants were. Fearing that he would do them harm, I said to him, 'Kelly, if you go there I will strike you whatever the consequences may be.' Thereupon Hart presented his revolvers at my head, and Kelly passed through. My wife and family, contrary to my expectations, took the visit very calmly, and were not injured. On returning to the bank, Kelly said he now knew that I had more money than they had got, and demanded it. I refused to give him anything, and he made the accountant give him the specie and notes in the safe. He took in all about £1,500 in notes, and about £300 in sovereigns, and about £90 in silver, besides 31ozs. of gold. He also entered the strong-room, but left the bills and securities undisturbed. Frequently he remarked that there was no use in resisting, as he had eight armed men outside whom he could call to his assistance in a moment. The story about the eight armed men, however, was only a pretence. I afterwards found that they bailed up a hawker and his boy at the station, and took possession of his cart. They rehabilitated themselves from his stock, and called for his bill, which they promised to pay 'if they were lucky.' They had also taken a spring-cart from a farmer. In approaching the bank the two Kellys came in the spring-cart and Hart upon one of Younghusband's horses, whilst they made the hawker's boy drive his van, which was a covered one, to my back yard. As Ned Kelly and Hart were entering the bank in front, Dan Kelly went round to the back and spoke to my domestic servant. Before this I had heard nothing about the gang being in the neighbourhood. Stephen Hart tied up at the DeBoos's hotel, where he afterwards had lunch. After the fellows had appropriated all the money in the bank, and my revolver and cartridges, Ned Kelly requested me to harness my horse into my buggy. I said, 'No, I won't, and my groom is away. Do it for yourself.' He replied, 'Well, I will do it myself.' He accordingly harnessed the horse and put Mrs. Scott and the family into it. He then said to me, 'Will you get in?' But I refused, saying, 'No, I won't; it is too heavily laden already.' Kelly rejoined, 'Now, none of your larks; you will then have to go with me'; and pointing his revolver at me, he made me

enter the spring-cart with himself and my servant. Before this I had asked the fellows to have a drink, and they accepted the offer, but made me drink first, no doubt to make sure that I was not attempting to drug them. I also tried to bustle them about. . . .”

FURTHER STATION INCIDENTS.

Kelly also stated that they had written a long letter to the Legislative Council, giving the whole of the circumstances that had led them into their present career. Mrs. Fitzgerald (wife of an employee at Faithfull’s Creek) was induced to obtain the postage stamps to enable them to forward this precious document, of which more will probably be heard. She says there were several sheets of paper covered with beautiful writing, and it was duly posted. Having locked up their prisoners for the night, two of the gang went to sleep, while the others were keeping watch. About 1 o’clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, two men named Casement and Tennant, who live on the opposite side of the railway station, were returning from a kangarooing excursion and had to pass the station before crossing the railway to their own place. Tennant was on horseback, while Casement was driving a spring-cart, in which were two guns. As they were passing the gates leading to the station, they saw two men on foot, one of whom called out, “Bail up! I am Ned Kelly,” at the same time seizing hold of Tennant’s bridle. Tennant called out to him to let go, to which Kelly replied by ordering him to dismount, at the same time tightening his grip on the bridle. Tennant said, “Mind what you are about, or it will be worse for you,” to which Kelly replied, “Good God! Will you get down, I am Ned Kelly, and if you won’t I will blow your brains out.” Tennant thereupon dismounted, and saying, “Oh, if that is the case let’s load our guns,” at the same time making for the cart, into which he jumped with the evident intention of doing as he said. Kelly was evidently losing his temper, and again said, “Good God, won’t you come out of the cart?” Some more angry words passed between them, and at last Kelly, in a paroxysm of passion, threw his rifle on the ground and, clenching his fists, said, “Come and have it out with me fairly. That is the fist of Ned Kelly, and it will not be long before you feel the weight of it.” Tennant, however, declined to accept the challenge, but deemed it advisable to get out of the cart before there was any more trouble. Kelly then ordered them to open the gate leading up to the station; and again Tennant refused. Kelly then put his revolver between Tennant’s teeth, and swore that if he did not at once open the gate, he would blow his brains out. To prevent such an occurrence Tennant did as he was ordered, and he and his companion was sent to join the others in captivity. . . .

DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTLAWS.

The names of the two unknown offenders have been ascertained beyond doubt to be Stephen Hart and Joseph Byrne. Stephen Hart is described as being between 20 and 21 years of age, 5ft. 6in. in height, having fresh complexion, brown hair, and hazel eyes. He was convicted at Wangaratta in July, 1877, and thirteen charges of illegally using horses, for which he received the very inadequate sentence of twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour. He got off lightly in consequence of not having been previously convicted. Joseph Byrne is described as being 21 or 22 years of age, about 5ft. 10in. in height, having fresh complexion, light brown hair and blue eyes. He was convicted at Beechworth in May, 1876, for having meat unlawfully in his possession, and got a sentence of six months' imprisonment. This was also his first conviction. . . . The clothes the offenders now wear are those which they appropriated from the hawker's cart, and are described as follows:—Ned Kelly: Grey tweed trousers and vest, dark coat and drab felt hat. Dan Kelly: Grey tweed trousers and vest, black coat and white felt hat. Hart: Dark grey tweed suit and white felt hat. Byrne: Light grey tweed suit and light felt hat. All the hats are supplied with elastic chin bands. Ned Kelly has now a long beard. The gang are armed with two double-barrelled guns, two single-barrelled guns, a Spencer rifle and eight revolvers.

Kelly Methods.

December 13, 1878.

The more the last daring outrage of the Kelly gang is looked into the greater is the astonishment evinced at their cool impudence and daring effrontery. In a well-populated township, with more than the usual number of persons about, owing to its being licensing day, not more than 40 yards from the principal hotel, and in full view of the railway station, that they should manage to clear out the bank and make prisoners of fourteen people, and drive them through the township into the bush, is almost beyond belief, while it is a matter of surprise with many persons still that some hitch did not occur so as to upset the whole scheme. But even if it had been known that the gang was in the township, one doubts whether there would have been any attempt made to interfere with it. There appears to be scarcely any firearms in the place, and the terror which is now evidently attached to the name of the Kellys would render it quite possible for them to carry out any freak of a similar character in the most open manner. Then, again, at the Faithfull Creek Station everything played into their hands. The station-hands and the others who were made prisoners came up in straggling twos and threes, and being unarmed were very easily secured. In fact, the whole

transaction was apparently looked upon by the gang as an immense joke, and they did not hesitate to say so to some of their prisoners, with whom they generally kept up the most amicable relations, and chatted and laughed with them the greater portion of the time. There were one or two occasions when the evil spirit cropped up, and there was likelihood of blood being shed, but these were times when Ned Kelly was thwarted or opposed in his orders, but as long as everything went as he wished he was perfectly calm in temper. The same cannot be said of the younger Kelly, who is evidently one of those bullying, tyrannical ruffians whose sole delight is in inflicting cruelty for the purpose of enjoying the agonies of his victims, and more than once Ned Kelly had to interpose his authority to prevent bloodshed. Ned evidently holds supreme authority, and his orders are unhesitatingly obeyed. It is said by more than one of the prisoners that Ned Kelly is not at all unprepossessing in appearance, but they all unite in declaring that Dan Kelly has a most villainous cast of countenance. They do not appear to have treated their prisoners at all harshly, but allowed them to take their meals, and even gave some of the silver which they had stolen from the bank to one of them. Ned Kelly also gave the boy belonging to the hawker's waggon, whom they took with them into the township when they went to the bank, £2 for his services, and also presented him with the silver watch taken from the body of Constable Lonigan. This latter has since been given up to the police authorities. The hawker's waggon was seen standing at the door of the bank by more than one person, but as the boy was in it, and there was no appearance of any disturbance inside the bank, of course no suspicion was aroused. The gang do their work so thoroughly that nothing is left to chance, for when the bank clerks put their arms up as ordered, Ned Kelly made sure they had no firearms by passing his hands over their clothes before he allowed them to put their hands down. A remark made by Ned Kelly proves that he was a little disappointed at the comparatively small sum he obtained from the bank. He said that he fully expected to get about £10,000. This remark of his, of course, strengthens the belief that many persons have, that if they are not captured very shortly another bank robbery will soon be heard of.

A False Alarm.

December 14, 1878.

. . . A commercial traveller who has just come in from Godur in the Alexandra district states that the Kellys stuck-up Messrs. Stoddart and Rowe's station near Alexandra, where they remained all night. Mr. Stoddart escaped by swimming the river and took the information into Alexandra. . . .

It is believed that the Mansfield murderers are still about the Strathbogie Ranges, but as yet there is no reliable information of their whereabouts to hand. The statement that they stuck-up Messrs. Stoddart and Rowe's station near Alexandra, on Thursday, proves to be a false report. . . . As the name of the commercial traveller who first circulated the report at Euroa is known to the police, it would be easy, and it might be worth while ascertaining the authority upon which he gave it currency. False reports of this kind are numerous, and as they cannot but seriously embarrass the police, their originators should not be allowed to escape with impunity. . . .

Colonel Anderson received an intimation from the Chief Secretary on Saturday that the Government desired the Garrison Corps to be sent into the bushranging district, to protect certain townships in which banks were situated, so that the chief Commissioner of Police might be enabled to remove the men he had stationed there to other places. . . .

A Woman's Clothes.

It is reported when at the Faithfull Creek Station the detectives found some clothes belonging to the Kellys that had not been burnt. Amongst them was a woman's straw hat covered with a white puggaree, and having a heavy black veil attached. This will perhaps afford some explanation of one or two of the rumours that were afloat respecting the outlaws soon after the murders took place. It was then said that there was a woman with them, and some persons allege that it was Kelly's sister. . . . It is now believed that Steve Hart, who is a slight built young fellow, had been masquerading in woman's attire. . . .

The Perfect Lady!

December 31, 1878.

. . . It will be remembered that some articles of female clothing—a hat, veil, &c.—were found at Younghusband's station after the Kellys had left. These, it afterwards transpired, were worn by Steve Hart, one of the gang, who was in the habit of going about in female attire, in order to reconnoitre and get all the intelligence possible of the movements of the police. Hart usually went on horseback, and his slender figure and boyish face, together with his general good looks, gave him altogether the appearance of a woman, and dressed as such he was in Jamieson a few days before the Euroa robbery without being recognised by anyone. He actually walked through the police in Mansfield, and then rode away towards the Wombat leading another horse which he was taking to his mates. He was met a few miles

from Mansfield by some person who, surprised at seeing, as they thought, a lady riding out unattended in that direction, enquired if he was not afraid of meeting the Kelly gang, to which Hart replied that he was not, nor of meeting the police either, as he had plenty of arms, at the same time displaying two revolvers. He then galloped away, leaving the persons he met in a state of wonderment at the courage of, as they thought, a young lady returning alone into the stronghold of the bushrangers.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE PUBLIC.

The Melbourne “Argus” is Angry.

Dec. 23, 1878.

Extract from a leading article:—

The record contained in our issue of yesterday of the outrage at Euroa was well calculated to cause humiliation and shame to be felt from one end of the land to the other. The existence in our midst of a gang of cold-blooded murderers . . . was bad enough in itself, but it is still more deplorable to find that these men can obtain local sympathy and support, and that, instead of their being in full flight from the scene of their crimes, they can haunt the spot and assume the aggressive. A few weeks ago, and the man would have been laughed at who ventured to predict that a party of police would be butchered in Victoria; that an Outlawry Act would be enforced; that the criminals would descend upon a station and occupy it for a day and a night; would imprison thirty people there; would cut the railway telegraph-wires; would march into a country town on a main line of railway; would plunder a bank in broad daylight; and would depart taking with them not only all the money on the premises, but the men, women and children belonging to the establishment. The story would have been deemed too wild for fiction; and yet it has been realised. And for all that the public is aware, the gang may be as far off capture as ever.

The question naturally arises, who is to blame for this unhappy and dangerous scandal? While recognising that it is easy to sit in the armchair and criticise, it may still be questioned whether society has been served as intelligently by its official protectors as it had a right to expect it would be. How the condition of things which we now know exists about Greta could have been allowed to grow up savours of the incomprehensible. We have a whole clan scattered about convenient fastnesses, and living principally by horse and cattle-stealing, terrorising the neighbourhood, and making a boast of their depredations, and no systematic and continued effort is made to root the offenders out. . . .

In due course it may be necessary to enquire into the present organisation of the police force, for there is a suspicion that the Inspector of Nuisances, and the Collector of Statistics, and the petty Municipal officer, have been allowed to unduly displace the rough but dashing bushman. The latter element is still needed in our force.

From "Argus" editorial notes of the same date:

Rumours obtained very general currency yesterday that the bushrangers had been shot down, and that a number of policemen had lost their lives in the encounter, but the statements are entirely without foundation. A letter which Kelly was said to have written for the Legislative or Executive Council had not been delivered yesterday at the offices of the Council or the Executive, or of the Chief Secretary, up till noon, when they were closed on account of the half-holiday. Mrs. Fitzgerald, who was entrusted with the posting of the document, was sent out of the district on Wednesday, as she appeared to be suffering from fright, and is understood to have come to Melbourne, but her place of residence here is not known. . . .

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF THE MELBOURNE "ARGUS."

Sir,—On October 20 I suggested the employment of the Local Garrison Corps to protect the small townships whilst the regular police were hunting after the Kelly gang. Though no particular notice was then given to my suggestion, subsequent and very recent events show it would have been much wiser to adopt than ignore it. Surely, when Parliament thought it proper and important enough to pass a special Act to facilitate the destruction rather than the capture of four men, it would not have been out of place to utilise the services of at least some portion of our Local Garrison Corps. The sticking up of the Euroa bank is a striking instance of Ministerial incompetence.

We now discover the whole time of the Ministry is devoted to Nelson festivities and embassies to England, continuous breaks, &c.

Truly, they travel in old historic company. Even Nero fiddled while Rome was burning. Why should Mr. Berry not eclipse Nero?

Dec. 12, 1878.

Yours, &c.,
DAVID GAUNSON.

Sir,—It is time someone took charge of our police arrangements who could put an end to the present disgraceful state of things.

Early last week the police gave intimation to the banks, in the country towns bordering in the Kelly district, that one or other of them was to be "stuck up," and yet, with this knowledge, nothing was done.

Half a dozen men in plain clothes at each of the four places warned ought to have been on the lookout for the Kellys when they turned up; but no, another surprise, although forewarned.

I need offer no comment on these facts, as I am sure public indignation will be quite sufficient if you publish this letter.

A.P.

Melbourne, December 12, 1878

Sir,—Allow me a line in your valued columns to point a suggestion to bankers which they would do well to seriously consider. I have been in charge of a "branch" on a gold-fields rush, and know the responsibility and danger of the post.

I would suggest to our bankers the urgent need of secret communication between the banking offices and managers' rooms—say, an electric bell, which should be placed where the teller could operate without attracting attention; this would warn the manager, and enable him to retire for assistance, or prepare for resistance, as the case might be.

If you think the above worthy of space, and likely to act on the powers that be, you will please publish it, and confer a favour on our branch of the community.—Yours, &c.,

BRANCH BANK.

December 12, 1878.

Sir,—Your facetious contemporary "Punch" had a capital cartoon last week entitled "Rough Upon Kelly," and though that worthy's last exploits at Euroa has called forth a fresh burst of public indignation, I submit that it is hardly fair to vent all one's indignation upon him and his gang and not think

of other culprits who are still at large—and for our sins occupying the highest places in the State.

For what is the "oligarchy" now in office doing but "bailing up" the colony? At all their out-of-door proceedings we stand aghast and helpless, just as the party did at Mr. Younghusband's. As the "Pastoral Times" in your quotation puts it, "The losses inflicted in Victoria by the struggles of the Berry Ministry to maintain its present position are enormous. They affect every class and condition, and yet there does not seem public spirit enough to organise an efficient Opposition."—Yours, &c.,

RODNEY.

December 12, 1878.

From a Leader in the Melbourne "Argus":—

December 16, 1878.

. . . Nearly every ruffian, it may be said, has some of the histrionic art about him, and the constant effort of these men is to posture when under the public eye as generous large-hearted beings, persecuted by a wicked police, but really entitled to the sympathy of their fellows. The practice is an instinct with them. They pose as injured innocents as naturally as a girl attitudinises before a mirror. . . .

An episode in the career of one of the Kellys, as currently narrated, is characteristic of the fraternity who are now baffling the police. A man put his horse up in the stable of a public house while this Greta personage was at the bar. The new saddle attracted his attention. He quietly unstrapped it and galloped off with it in his possession. In court the owner swore to the saddle, which was made to order, and the saddler who was called pointed to his private mark. But seven witnesses on the other side made oath and said that the saddle was Kelly's, and that they had seen him use it constantly, and the prisoner received the benefit of the doubt.

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS AND LAW.

The Wrong Man.

December 17, 1878.

. . . A horseman who was travelling between Longwood and Seymour on Saturday last was arrested by the police on suspicion of being Ned Kelly, his appearance being identical with the description given of the leader of the gang. The man, however, conclusively proved that he was an inoffensive traveller making his way from New South Wales to Melbourne, and he was therefore at once released. The man's appearance so much resembles that of Ned Kelly that it has become a regular nuisance to him, this being the third time he has been detained by the police on suspicion of being that notorious individual.

The inhabitants of Euroa were alarmed last evening by the report of a gun on the outskirts of the town. It was rumoured that the Kellys had returned. The detachment of Victorian Artillery at once turned out and, leaving two of their number to guard the bank, proceeded to search the scrub in order to find out who had fired the gun. The whole affair turned out to be a hoax. . . .

Ned Kelly's Letter.

December 18, 1878.

The mysterious letter which the Kellys exhibited at the Faithfull Creek Station arrived in Melbourne. It was addressed to Mr. Donald Cameron, M.L.A. Mr. Cameron, it will be remembered, put a question in the Assembly to the Chief Secretary as to whether enquiries had been made as to the cause of the outbreak, and very much to his surprise he had been honoured with the outlaws' confidence. The circumstance proves that the men are readers of the papers and are aware of what takes place in Parliament. The letter was delivered by post to Parliament House, and was received by Mr. Cameron in the afternoon. Never thinking that it was a communication from the outlaws, he allowed it to lie unattended, too, for some time, and, on eventually

opening it, he tore up the envelope. On seeing what the contents were, he gathered up the fragments of the envelope, and found that it bore the Glenrowan post-mark of December 14. He declines to give the document to the press until he has first consulted the Chief Secretary and police authorities. It may, however, be stated that the letter is evidently composed with the object of obtaining public sympathy, and it appears to be perfectly genuine. It was written by a clever illiterate in red ink, covers some twenty-two pages, and is signed "Edward Kelly, a Forced Outlaw." The place from which it was written is not stated. The fact that it was written in red ink is evidence of its authenticity, inasmuch as Kelly left a bottle of red ink behind at Mr. Younghusband's station. The envelope, too, corresponds to the one stamped by Mrs. Fitzgerald, being square, and having two postage stamps. Kelly relates his whole history from boyhood up to the Euroa outrage. He charges members of the police force with having wronged his relatives, and with being the cause of his crimes. These charges have been repeated more than once. . . . The letter concludes with certain fiendish threats, which Kelly says he will carry out if justice is not done to his mother. . . . Just before closing his lengthy epistle, Kelly said that he had something more to write, but that he would be unable to do so unless he "robbed" for more paper. . . .

(*In the issue of the "Argus," Thursday, December 19, 1878, the authorities agreed, according to an article, not to publish Kelly's document, but they allowed a summary to appear from which all the important points, and especially the charges against the police, were eliminated.*)

Kelly Sympathisers.

Monday, Feb. 3, 1879.

Mr. Foster, P.M., sat at the Beechworth police court to-day when the fourteen men who were in custody, under the provisions of the Outlawry Act, on a charge of aiding and abetting the outlawed Kellys, were again brought up. Superintendent Hare prosecuted on behalf of the Crown, and Messrs. Bowman and Zincke appeared on behalf of some of the prisoners. The first one placed in the dock was Thos. Lloyd, for whom Mr. Bowman appeared.

Superintendent Hare said, for the reason assigned by him on a previous occasion, and which there was no necessity for him to repeat, he must ask for a further remand for seven days.

Mr. Bowman remarked the same statement would apply to him. It was of no use his repeating the same arguments as he had adduced on a previous occasion in opposition to a further remand being granted. He would,

however, point out that another seven days had passed away, and still the police were unable to bring forth any further evidence against these men, and he would therefore ask whether any reasonable case had been shown why they should longer be held in custody . . . . Mr. Zincke said that they had now been detained for one month on an information which was a rotten one, as it did not disclose the date on which any offence had been committed.

(*Mr. Zincke went on at great length to point out to the Magistrate that he and Mr. Bowman had not received fair treatment from the newspapers.*)

(*The Police Magistrate, after smoothing over Mr. Zincke, said that as to the prisoners' case and the application for a further remand, he could only repeat what he had before said that they were exceptional cases, and must be dealt with in an exceptional manner. The prisoner would therefore be again remanded for seven days.*)

James M'Elroy, James Quinn and Francis Hearty were next placed in the dock.

Mr. Bowman: I presume the same ruling will apply to all the prisoners?

The Police Magistrate: I suppose the same application will be made in this case as in the last.

Supt. Hare: I intend to ask for the remand of all the prisoners.

The Police Magistrate: They are remanded for seven days.

The other ten prisoners were then brought up and formally remanded.

Monday, February 10, 1879.

Fourteen men accused of complicity with the Kelly gang were brought up again on remand yesterday, before Mr. A. Wyatt, P.M. Supt. Hare and Fennell conducted the prosecution. Mr. Zincke and Mr. Bowman appeared for the prisoners.

Mr. Bowman asked what the prisoners were kept for. Were they to be kept in gaol because the police were so demoralised, so inefficient as to be unable to catch the outlaws? . . . He was familiar with the Magna Charta, one of the clauses of which read as follows:—"I will sell to no man, delay to no man, deny to no man, justice," but in this case the Crown both denied and delayed to these men justice. It was a monstrous injustice to keep them. The

information disclosed no offence, and there was no proof the accused had anything to do with the Kellys any more than he had.

(*Further bandying of words occurred between the Bench and the Advocate, and obviously Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Zincke were at daggers drawn. The conclusion to this column report is reminiscent of a chapter out of Hilaire Belloc's "Mr. Petre."*)

After some further talk, the accused was remanded until Saturday. The other prisoners were remanded for a week also.

When James Quinn came up, Mr. Wyatt said: "I would rather let you go than any other if it was for your good, but in your case the devil has got hold of a halter at one end and I at the other, and if I let you go you will probably be hung. For your own sake I will remand you."

To Isaiah Wright Mr. Wyatt said: "Well, Wright, we have met before."

Wright replied: "There is no fear of the Kellys shooting me. You will not get the Kellys until Parliament meets and Mrs. Kelly is released, and Fitzpatrick put in her place. I could have done nothing, as the police had their eyes on me for four months before I was taken."

James Clancy said he knew nothing about the Kellys.

Thomas Lloyd was brought up again and remanded until Saturday.

Mr. Wyatt frequently interrupted counsel, and his attitude on the Bench was unfavourably commented upon. Amongst other things, he said to Isaiah Wright, "I would give you fair-play if I could."

The Sympathisers Again.

February 16, 1879.

Fourteen prisoners were brought up at the police court on Saturday before Mr. Wyatt, P.M., charged with aiding and abetting the outlaws. The court was crowded, but the proceedings were very tame and only lasted a few minutes.

Thomas Lloyd was first brought up.

Superintendent Hare asked for a remand.

Mr. Bowman opposed the application on the same ground as before. How long was this to last? It was a monstrous thing to keep the men incarcerated without one tittle of evidence brought against them or without any tangible charge preferred against them. . . . The Kellys were now in New South Wales, and how could these men aid them if released? Besides,

they were being half-starved, as the governor of the gaol would tell the Bench that their allowance was not near that of prisoners undergoing sentence. It would be one of the greatest crimes known against English liberty if they were kept longer.

Mr. Wyatt said he would enquire into the diet, but would remand the prisoners until Tuesday.

John M'Elroy was the next prisoner.

Mr. Zincke said he did not care what was done that day, as he had taken steps to have the matter tested, and intended taking M'Elroy to Melbourne to an untrammelled court.

Mr. Wyatt said the prisoners were remanded until Tuesday.

When brought up Isaiah ("Wild") Wright said to Mr. Hare, "No wonder you blush, you ought to be ashamed of yourself"; and to Mr. Wyatt he said, "Your Worship, you said you would give me fair-play, but this does not look like it. I wonder how some of the men stand it."

Mr. Wyatt said he had been misunderstood and mis-reported the previous week. He thought it better for Wright himself to remand him.

Daniel Clancy, when remanded, said, "It's a wager, Sonny," and Joseph Ryan said, "It's getting rather stale now. Don't you think there should be a change?"

Mr. Wyatt advised Mr. Bowman to bring the matter of the prisoners' nutriment under the notice of the authorities. He was not visiting justice of the gaol, or he would see to it himself.

Again the Sympathisers.

February 19, 1879.

The Kelly sympathisers were again brought up to-day before Mr. Wyatt, P.M.

(*The Police Magistrate went into a long-winded explanation about his behaviour to the prisoners. The time was approaching, he said, when the police must do something, not necessarily to bring the cases to an issue, but to bring forward evidence of some sort.*)

Mr. Wyatt (the P.M.) said Mr. Zincke had spoken about separating the chaff from the wheat in the cases. He had himself taken steps, and he knew

that the Crown had also taken steps in the matter, but he was not at liberty to state what they were. He would remand the prisoners to Tuesday next.

John M'Elroy was then charged.

Mr. Zincke said that there already had been sufficient declamation and argument. The police had said that one portion of this colony was disaffected, and in others there existed a scare. If so, was it not time the Attorney-General took the cases in hand? Three different police superintendents had been sent, one had broken his word, and now the public condemned the whole proceedings as an eternal blot on the administration of justice in Victoria. If this was constitutional government he would prefer to live under a rule of tyranny, as he could get at the tyrant, but not at the constitution. Mr. Foster had first remanded the men on the 11th January, and had evidently expected that afterwards some evidence would be brought forward, but there was no sign of any evidence, and it was not English law to go on, as they had done, remanding.

The twelve men were similarly remanded. Isaiah Wright, when remanded, said, "I hope this will be the last; you can't get Kelly evidence against me unless you buy it."

The Kelly Sympathisers.

February 21, 1879.

An application was made to his Honour Mr. Justice Barry yesterday by Mr. M'Farlane, on behalf of John M'Elroy, now a prisoner in the gaol at Beechworth, for a writ *Habeas Corpus*, directing Mr. C. G. Thomson, governor of the gaol, to bring before the Court the body of John M'Elroy, and show by what authority he was detained in custody.

(*A long argument ensued between his Honour and Mr. M'Farlane. The "Argus" reports it verbatim; but reading it over to-day, it is quite obvious that his Honour had his instructions from the powers that were, and that those instructions were that no matter what case was put up for M'Elroy, the* Habeas Corpus *was not to be granted. We reproduce the final part of the argument between his Honour and counsel.*)

His Honour asked when the writ of *habeas* was to be made returnable.

Mr. M'Farlane: On Monday; the prisoner is remanded until Tuesday and he must be brought up before that day.

His Honour: I have to be at the Geelong Assize Court to-morrow, and I cannot return until Tuesday. His Honour the Chief Justice will be absent at

Sandhurst. I shall make the writ returnable on Thursday, when the case can be held before the Chief Justice and myself.

Mr. M'Farlane: That will be quite useless, as the prisoner will be in custody then on another warrant. Probably Mr. Justice Molesworth will take it.

His Honour: I don't know that I can impose that task upon him.

Mr. M'Farlane: The petition is addressed to all the judges, and I think your Honour has no option in the matter.

His Honour: I certainly do not intend to pay a fine of £500. Where is the fiat for the writ?

The papers were then handed to his Honour, including the petition by the prisoner for the writ of habeas. His Honour noticed that the petition was signed only by the prisoner, and was not attested by two witnesses.

Mr. M'Farlane submitted that that was not required. It was not mentioned in the forms given by *Archbold*.

His Honour said that the Act of Charles II required that it should be so attested, and this was held in Huntley v. Luscombe, 2 B&P, to be a preliminary to the grant of the writ.

Mr. M'Farlane admitted that this was essential. He would renew the application next week.

The application for the *habeas* was therefore refused.

Dealing With Sympathisers.

February 26, 1879.

At the police court to-day, before Mr. Foster, P.M., Thomas Lloyd was first arraigned.

Supt. Furnell asked for the prisoner's discharge.

Mr. Bowman said this was a grand end to a grand *fiasco*. He had objected—

Mr. Foster.—Pardon me, are you objecting to the discharge of your client?

Mr. Bowman sat down and accused was discharged.

John M'Monigal, and Michael Haney, and John M'Elroy, were brought up and discharged on the application of the police.

Mr. Furnell stated that one of the men, Joseph Ryan, had broken his leg, and he intended to ask for his discharge. Perhaps the Police Magistrate would visit him in gaol. Mr. Foster assented, and subsequently went to the gaol and formally discharged Ryan who was removed to the hospital.

James Quinn was then brought forward, and a remand asked for. Mr. Foster asked on what grounds. Mr. Furnell said, on account of the scare, he was unable to bring forward witnesses who were afraid to appear.

(Mr. Zincke went into a long explanation of why his application for *habeas corpus* had failed in Melbourne. He asked the court to refuse the application for a further remand as regarded Quinn. He was serving a sentence for assault in Beechworth gaol both before and at the times of the Stringy Bark murders, therefore he could not be charged as an accomplice. Everyone of the men he believed had an action for damages against the Crown.)

The prisoner was remanded for eight days.

Quinn.—“For how many more eight days, I wonder?”

The remaining eight were then remanded until Tuesday. When Isaiah Wright was remanded he tried to speak, but was properly and promptly stopped by Mr. Foster, who refused to hear him. When leaving the box, however, with a savage look at the Bench, he said, “If ever I get out of this I’ll make my name a terror to you.”

Mr. Furnell said, “Surely, Your Worship, this is sufficient to keep this man in gaol.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE KELLY GANG IN N.S.W.

STICKING UP A BANK AT JERILDERIE.

February 11, 1879.

The Kelly gang stuck-up the telegraph office to-day at 2 o'clock, and cut the office connections, and also cut down seven poles. The stationmaster and assistant were covered by revolvers, and marched up to the lock-up, which they had stuck-up, and were there locked up together with two constables. They were released at 7 p.m., and told not to touch the wire until morning; but the stationmaster did so and fixed a wire along the fence.

They stuck-up the Bank of New South Wales. The gang took nothing from the telegraph office, but cut the wires about in a fearful mess. Nothing more was seen of the gang after they left at 4 p.m., but it is supposed they may return. They were drinking and were reckless. They locked the stationmaster up, and made him promise not to mend the line till morning, but as soon as he was released he got help and fixed the wires along the fences, so as to work. They took the constable down with them from the barracks and walked into the bank and stuck-up two clerks, and then found Mr. Tarleton in a bath in his room. Stuck him up, and then proceeded to take everything. After this they marched the bank officials into the Royal Hotel, where they collected a whole roomfull and then came over and stuck the telegraph-master up and made him stop the lines, which he did by disconnecting the wires. Then they ordered some men to chop down the poles, and told the telegraph officers to lock up the place and go with them. They said they would take them a few miles with them; but when they got to the lock-up, they put them in the lock-up with the two police, and threatened Mrs. Devine, the senior constable's wife, with her life if she let them out before 7 o'clock. It is believed they have taken about £2,000 from the bank, besides burning a number of deeds, securities, books, &c.

The Kellys openly stated that they came purposely to shoot Constable Devine, only his wife begged his life. Ned Kelly stated that he intended to stick-up the Urana coach and bank. Two of the police and two civilians armed with guns offered to go in the coach, but the driver declined to take the police. The police had no means of following the gang, being unarmed and without horses.

A Document to Print.

Great excitement prevails here just now. Yesterday afternoon the town was filled with swagsmen of suspicious character. To-day unknown men are seen about. In the swags of the strangers revolvers were seen.

Mr. S. Gill, journalist, when called upon to stand, being frightened, ran away, and planted himself in the creek. Ned Kelly, in company with Mr. Living and Constable Richards, came over to the printing office, when Richards said, “Mrs. Gill, don’t be afraid, this is Kelly.” Mrs. Gill replied, “I am not afraid.” Kelly said, “Don’t be afraid; I won’t hurt you nor your husband. He should not have run away.” Mrs. Gill replied, “If you shoot me dead, I don’t know where Mr. Gill is. You gave him such a fright I expect he is lying dead somewhere.” Mr. Living said, “You see, Kelly, the woman is telling you the truth.” Kelly said, “All I want him for is to print this letter, the history of my life, and I wanted to see him to explain it to him.” Mr. Living said, “For God’s sake, Kelly, give me the papers, and I will give them to Gill.” Mr. Living, under promise, then received the papers. This is given as I received it from Mrs. Gill, who, though alarmed, never evinced any fear. Later in the day Kelly mixed up with a number of persons at M’Dougall’s, and said anyone could shoot him, but they would have to abide the consequences, as every inhabitant would be shot.

The N.S.W. Inspector-Gen. of Police, immediately on receipt of the news of the outrage committed yesterday by the Kelly gang, sent off some thirty or forty telegrams containing warnings and instructions to all police stations in and near the frontier districts. There is already a large additional force of police in various parts of the border district all well mounted and armed.

A number of troopers were despatched by the evening train to Wagga to proceed in pursuit of the Kelly gang. As soon as news of the Jerilderie

outrage reached Albury, police were told off to guard the banks at Albury and in the country districts.

It is conjectured that the Kelly gang may have stuck-up Urana, as no communication has been received from there.

A visit of the Kelly gang to Wagga is feared, and the banks have taken precautions to guard their interests. There is considerable excitement there, as the state of the police force gives no sense of security from a visit of the gang.

INTERVIEW WITH MESSRS. TARLETON AND LIVING.

The above gentlemen have supplied the following information:—Mr. Living, the teller of the Bank of N.S.W., states that about ten minutes past 12 on Monday afternoon he was sitting at his desk in the bank when he heard footsteps approaching him from the direction of the back door. He at first took no notice, thinking it was the manager, Mr. Tarleton. The footsteps continued approaching him, when he turned round on his office stool, and noticed a man approaching from the back door. He immediately accosted the fellow, who had his revolver already levelled at him, and on asking the intruder who he was, and what right he had to enter the bank by the back way, he answered that he was Kelly, and ordered Mr. Living to bail up. The man, who afterwards turned out to be Byrne, ordered him to deliver up what firearms he had. Living replied that he had none. Young Mackie, who was standing in front of the bank, then came in, when Byrne ordered him (Living) to jump over the counter, which he did. He then told him to come with him into Cox's Hotel, and remarked that they had all the police stuck-up. They went into the hotel, where they met Ned Kelly, who asked for Mr. Tarleton, when he was told that he was in his room. They went back to the bank, but could not find the manager in his room. Ned Kelly said to Mr. Living, "You had better go and find him." Living then searched, and found the manager in his bath. Mr. Living was a little alarmed at not finding the manager in his room, and at first thought he had got some clue that the bushrangers were in the place, and had cleared out. On finding the manager in his bath, he said to him, "We are stuck-up; the Kellys are here, and the police also are stuck-up." Byrne then brought Hart and left him in charge of the manager. After Living had got out of the bathroom, Ned Kelly came and took him into the bank, and asked him what money they had in the bank. Living replied that there was between £600 and £700. When Kelly said, "You must have £10,000 in the bank." Living then handed him the teller's cash, amounting to about £691. Mr. Elliot, the schoolmaster, then went into

the bank, and as soon as Kelly saw him, he ordered him to jump over the counter. Mr. Elliot replied that he could not, but Kelly made him. They then tried to put the money in a bag, but not having one sufficiently large, Ned Kelly went and brought a bag and they put the money into it. Kelly asked if they had more money, and was answered "No." Kelly then obtained the teller's revolver, and again requested more money. He then went to the safe and caught hold of the treasure drawer, and requested to know what was in it, and was told by Living that it contained nothing of any value. Kelly insisted on it being opened, and one of the keys was given to him; but he could not open it, owing to the manager having the second key, which was required to open it. Byrne then wanted to break it open with a sledge-hammer, but Kelly brought the manager from the Royal Hotel, and demanded the key, which was given to him, and the drawer was opened, when the sum of £1,450 was taken out by Kelly and placed in the bag. Kelly then took down a large deed box and asked what it contained, and was told that the contents consisted of a few documents, which were of no use. He replied that he would buy the contents, but Mr. Tarleton argued with him, and Kelly took one document and put it into the bag, and then expressed his intention of burning all the books in the office. He, however, left the rest of the papers, and said that he would come back and see if there were any deeds for town allotments. The whole of the party then went into the Royal Hotel. Daniel Kelly was in the bar, and Ned Kelly took two of the party to the back of the hotel, where he made a fire and burned three or four of the bank books. In the meantime Mr. Rankin and Mr. Gill, seeing the bank door open, went in, and were immediately followed by Kelly, who ordered them to bail up. Both gentlemen at once made off—Mr. Rankin running into the hotel and Mr. Gill in some other direction. Ned Kelly ran after Rankin and caught him in the hotel. Kelly caught him by the collar, and asked him why he ran away, at the same time telling him to go into the passage, and that he intended to shoot him. He took Mr. Rankin into the passage, and after straightening him against the wall, levelled his revolver at him. Several persons called out to Kelly not to fire, and he did not. He then called Hart by the name of Revenge, and told him to shoot the first man that attempted any resistance, and told Rankin that if he attempted to move he would be the first shot. Kelly then asked for Gill, and took Richards and Living with him to look for Gill. The policeman had his revolver with him, but Kelly had previously withdrawn the cartridges. They went up to Gill's house and saw Mrs. Gill. Kelly said to her, "I have a statement here which contains a little act of my life, and I want it published by Mr. Gill. Will you take it?" She refused to do so. Mr. Living then took the paper and promised to have it published. The party then went to M'Dougall's Hotel, where Kelly took a

blood mare out of the stables, and remarked that he would return it in three weeks. The party then went to the telegraph-office and met Byrne, who had cut the wires. Ned Kelly then broke the insulators of the office with his revolver. After this he took the postmaster and his assistant to the Royal Hotel, and left the party there. Kelly returned to the bank and obtained a saddle and a pair of riding trousers belonging to Mr. Tarleton, and also a watch and a gold chain. The saddle was put on the mare, and Dan Kelly mounted it and rode away, but returned in five minutes. Dan Kelly and Hart then kept guard at the hotel. Ned Kelly informed the postmaster, Mr. Jefferson, that if he attempted to mend the wires before next day, or offered any resistance, he would be shot. He also told Mr. Jefferson that he intended to take him a few miles in the bush and then liberate him. He informed those present that he intended sticking up the Urana coach that night, and would shoot anyone that attempted to give warning. Byrne still rode in the direction of the Murray, with the money, and in the meantime Mr. Tarleton had succeeded in despatching a messenger to Urana to warn the bank manager there. The remaining part of the gang then rode in the direction of the police camp, and the party were liberated, and Mr. Living started for Deniliquin.

This completed Mr. Living's narrative, and the following additional particulars are given by Mr. Tarleton, the manager of the bank. That gentleman states that at the time of the occurrence he had not long returned from a long ride of forty miles and was having a bath when the teller came rushing into the bathroom and explained that they were stuck-up. Mr. Tarleton at first thought it was rubbish, but on seeing two men with revolvers, believed such to be the case. As soon as he came out of the bath, Hart pointed a pistol at him and then searched his clothes. Mr. Tarleton made some inquiries as to the movements of the gang, but Hart, after answering one or two questions, replied in an angry voice that Mr. Tarleton had better cease asking such questions. Hart then took him into the hotel, and as he was going in he noticed Byrne strike the Chinese cook. He was then placed with some others in a bar parlour, where he was kept until taken back to the bank. Hart stood the whole time at the door of the room with revolvers and evinced a strong desire to shoot someone occasionally if there was a little too much talking. During his confinement in the room, Mr. Tarleton was placed in such a position that he thinks he could have knocked Hart down, but on asking the policeman if he would back him up, he replied that Dan Kelly had them covered with a revolver, and if he happened to miss them he would be sure to kill some of the others. The gang then prepared to go out, but before doing so, Ned Kelly made a speech, with the evident intention of

inciting pity. He said that on the occasion when Fitzpatrick, the Benalla constable, was shot, he was not within 400 miles of Greta, and during his career he had stolen 280 horses from Whitty's station and sold them; and beyond this he had never been guilty of any other crime. The horses, he stated, were sold to Baumgarten. Kelly showed those present his revolvers, and pointed out one which he said was the property of Constable Lonigan, and further stated that the musket that he shot Lonigan with was an old worn-out crooked thing. He asked those present if they would like to be treated as he had been treated, and detectives to go to their houses and present revolvers at their mothers and sisters, and threatened to shoot them if they did not say where Ned Kelly was. He considered such treatment to be more than any man could stand, and was enough to turn an outlaw. He said that he came to that place not with the intention of robbing the bank, but to shoot the two policemen, Devine and Richards, who were worse than any blacktrackers, especially Richards, whom he intended to shoot immediately. Mr. Tarleton remarked to Kelly that it was Richards' duty and he should not blame him for doing it. Kelly then replied, "Suppose you had your revolver ready when I came in; would you not have shot me?" Mr. Tarleton replied, "Yes." "Well," said Kelly, "that is just what I am going to do with Richards —shoot him before he shoots me." The party then interceded for Richards, but Kelly said, "He must die." Kelly then started to walk in the direction of the police camp in company with Richards. Hart and Dan Kelly rode up the street shouting and flourishing their revolvers. The captives were then free. Both the Kellys were dressed as troopers. Before leaving Ned Kelly remarked that he had made a great blunder in connection with the affair, which would likely be the means of capturing the gang. Mr. Tarleton then got his horse and mounted it, for the purpose of going to Deniliquin, when a number of persons warned him of the scouts posted about by the Kellys to watch. But knowing that he was mounted better than any of them, and having a strong desire to report the matter, he started at a quarter to 4 p.m., and reached Deniliquin at a quarter to 6 the next morning, only one minute before the train left the station, giving Mr. Tarleton just time to take his seat. At the time Mr. Tarleton left Jerilderie, he did not see anything of the postmaster or Richards.

Rumours and Scares.

February 14, 1879.

It is believed that the Kellys are only a short distance from Jerilderie, and waiting to ascertain the movements of the police. Residents are positive there are still confederates in town who are informing the Kellys of

everything that is going on. Four men were seen riding on bay horses six miles from Jerilderie, well armed, and looked like police, asking the road to Conargo. It has since transpired they were not police.

It is stated on good authority that five men, supposed to be the Kelly gang, passed through Urana at 9 o'clock last night. They had six horses, and one was recognised as Constable Devine's. It is rumoured that the gang is in the neighbourhood of Wagga. This is doubted.

Considerable excitement was caused to-day by the report of the proximity to Echuca of the Kelly gang. At a late hour last night the Deniliquin police communicated with the Echuca Police Department to the effect that the outlaws were in the vicinity of Deniliquin, and had made enquiries as to the shortest road to Moama. Deniliquin also asked for reinforcements of police, and two Echuca troopers were sent. Sergeant Hayes, of Echuca, has since received instructions to be watchful, and four troopers have been sent to supplement the local force. The Moama police have gone out towards Redbank in search of the Kellys.

CHAPTER VII.

OPINIONS OF THE PUBLIC.

HOW TO CAPTURE THE KELLY GANG.

To the Editor of the "Argus."

Sir,—The complete success of the latest exploit of the Kelly gang shows the necessity for further measures being adopted for their capture, if the whole of the country banks are not to be left at their mercy. I would therefore suggest through your valuable columns, if you will permit me, have each of the nine leading banks, all of which are represented throughout the colony, subscribe the sum of £250 as a reward for the capture of the gang—say, £750 for the leader and £500 for the others. I think this additional bait would prove too strong to be resisted even by the friends of the ruffians, which is really the only quarter to which we can look for help, now that the police have shown themselves to be completely out-generalled.—I am, &c.,

A BRANCH MANAGER.

February 12.

To the Editor of the "Argus."

Sir,—On the theory that every man has his price, I suggest that the capture of the Kellys should be regarded as a matter of money. It is said that the Government outlay upon attempts to capture exceeds £20,000 already. The banks have lost £4,000 in coin, to say nothing of securities destroyed, or the expense and inconvenience attending the precautionary measures adopted by these institutions throughout the country.

Let the Government offer a reward of £1,000 for capture of any one member of the gang, or £5,000 for the lot, with free pardon and safe conveyance from the colony to any accomplice or informer, not personally implicated in the murders, who may lead to the effecting of such capture,

and let the banks offer to supplement the award by another £5,000, and I'll wager you'll have the Kellys within a fortnight, and they'd be cheap at the money.—Yours, &c.,

NEMO.

February 13.

To the Editor of the "Argus."

Sir,—The non-success of the police in cutting short the career of the Kelly gang is, there is very good reason to believe, caused by the character of the regulations which the men are bound to conform to. It is therefore of importance that this point should be well considered. If the police are to succeed, the officers must have some discretionary power, and the police troopers sent into the bush should not be compelled to act as if on ordinary duty. I have the most reliable information that the police are chafing under these ridiculous restrictions, and that there are a number of first-class troopers of undoubted experience as bushmen who assert that they can capture the Kellys if free to follow out the chase at their own risk, and would be satisfied to undertake the responsibility. But while the men are compelled to report themselves, as when on their ordinary beats, there is but little chance for the police against men like the Kellys.—Yours, &c.,

J.E.S.

February 12.

To the Editor of the "Argus."

Sir,—American slave owners, when they wished to track a fugitive slave, used that keenly-scented animal the bloodhound. Might not the police use similar means to "fetch" those clever scoundrels "the Kellys"? Many of these dogs, I am informed, are to be obtained from Tasmania, and, if procured, I believe they would be found equal to the occasion.—Yours, &c.,

Wm. GANE.

Wilton-house, Regent-street, Fitzroy,

February 12.

To the Editor of the "Argus."

Sir,—One of your correspondents tells us that there are many young troopers in the force eager to pursue the Kelly gang on their own account. Why not allow them to do so, and act the part of irregulars? Again, why not allow the police to participate in the rewards offered? Let these two points be conceded. Let the younger and more daring men of the force who choose to volunteer for the service be allowed to follow up the chase in their own fashion, untrammelled by regulations, and let them know that the reward will be paid to them as freely as it would be to any civilian. Within a fortnight you would have Kelly in gaol or we should hear of his death.—Yours, &c.,

AN OLD SOLDIER.

February 14.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER JERILDERIE.

N.S.W. Now Acts.

February 18, 1879.

On leaving Jerilderie, the Kelly gang went in the direction of Wannamurra Station. When coming close to the homestead they met a drover driving his stock. Mr. A. Mackie was a short distance away when Ned Kelly rode up to him, and accosted him thus: “Is your brother out on the station?” Mackie replied, “I do not know.” Kelly said, “I am going to shoot him because he helped to catch the horses for Living and Tarleton, and I will go down and burn the homestead for giving them fresh horses to go on with.” Kelly evidently thought that J. Mackie, on getting released from the room at Jerilderie, had gone out to the station. Kelly again said to A. Mackie, “Where is your brother?” Mackie replied, “I don’t want him shot, and it is not likely I would tell you even if I knew where he was.” Kelly then took Mr. Mackie and the drover to the homestead. Hart and Byrne in the meantime went on ahead with the packhorses and booty. On getting to the homestead he saw the storekeeper, Mr. Elvery, standing at the gate. Kelly said, “What’s your name?” Elvery, not knowing who he was, and thinking the question rather impudent, remained silent. Kelly jumped off his horse and, pointing his revolver at him, again asked him his name. Elvery, not liking the close proximity of the revolver, said, “My name is Elvery.” Kelly asked Mackie was he (Elvery) speaking the truth, and Mackie told him he was. He then asked Elvery where Tarleton and Living were. Elvery said, “I do not know.” Kelly said, “Did you not give them fresh horses to go on to Deniliquin with?” Elvery said, “No, I did not. Because the horses were not mustered since morning.” Kelly then, seeing that Wannamurra was not the station the bankers had made for, appeared satisfied, and conversed freely with Elvery. He told him, in the course of conversation, that he would shoot Living whenever he saw him, “for,” added he, “I gave the —— everything he asked that belonged to himself. He almost begged and prayed in the bank for me not to destroy his life policy, and when I was taking his saddle he again begged me to give it back. Seeing he was a poor man, I gave it back,

and now the ——, as soon as he gets a chance, rushes off to betray me!" He asked me for a drink of water, and then got on his horse, and he and Dan rode off in the direction of Berrigan Station.

A large number of police were concentrated in Howlong in anticipation of a visit from the Kellys. The excitement here is great, and special constables have been sworn in. An application was made to the Bank of New South Wales authorities in Melbourne to supply arms to volunteers. The application was met with a prompt refusal.

Sir Henry Moves.

February 21, 1879.

In the N.S.W. Assembly, Sir H. Parkes moved the suspension of the Standing Orders, in order to pass an outlawry bill through all its stages. He said the measure he proposed to introduce would be a copy of the Victorian Act, because it was considered desirable that the legislation of the two colonies in this matter should be alike. A clause was, however, introduced giving the Government power to outlaw persons who had committed a crime, although committed across the border. As to the necessity for the bill, he said it was a national disgrace that the Kelly gang should be permitted to remain at large, and no effort should be spared to terminate the present state of things, which reflected in a serious manner on the character of the country.

The Assembly has renewed the Outlawry Act. The Crown Law Officers had some hesitation over the new clause that was necessary to meet the case. In the old Act and in the Victorian Act, which is substantially a copy, men were outlawed for capital crimes committed within the Commonwealth. But we have now outlawed men for crimes committed outside jurisdiction. This is a novelty, but it is one to which all the colonial Governments will have to give their adhesion, if the occasion requires it. Three or four members objected to this extension of the criminal law, but the commonsense of the House overruled the objection. It was urged, quite fairly, that the measure was wanted on our own part, simply to discourage the men from entering our territory—that if it was right they should be outlawed in Victoria, it was right they should have no more mercy in New South Wales, and that it was absurd to look upon a mere frontier line as so separating jurisdictions that a criminal hunted out of one colony should be tempted to find harbour in

another. The large majority by which the Bill was passed, and the promptness with which the Government has acted will, it is hoped, satisfy the Kellys and their friends, that they will find short shrift north of the Murray.

Jerilderie, Thursday, June 28th, 1880.

It is firmly believed that the Kellys are making for the Murrumbidgee; four men with packhorses were seen by a selector on Kulkie going in that direction. No police are here at present.

THE KELLY GANG OF BUSHRANGERS.

February 21, 1879.

(*Here is how the "Argus" served up the latest news of the outlaws in the "Overseas Summary."*)

The four outlawed murderers, Edward Kelly, Dan Kelly, Stephen Hart, and Joseph Byrne, are still playing at their desperate game, and defying the police forces of Victoria, and New South Wales to capture them. They have followed up the atrocious murders of a sergeant and two constables of police in the Wombat Ranges in October last, and the outrage and bank robbery at Euroa in December, by crossing the River Murray, sticking up the township of Jerilderie in New South Wales, some forty miles from the border, and robbing the local branch of the New South Wales bank of over £2,000. In this latter, as in their former exploits, Ned Kelly, their leader, has displayed a great amount of generalship and cunning.

The New South Wales Government offer £3,000 and the banks of that colony £1,000 for the capture of the bushrangers, and the reward offered by the Victorian Government is being increased from £2,500 to £4,000, so that there is now a total reward of £8,000 offered for the gang or £2,000 a head.

CHAPTER IX.

ANOTHER KELLY OUTRAGE.

Cold-blooded Murder.

June 28, 1880.

All doubts as to the presence of the Kelly gang in the colony—a fact which has been for some extent a matter of dispute—was set at rest yesterday by the intelligence that they had re-appeared at Beechworth, and had added yet another murder to the crimes already resting on their heads. Since the gang so successfully plundered the bank at Jerilderie and escaped across country, no trustworthy information as to their whereabouts has been obtained. At various intervals it has been intimated that they were in the country, but the information as to their being in a particular locality at any set time was always many days late, and generally even then of an uncertain character. The particulars to hand with regard to the last outrage perpetrated by the gang are simply these. On Saturday evening the band of outlaws called at the hut of a man named Aaron Sherritt, having with them a German whom they compelled to call on Sherritt to come out. The latter, recognising the voice, complied with the request, and on his coming out of the door he was instantly shot dead by Joe Byrne, who put one bullet through his head and another through his body. In the hut were a party of police, but they did not fire a shot at the bushrangers, and acted entirely on the defence. The reason given for this inactivity is that the night was dark, while there was a bright fire burning in the hut, so that while the bushrangers were out of sight, the police would instantly have been seen and shot if they had appeared at the door or window. The Kellys fired a volley through the house, and also attempted to burn it down. The gang remained outside the hut until half-past 6 o'clock yesterday morning, when, it was presumed, they rode away. The object for taking Sherritt's life is clearly shown. It appears that at one time Sherritt was a friend of the Kellys, but was most intimate with Joe Byrne. He had been several times in gaol, and on one occasion was convicted with Byrne of stealing a quantity of meat. His father, John Sherritt, an ex-policeman, is a selector, now an elderly man, and resides at Sebastopol, which is about 8 miles from Beechworth. The deceased man had

a selection of 107 acres about a mile from his father's place, and it is noteworthy that he was assisted in fencing it in by Joe Byrne and Ned Kelly. He was about 24 years of age, of robust health, and was noted as a runner and jumper. His holding was on the Woolshed Creek, in the county of Burgoyne, and about 2 months ago he sold it to Mr. Crawford, of the Eastern Arcade, who is also a large coach proprietor, and has property to a considerable extent in the district. After selling the land, he built a hut at Sebastopol about 2 miles away and it was there that he was shot. A few months ago he was married to Miss Burke, the daughter of a well-known farmer at the Woolshed. Prior to the Kelly outbreak, as already stated, he was on very friendly terms with the members of the gang and their companions, but recently it appears that he placed himself in communication with the police, and for some months has been employed by them. The information he afforded as to the movements of the outlaws proved highly valuable, and it is stated on good authority that not only did the gang ascertain who was keeping the police posted up, but they also caused it to be made known in Beechworth some weeks ago that they intended to take his life. The house occupied by Joseph Byrne's mother, there is every reason to believe, was recently visited by the gang, and the information that the deceased was watching the place is supposed to have been communicated to the murderers; in fact, it is stated that the reason that Sherritt went to the house in which he met his death was, that he might be the better able to watch Byrne's place.

As soon as the information of the outrage was received by the police authorities efforts were immediately made to pursue the murderers. Parties of police were sent out from the various country depots, and by special train last night blacktrackers and a further contingent of police were despatched from Melbourne.

WHY SHERRITT TURNED INFORMER.

. . . Some curiosity has been expressed as to the causes which led Aaron Sherritt to turn against the gang, with all of whom he was once on terms of intimate friendship, and go over to the police. From enquiries from the deceased man's friends and relatives, it transpires that Sherritt was on several occasions served very shabbily by them, especially by Byrne. A mob of stolen horses or cattle would be put on Aaron Sherritt's selection and left there until they could conveniently be sold, and when they were realised upon none of the money was given to Sherritt. This led to bickerings, and

gradually engendered the ill-feeling which ultimately developed into hate. . . .

CHAPTER X.

DESTRUCTION OF THE KELLY GANG.

Desperate Encounter.

Ned Kelly Captured.

Dan Kelly, Hart and Byrne Dead.

Children and Civilians Killed and Wounded.

Glenrowan, Monday Night, June 29, 1880.

At last the Kelly gang and the police have come within shooting distance, and the adventure has been the most tragic in any of the bushranging annals of the colony. Most people will say that it is high time, too, for the murders of the police near Mansfield occurred as long ago as 26th October, 1878, the Euroa outrage on the 9th of December of the same year, and Jerilderie affair on the 8 and 9 of February, 1879. The lapse of time induced many to believe that the gang was no longer in the colony, but these sceptics must now be silent. The outlaws demonstrated their presence in a brutally effective manner, by the murder of the unfortunate Aaron Sherritt at Sebastopol. Immediately on the news being spread the police were in activity. A special train was despatched from Melbourne at 10.15 on Sunday night. At Essendon Sub-Inspector O'Connor and his 5 blacktrackers were picked up. They had come recently from Benalla, and were en route to Queensland again. Mr. O'Connor, however, was fortunately staying with Mrs. O'Connor's friends at Essendon for a few days before his departure.

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER.

No sooner had the train arrived at Glenrowan than Constable Bracken, the local policeman, rushed up and stated with an amount of excitement which was excusable under the circumstances, that he had just escaped from the Kellys, and that they were at the moment in possession of Jones's public

house, about a hundred yards from the station. He called upon the police to surround the house and his advice was followed without delay. Supt. Hare with his men, and Sub-Inspector O'Connor with his blacktrackers, at once advanced on the building. They were accompanied by Mr. Rawlins, a volunteer from Benalla, who did good service. Mr. Hare took the lead, and charged right up to the hotel. At the station were the reporters of the Melbourne press, Mr. Carrington, of *The Sketcher*, and the two ladies who had accompanied the train. The latter behaved with admirable courage, never betraying a symptom of fear, although bullets were whizzing about the station and striking the building and train. The first brush was exceedingly hot. The police and the gang blazed away at each other in the darkness furiously. It lasted for about a quarter of an hour, and during that time there was nothing but a succession of flashes and reports, the pinging of bullets in the air, and the shrieks of women who had been made prisoners in the hotel. Then there was a lull, but nothing could be seen for a minute or two in consequence of the smoke. In a few minutes Supt. Hare returned to the railway station, with a shattered wrist. The first shot fired by the gang had passed through his left wrist. He bled profusely from the wound, but Mr. Carrington, artist of *The Sketcher*, tied up the wound with his handkerchief, and checked the hemorrhage. Mr. Hare then set out again for the fray, and cheered his men on as well as he could, but he gradually became so weak from loss of blood that he had reluctantly to retire, and was soon afterwards conveyed to Benalla by a special engine. The bullet passed right through his wrist and it is doubtful if he will ever recover the use of his left hand. On his departure Sub. Inspector O'Connor and Senior Constable Kelly took charge, and kept pelting away at the outlaws all the morning. Mr. O'Connor took up a position in a small creek in front of the hotel, and disposed his blackfellows one on each side, and stuck to this post gallantly throughout the encounter. The trackers also stood the baptism of fire with fortitude, never flinching for one instant.

About 5 o'clock in the morning a heartrending wail of grief ascended from the hotel. The voice was easily distinguished as that of Mrs. Jones, the landlady. Mrs. Jones was lamenting the fate of her son, who had been shot in the back, as she supposed, fatally. She came out from the hotel crying bitterly and wandered into the bush on several occasions, and nature seemed to echo her grief. She always returned, however, to the hotel, until she succeeded with the assistance of one of the prisoners, in removing her wounded boy from the building, and in sending him on to Wangaratta for medical treatment. The firing continued intermittently, as occasion served, and bullets were continually heard coursing through the air. Several lodged

in the station buildings and a few struck the train. By this time the hotel was completely surrounded by the police and the blacktrackers, and a vigilant watch of the hotel was kept up during the dark hours.

At daybreak police reinforcements arrived from Benalla, Beechworth and Wangaratta. Supt. Sadlier came from Benalla with 9 more men, and Sgt. Steele from Wangaratta with 6, thus augmenting the besieging force to about 30 men. Before daylight Senior Constable Kelly found a revolving rifle and a cap lying in the bush, about a hundred yards from the hotel. The rifle was covered with blood, and a pool of blood lay near it. This was evidently the property of one of the bushrangers, and a suspicion therefore arose that they had escaped. That these articles not only belonged to one of the outlaws, but to Ned Kelly himself was soon proved. When day was dawning the women and children, who had been made prisoners in the hotel were allowed to depart. They were, however, challenged individually as they approached the police line, for it was thought that the outlaws might attempt to escape under some disguise.

CAPTURE OF NED KELLY.

At daylight the gang was expected to make a sally out, so as to escape, if possible, to their native ranges, and the police were consequently on the alert. Close attention was paid to the hotel as it was taken for granted that the whole gang were there. To the surprise of the police, however, they soon found themselves attacked from the rear by a man dressed in a long grey overcoat and wearing an iron mask. The appearance of the man presented an anomaly, but a little scrutiny of his appearance and behaviour soon showed that it was the veritable head of the gang, Ned Kelly himself. On further observation it was seen that he was only armed with a revolver. He, however, walked coolly from tree to tree and received the fire of the police with the utmost indifference, returning a shot from his revolver when a good opportunity presented itself. Three men went for him viz., Sgt. Steele of Wangaratta, Senior Constable Kelly, and a railway guard named Dowsett. The latter, however, was only armed with a revolver. They fired at him persistently, but to their surprise with no effect. He seemed bullet-proof. It then occurred to Sgt. Steele that the fellow was encased in mail, and he then aimed at the outlaw's legs. His first shot of that kind made Ned stagger, and the second brought him to the ground with the cry, "I am done—I am done." Steele rushed up along with Senior Constable Kelly and others, the outlaw howled like a wild beast brought to bay, and swore at the police. He was first seized by Steele, and as that officer grappled with him he fired another

charge from his revolver. This shot was evidently intended for Steele, but from the smart way in which he secured the murderer, the Sergeant escaped. Kelly became gradually quiet, and it was soon found that he had been utterly disabled. He had been shot in the left foot, left leg, right hand, left arm and twice in the region of the groin. But no bullet had penetrated his armour. Having been divested of his armour he was carried down to the railway station and placed in a guard's van. Subsequently he was removed to the stationmaster's office, and his wounds were dressed there by Dr. Nicholson of Benalla.

THE SIEGE CONTINUED.

In the meantime the siege was continued without intermission. That the three other outlaws were still in the house was confirmed by remarks made by Ned, who said they would fight to the last, and would never give in. The interest and excitement were consequently heightened. The Kelly gang were at last in the grasp of the police, and their leader actually captured. The female prisoners who escaped during the morning gave corroboration of the fact that Dan Kelly, Byrne and Hart were still in the house. A rumour got abroad that Byrne was shot when drinking a glass of whisky at the bar of the hotel about half-past 5 o'clock in the morning, and the report afterwards turned out to be true. The remaining two kept up a steady defence from the rear of the building during the forenoon, and exposed themselves recklessly to the bullets of the police. They, however, were also clad in mail, and the shot took no effect.

At 10 o'clock a flag or white handkerchief was held out at the front door, and immediately afterwards about 30 men, all prisoners sallied forth holding up their hands. They escaped whilst Dan Kelly and Hart were defending the back door. The police rallied up towards them with their arms ready, and called upon them to stand. The crowd did so, and in obedience to a subsequent order fell prone on the ground. They were passed one by one, and two of them—brothers named M'Auliffe—were arrested as Kelly sympathisers. The precaution thus taken was highly necessary, as the remaining outlaws might have been amongst them. The scene presented when they were all lying on the ground, and demonstrating the respectability of the characters was unique, and, in some degree, amusing.

THE HOTEL BURNT.

The siege was kept up all the forenoon until nearly 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Some time before this the shooting from the hotel had ceased and

opinions were divided as to whether Dan Kelly and Hart were reserving their ammunition or were dead. The best part of the day having elapsed, the police, who were now acting under the direction of Supt. Sadlier, determined that a decisive step should be taken. At 10 minutes to 3 o'clock another and a last volley was fired into the hotel, and under cover of the fire Senior Constable Charles Johnson, of Violet Town, ran up to the house with a bundle of straw, which, (having set fire to) he placed on the ground at the west side of the building. This was a moment of intense excitement, and all hearts were relieved when Johnson was seen to regain uninjured, the shelter he had left. All eyes were now fixed on the silent building, and the circle of besiegers began to close in rapidly on it, some dodging from tree to tree, and many, fully persuaded that everyone in the hotel must be *hors de combat*, coming out boldly into the open. Just at this juncture Mrs. Skillian, sister of the Kellys, attempted to approach the house from the front. She had on a black riding habit, with a red underskirt, and white Gainsborough hat, and was a prominent object in the scene. Her arrival on the ground was almost simultaneous with the attempt to fire the building. Her object in trying to reach the house was apparent to induce the survivors, if any, to come out and surrender. The police, however, ordered her to stop. She obeyed the order, but very reluctantly, and, standing still, called out that some of the police had ordered her to go on and others to stop. She, however, went to where a knot of the besiegers were standing on the west side of the house. In the meantime, the straw, which burned fiercely, had all been consumed, and at first doubts were entertained as to whether Senior Constable Johnson's exploit had been successful. Not very many minutes elapsed, however, before smoke was seen coming out of the roof, and flames were discerned from the front window on the Western side. A light Westerly wind was blowing at the time, and this carried the flames from the straw underneath the wall and into the house, and as the building was lined with calico the fire spread rapidly. Still no sign of life appeared in the building.

When the house was seen to be fairly on fire, Father Gibney, who had previously started for it but had been stopped by the police walked up to the front door and entered it. By this time the patience of the besiegers was exhausted, and they all regardless of shelter, rushed to the building. Father Gibney, at much personal risk from the flames, hurried in to a room to the left, and there saw two bodies lying side by side on their backs. He touched them and found that life was extinct in each. These were the bodies of Dan Kelly and Hart, and the rev. gentleman expressed the opinion, based on their position, that they must have killed one another. Whether they killed one

another or whether both or one committed suicide, or whether both being mortally wounded by the besiegers, they determined to die side by side, will never be known. The priest had barely time to feel their bodies before the fire forced him to make a speedy exit from the room, and the flames had then made such rapid progress on the Western side of the house, that the few people who followed close on the rev. gentleman's heels dared not attempt to rescue the two bodies. It may be here stated, that, after the house had been burned down, the two bodies were removed from the embers. They presented a horrible spectacle, nothing but the trunk and skull being left, and these being almost burned to a cinder. Their armour was found near them. About the remains there is apparently nothing to lead to positive identification, but the discovery of the armour near them and other circumstances render it impossible to be doubted that they were those of Dan Kelly and Steve Hart. The latter was a much smaller man than that of the younger Kelly, and this difference in size was noticeable in their remains. Constable Dwyer, by-the-by, who followed Father Gibney into the hotel, states that he was near enough to the bodies to recognise Dan Kelly.

As to Byrne's body, it was found in the entrance to the bar-room, which was on the East side of the house, and there was time to remove it from the building. But not before the right side was slightly scorched. This body likewise presented a dreadful appearance. It looked as if it had been ill-nourished. The thin face was black with smoke, and the arms were bent at right angles at the elbows, the stiff end joints below the elbows standing erect. The body was quite stiff, and its appearance and the position in which it was found corroborated the statement that Byrne died early yesterday morning. He is said to have received the fatal wound which was in the groin, while drinking a glass of whisky at the bar. He had a ring on his right hand which had belonged to Constable Scanlan, who was murdered by the gang on the Wombat Ranges. The body was dressed in a blue sack coat, tweed striped trousers, Crimean shirt, and very ill-fitting boots. Like Ned Kelly, Byrne wore a bushy beard.

In the out-house or kitchen immediately behind the main building the old man Martin Cherry, who was one of the prisoners of the gang, and who was so severely wounded that he could not leave the house when the other prisoners left, was found still living, but *in articulo mortis* from a wound in the groin. He was promptly removed to a short distance from the burning hotel and laid on the ground, when Father Gibney administered to him the

last sacraments. Cherry was insensible, and barely alive. Cherry, who was unmarried, was an old resident of the district and was employed as a platelayer and resided about a mile from Glenrowan. He was born at Limerick, Ireland, and was 60 years old. He is said by all who knew him to have been a quiet, harmless old man, and much regret was expressed at his death. He seems to have been shot by the attacking force, of course, unintentionally.

While the house was burning some explosions were heard inside. These were alarming at first, but it was soon ascertained that they were cartridges burning. Several gun barrels were found in the *débris*, and also the burnt carcase of a dog which had been shot during the *melée*. All that was left standing of the hotel was the lamp-post and the signboard bearing the following device, which in view of the carnage that had just been perpetrated within the walls of the hostelry, read strangely—

THE GLENROWAN INN
ANN JONES
BEST ACCOMMODATION.

In a small yard at the rear of the buildings four of the outlaws' horses, which had been purposely fired at early in the day, were found and were killed at once, to put them out of their agony. They were poor scrubbers. Two of them were shod. The police captured Byrne's horse—a fine animal.

About the same time that Mrs. Skillian appeared on the scene, Kate Kelly and another of her sisters were noticed, as were likewise Wild Wright and his brother Tom, and Dick Hart, brother of one of the outlaws. Mrs. Skillian seemed to appreciate the position most keenly, her younger sisters appearing at times rather unconcerned. Dick Hart, who was Steve Hart's senior, walked about very coolly.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

INTERVIEW WITH NED KELLY.

After the house had been burned Ned Kelly's three sisters and Tom Wright were allowed an interview with him. Tom Wright as well as the sisters kissed the wounded man, and a brief conversation ensued, Ned Kelly having to a certain extent recovered from the exhaustion consequent on his wound. At times his eyes were quite bright, and, although he was of course excessively weak, his remarkably powerful physique enabled him to talk rather freely. During the interview he stated:—"I was at last surrounded by the police, and only had a revolver, with which I fired four shots. But it was no good. I had half a mind to shoot myself. I loaded my rifle, but could not hold it after I was wounded. I had plenty of ammunition, but it was no good to me. I got shot in the arm, and told Byrne and Dan so. I could have got off, but when I saw them all pounding away, I told Dan I would see it over, and wait until morning."

"What on earth induced you to go to the hotel?" inquired a spectator.

"We could not do it anywhere else," replied Kelly, eyeing the spectators who were strangers to him suspiciously. "I would," he continued, "have fought them in the train, or else upset it if I had the chance. I don't care a —— who was in it, but I knew on Sunday morning there would be no usual passengers. I first tackled the line, and could not pull it up, and then came to Glenrowan station."

"Since the Jerilderie affair," remarked a spectator, "we thought you had gone to Queensland."

"It would not do for everyone to think the same way," was Kelly's reply. "If I were once right again," he continued, "I would go to the barracks, and shoot everyone of the —— traps, and not give one a chance."

Mrs. Skillian (to her brother).—"It's a wonder you did not keep behind a tree."

Ned Kelly.—“I had a chance of several policeman during the night, but declined to fire. My arm was broke at the first fire. I got away into the bush, and found my mare, and could have rushed away, but wanted to see the thing out, and remained in the bush.”

A sad scene ensued when Wild Wright led Mrs. Skillian to the horrible object which was all that remained of her brother Dan. She bent over it, raised a dirge-like cry, and wept bitterly. Dick Hart applied for the body of his brother, but he was told he could not have it until after the post mortem examination. The inquest on the bodies will be held at Benalla.

Michael Reardon, aged 18 years, was shot through the shoulder, but it was apparently only a flesh wound. The boy Jones, is dangerously shot in the thigh. Both have been sent to the Wangaratta Hospital.

Cannon was brought up as far as Seymour, but as the burning of Jones’s hotel had proved successful, it was countermanded.

THE ATTEMPT ON THE TRAIN.

According to Ned Kelly, the gang after shooting Sherritt at Sebastopol rode openly through the streets of Beechworth, and then came on to Glenrowan for the purpose of wrecking any special police train which might be sent after them, in the hope of destroying the blacktrackers. They descended on Glenrowan at about 3 o’clock on Sunday morning, and rousing all the inhabitants of the township bailed them up. Feeling unable to lift the rails themselves, they compelled the line-repairers of the district and others to do so. The spot selected was on the first turning after reaching Glenrowan at a culvert and on an incline.

“I was going down to meet the special train with some of my mates, and intended to rake it with shot; but it arrived before I expected, and then I returned to the hotel. I expected the train would go on, and I had the rails pulled up so that these —— blacktrackers might be settled. I do not say what brought me to Glenrowan, but it seems much. Anyhow I could have got away last night, for I got into the bush with my grey mare, and lay there all night. But I wanted to see the thing end. Why don’t the police use bullets instead of buckshot? I have got one charge of duck shot in my leg. One policeman who was firing at me was a splendid shot, but I do not know his name. I dare say I would have done well to have ridden away on my grey mare. The bullets that struck my armour felt like blows from a man’s fist. I wanted to fire into the carriages, but the police started on us too quickly. I expected the police to come.”

Inspector Sadlier.—“You wanted then to kill the people in the train?”

Kelly.—“Yes, of course I did; God help them, but they would have got shot all the same. Would they not have tried to kill me?”

THE BULLET-PROOF ARMOUR.

When the first attack subsided, the outlaws were heard calling, “Come on, you ——, the —— police can’t do us any harm.” The armour in which each member of the gang was clad was of a most substantial character. It was made of iron ¼ inch thick, and consisted of a long breast-plate, shoulder-plates, back-guard, and helmet. The helmet resembled a nail can without a crown, and with a long slit at the elevation of the eyes to look through. All these articles are believed to have been made by two men, one living near Greta, and the other near Oxley. The iron was procured by the larceny of plowshares, and larcenies of this kind having been rather frequent of late in the Kelly district, the police have begun to suspect that the gang were preparing for action. Ned Kelly’s armour alone weighed 97 lbs., a considerable weight to carry on horseback. There are five bullet marks on the helmet, three on the breast-plate, nine on the back-plate and one on the shoulder-plate. His wounds, so far as at present known, are:—Two on the right arm, several on the right leg, one on left foot, one on right hand, and two near the groin.

THE STATIONMASTER’S NARRATIVE.

John Stanistreet, the stationmaster at Glenrowan, told the story of the Glenrowan happenings later: “About 3 o’clock on Sunday morning a knock came to my door. I live at the gate house, within a hundred yards of the station, on the Melbourne side. I jumped out of bed, and, thinking it was someone wishing to get through the gates in a hurry, I proceeded to dress, and after getting half my clothes on I went to the door. Just as I arrived at the door it was burst in. Previous to that there was some impertinent talk outside to get me to open quickly. When the door was burst in I asked, ‘Who are you; what is this for?’ The answer was, ‘I am Ned Kelly.’ I saw a man clad in an overcoat, who walked in with me to my bedroom. Mrs. Stanistreet was there in bed. There were two little girls and one infant. Ned Kelly said to me, ‘You have to come with me and take up the rails.’ I replied, ‘Wait until I dress;’ and I completed my dress, and followed him out of the house on to the railway line. I found seven or eight men standing at the gate looking over the line near Mrs. Jones’ Glenrowan Inn. Ned Kelly, speaking to me, said, ‘Now you direct those men how to raise some of the rails, as we expect

a special train very soon. I objected, saying, 'I know nothing about lifting rails off the line.' The only persons that understand it are the repairers, and they live outside of the town. Ned went on alone to Reardon, the platelayer's house, which stands about a quarter of a mile along the line southward. I and the other men were left in charge of Steve Hart. Ned Kelly went on to Reardon's house; Steve Hart gave me a prod with his gun in the side, and said, 'You get the tools out that are necessary to raise those rails.' I replied, 'I have not the key of the chest.' He said, 'We'll break the lock,' and he got one of the men to do so. They took all the tools out of the chest, which lay in a back shed or tool house between the station and the crossing. Soon afterwards Ned and two of the repairers, Reardon and Sullivan arrived. Ned, accompanied by these two men proceeded down the line towards Wangaratta. We stood with Hart in the cold at the hut for about two hours. At last Ned Kelly and the repairer returned. Ned enquired about the signalling on the line—how I stopped trains with the signal lamps. I told him white is right, and red wrong, and green generally 'come along'. He then said, 'There is a special train coming, and you will give no signal.' Then speaking to Hart, he said, 'Watch his countenance, and if he gives any signal shoot him.' He marched us into my house, and left us under the charge of Steve Hart. Subsequently other persons were made prisoners and lodged in my house to about the number of seventeen. They were the Reardon family, the Ryan family, Tom Cameron, son of the gatekeeper on the line, and others whom I don't remember. We were locked up all day on Sunday, but we were allowed out under surveillance. The women were allowed to go to Jones's hotel about dark. All the men but myself and family went to the hotel soon afterwards. Steve Hart remained with us all night. During the night Dan Kelly relieved Hart, and he was afterwards relieved by Byrne. Just before the special train arrived this morning, I was ordered by Hart, who was on and off duty throughout the night, to follow him over to Jones's and not to signal the train. I went into the back kitchen, and found there Mrs. Jones with her daughter about fourteen and two younger children. There was also a man there named Neil M'Kean. By this time the train had arrived and firing was going on furiously, and we all took shelter about the chimney. The house is a mere shell of a structure. The gang disappeared from me when the firing commenced. A bullet passed right through the kitchen, and grazed the temple of Jane Jones, aged fourteen, daughter of the landlord. She exclaimed, 'I am shot', and she turned to me I saw her head bleeding, and told her it was nothing serious. Poor Mrs. Jones commenced to cry bitterly. I left the kitchen and went into the backyard and passed the gang there. They were standing together at the kitchen. I cannot say whether there were three or four of them. One of them said, 'If you go out you will be shot.' I walked

straight to my house. Firing was going on, but I was uninjured. Of course, I was challenged as I passed through. I omitted to state that on Sunday night, Steve Hart demanded my revolver from me, and I had to give it up."

STATEMENT OF THE REV. M. GIBNEY.

"I am a Catholic priest of Perth, Western Australia. I was travelling on the north-eastern line, having left Melbourne by the first down train that morning. On arriving at Glenrowan Station, having heard while going there that the Kelly gang were at Jones's hotel, I got out of the train, abandoning my intention to proceed further on. Consequently my presence at the scene was, so to speak, accidental. I got out at Glenrowan, because I thought I might be of use in my clerical capacity. The train arrived at Glenrowan between 12 noon and 1 o'clock, and I went at once into the room where Ned Kelly was lying at the station. I don't think he is dying. He is penitent, and shows a very good disposition. When I asked him to say, 'Lord Jesus have mercy on me,' he said it, and added, 'It's not to-day I began to say that.' I heard his confession which I shall not be expected to repeat. As I at first thought he was dying I anointed him."

STATEMENT OF GUARD DOWSETT.

Jesse Dowsett, guard on the Victorian railways, states.—"I came up with the train that left Benalla on 5 o'clock on Monday morning, and on arriving at Glenrowan I found that they were still firing at the hotel. I had a Colt's breech-loading revolver supplied to me by our Department. A woman was screaming near the hotel. I crawled up under the fence on my hands and knees, and got within 30 yards of the hotel. I called upon her in a low voice to come on, and she walked towards me. She proved to be Mrs. Reardon, with an infant in her arms. I caught hold of her, and brought her down to the platform, where I handed her over to the reporters. After getting some cartridges from another guard, I made my way back again to the front from tree to tree. Got pretty close up to the house, and was challenged by the police. I replied, 'railway', went along side of a constable and at this time there was warm firing from the skillion window. All at once I saw the figure of a man looming up in the bush behind us, about 150 yards away. I called out to Senior Constable Kelly, 'My God, who is that?' The Senior Constable ordered the troopers, who were nearer the man to challenge him, and to shoot him down if he did not answer. The man replied by firing four or five shots at us with a revolver, and steadily advanced, as if making for the hotel. We then made for cover, and went for him. After we had fired at him for

some time, he sat down behind a tree, evidently to reload his weapon. I asked Senior Constable Kelly: 'Cannot you pot him off from there?' The Senior Constable fired, and I saw that his bullet hit the right-hand side of the tree. He fired again and I said, 'By ——, you've hit him on the hand,' for I saw that he had been wounded there. The man then left his cover and came straight towards us, walking right out into the open. I fired five shots at him, point blank, from a distance of twelve to fifteen yards, and hearing the bullets thud upon him with a metallic sound, and seeing him still advancing, I exclaimed, 'This must be the devil.' He then tapped his helmet with his revolver and said, 'You dogs, you cannot shoot me.' I then thought the man was mad, and that he was ringing a bell. He then went into the fork of a fallen tree, and I went up to the butt end of it. I said to him, 'You had better surrender, old man. Throw up your hands.' He replied, 'Never, while I have a shot left.' I then took a pot shot at him over the log, and said, 'How do you like that, old man?' He rose up and said, 'How do you like this,' firing at me. I was not hit. At this juncture Sergeant Steele left his tree and ran up towards the man to within twelve or fifteen yards, and fired. The man dropped behind the log. Steele, Senior Constable Kelly and I ran up. Steele seized the man by the hand, Kelly caught him by the head-gear, and I caught hold of his revolver. Kelly pulled off his helmet, and Steele, catching hold of him by the beard, said, 'By heavens, it is Ned—I said I would be at the death of him.' Reporters came running up at the same time, and with their assistance we carried our prisoner to the railway station."

Ned Kelly's armour has been on view at the police camp all day, and has been inspected by many of the residents and visitors from Melbourne and elsewhere.

Who Shot Martin Cherry?

A number of the persons who were made prisoners by the Kelly gang at Glenrowan seemed to doubt the statement that Ned Kelly shot the line repairer Cherry. Most of the prisoners were, however, in the back rooms at the time, whilst others were too excited to note every incident. The police, moreover, are fully convinced of the truth of the statement, and furnished the names of the prisoners who, they say, made the disclosure on condition that they should not be published at present.

An Outsize Bomb.

Ned Kelly stated that it was the intention of the gang, after destroying the blacktrackers and the police, to proceed to Benalla, and to blow up the police camp and the bank. This was put down at first as mere “blow,” but a discovery has been made which shows that the outlaws were in real earnest. During Thursday, Mr. Stanistreet, the stationmaster at Glenrowan, found an oil-can containing 45lb. of blasting powder concealed behind a log in the vicinity of M’Donnell’s hotel. The can was taken possession of by Senior Constable Kelly this morning, but still lies at Glenrowan until the magazine waggon is sent to bring it down. Previous to this a quantity of fuse was found in swags carried by the packhorses left by the gang at M’Donnell’s hotel.

CHAPTER XII.

BEFORE THE TRIAL.

NED KELLY BROUGHT TO MELBOURNE.

(*Hundreds of people waited at the North Melbourne station for the arrival of Ned Kelly, and when the train arrived the platform was rushed. Doctors had been in attendance throughout the whole journey. On the same train was Supt. Hare. According to the medical reports the injury to his hand had been much exaggerated.*)

"I came down in the same van as Ned Kelly," said Dr. Chas. Ryan. "He spoke very little, and seemed like a man in a trance, and glared at any strangers he saw. He had had no sleep the previous night. Most men wounded as he was would have been far more prostrated, but he has a splendid constitution. Moreover, his body looked as if it had been well nourished. When I asked him if he had been pretty well fed, he said that he had. But he did not add where he had got the food. I expected to find him after the life he had been leading, very dirty; but his skin was as clean as if he had just come out of a Turkish bath. I attended to his wounds, and now and then gave him some brandy and water. He seemed grateful, but gave me the idea that he wished to die. . . . His wounds were not likely to prove mortal in an ordinary case . . . . but the prisoner is likewise suffering from a severe mental shock and moreover wants to die. That must be borne in mind when considering his chances of recovery. . . . He told me he didn't think that his brother and Hart shot themselves, because they were 'Two cowards, and hadn't enough pluck to kill themselves.' "

(*There follows a report officially given by Dr. A. Shields, Medical Officer, Melbourne Gaol. A special report from Benalla stated that just before Kelly was taken away, Senior Constable Kelly had a short interview with him in his cell. The Senior Constable said, "Look here, Ned, now that it is all over, I want to ask you one question before you go, and that is—did you shoot Constable Fitzpatrick at Greta, when he went to arrest your brother?" The prisoner replied, "Yes, I did. I shot him in the wrist, and the*

statements which have been made that Fitzpatrick inflicted the wound himself are quite false.")

KELLY IN GAOL.

Kelly had a good night's sleep on Tuesday, and was suffering less pain yesterday than on the previous day. As he appeared to be stronger, the prisoner was permitted by the medical officer to see his mother, whom he had urgently requested to see . . . . He was very anxious to obtain information with regard to the surviving relatives, as well as about those who had perished in the fray. . . .

There was a prospect this morning of some difficulty rising in connection with the magisterial inquiries proposed to be held on the charred remains of Dan Kelly and Hart. The remains were handed over to the friends on the Monday night, and were taken on Monday to Mrs. Skillian's hut at Sevenmile Creek. The authorities subsequently stated that, after all, it might be better to go through the usual formalities, and communicated with the magistrate of Wangaratta, on the subject. The magistrates there, however, replied that they could not get a trap to take them to Greta, and altogether seemed disinclined to undertake the duty. No one could have gone to the Seven Mile Creek without a strong body of police, and even then the visit would not have been unattended with danger. Indeed, one of the Kelly sympathisers told the police that the remains would be interred at a certain hour on Wednesday whether inquiries were held or not, and reports came from Greta that all the Kelly sympathisers there had made themselves intoxicated at the wake, and were bounding about armed, and threatening to attack the police. These reports were to some extent corroborated by the well-known fact that when the friends of the gang left Glenrowan they took a large quantity of spirits with them. Supt. Sadlier, however, suggested that a magistrate should come down as far as Glenrowan, and after taking what evidence was obtainable there give an order for interment, Senior Constable Kelly, with four troopers accordingly proceeded to Glenrowan by the forenoon train and two or three policemen were directed to come down from Wangaratta. Their orders were to accompany the magistrate to Mrs. Skillian's hut if it was necessary to go there, and if that really had to be done a disturbance and probably more bloodshed, would have been the result. At the last moment, however, it was decided that the game was not worth the candle, a magistrate's order for interment would suffice, and the police were, therefore, recalled.

It is stated that Dick Hart openly dared the police at M'Donnell's hotel, Glenrowan, to interfere in any way with the funerals of Dan Kelly and Steve Hart. The words attributed to him are, "If you want the bodies back, you will have to fight for them." From the statements of two men who came into Benalla from Greta to-day, it appears that on the arrival of the bodies there was great excitement in the district. The remains were laid on a table in Mrs. Skillian's hut which was soon crowded. So great was the crush that Mrs. Skillian lost her temper, and seizing a gun hustled the crowd out, and then allowed them to view the remains in couples. Many of the male sympathisers were armed, and whilst in a drunken state professed to be anxious for a brush with the police. It is further averred that one of the relatives of the Kellys held up his hand over the remains, and swore to Kate Kelly that he would avenge the slaughter of the gang. His name has been given to the police. Lest any disturbance should take place in the district whilst the sympathisers are in their present state of intoxication and excitement, Senior Constable Kelly with four troopers have been sent on again this evening to Glenrowan, and will remain there all night. Up to the present, however, things are quiet.

Ned Kelly's mare was found on the railway line a few miles from Glenrowan, saddled and bridled . . .

Ned Kelly's Condition.

At a late hour last night Ned Kelly was reported to be still progressing favourably, but an increase in temperature had manifested itself, and gives rise to some doubt as to his ultimate recovery. During the past few days he has grumbled considerably at the diet supplied to him, which has been chiefly of a farinaceous nature, while he requested animal food. . . .

The only topic of conversation here, apart from the political situation, which has, however, assumed a somewhat insignificant position in comparison with the extermination of the Kelly gang, is the conduct of the police who were in the hut in which Aaron Sherritt was shot on Saturday last. The inquest, it was supposed, would lead to a thorough investigation of the whole matter, and that all the facts would come to light. The result of the enquiry is not, however, regarded as satisfactory, and the general opinion is strongly against the police, who, it is thought might have done something to capture the outlaws at Sebastopol . . . .

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.

Straight from the Shoulder. July 2nd, 1880.

(To the Editor of "The Argus")

"Sir,—May I offer a few remarks bearing on the capture of the Kelly gang. There is, I think, little doubt that they, through foolhardiness and want of foresight gave themselves into the hands of the police. They had plenty of opportunities, both before and during the fight, and it appears, from a paragraph in your yesterday's issue, that but for the Chief Secretary ordering a train, the police did not intend leaving Melbourne until next day, thus displaying a fondness for warm beds and daylight and a reluctance to put the country to unnecessary expense that is quite touching. However, what I wish more particularly to draw attention to is this—from the reports I find there were some 30 or 40 prisoners in the house with the Kellys. These prisoners—men, women and children—were not even given a chance to escape, but were fired on at once, and I think I may say that those that were killed were ruthlessly butchered. How would matters have stood had 20 of them been killed? After all what did the police do? They shot Byrne, and they wounded Ned Kelly, when he stood out to be shot at. It is doubtful whether the younger Kelly and Hart did not shoot themselves. Everybody, is of course, highly pleased at the dispersion of the gang, but it seems a pity that such inhumanity was shown towards the harmless prisoners. The end of the encounter was as ruthlessly conducted as the beginning. Ned Kelly was in custody, Byrne was shot, and the other two outlaws supposed to be dead. Yet these 30 or 40 valiant policemen were quite easily restrained from rushing the place and determined on burning it down, quite regardless of the fact of which they were well aware, that there was a wounded prisoner inside. The police were, of course, quite right not to expose themselves more than was necessary, but their caution in this respect contrasts unfavourably with their reckless disregard for other people's lives. I suppose the blacks would look upon the affair as a 'dispersion.' What about the black that was wounded?

Being a coloured gentleman, I suppose he does not count, as I have not seen him mentioned in the list of casualties.

"Yours, &c.,
"T.H.B."

(To the Editor of "The Argus")

"Sir,—Now that the Kelly excitement is cooling, some of its features begin to excite comment. People are heard asking such questions as the following:—

"Why were the police permitted to fire into a slightly-built weatherboard house which was well known to be crammed with men, women and little children, killing and wounding indiscriminately? Again, who was it that permitted the police to burn the building when it was known that an innocent and helpless man lay there, and must be destroyed, and was in fact only saved by a civilian's pluck and humanity?

"Next, who was it that permitted the bodies of Daniel Kelly and Hart to be handed to a defiant pack of thieves and lawless vagabonds, whose sympathy and help had so long saved them from the gallows?

"Who allowed these bodies to be carted away before the inquest could be held? And why, when the tribe had got the bodies, and got drunk and insolvent over them, did the authorities first claim them, and when denied and dared, recall their orders and give these desperadoes best?

"If it was necessary to hold an enquiry upon Byrne, why was it unnecessary to hold one over Hart and Daniel Kelly? What a farce it would be to hold one over Edward Kelly when he has been executed; and yet that has been the rule, and is the law.

"The police first promote a drunken orgie amongst a set of desperate rogues by improperly giving them the bodies to wake, and when the corpses are needed for the Coroner they permit the law to be defied and insulted.

"Are there any Kelly sympathisers in the force, or are they simply muddleheaded and craven? We shall next hear of the erection of monuments inscribed with expressions of admiration for the careers and sorrow for the fate of these outlaws. The stones will become shrines, and be venerated by the neighbourhood, tainting its moral atmosphere by exalting these murderers into heroes, in the eyes of the young in particular. Their graves should have been a nameless hole in a graveyard—out of sight, out of mind.

“If we experience further difficulties with these people, let us thank our policemen. . . .

“Yours, &c.,
“GEORGE S. GRIFFITH.”

CHAPTER XIV.

NED IN COURT.

Hidden Treasure.

August 6, 1880.

Mr. D. Gaunson arrived to take up Ned Kelly's defence, and Mr. Chomley to assist Mr. C. H. Smyth in the prosecution. Dick Hart came by the same train, but no other sympathisers. According to the surmises of the gentlemen behind the scenes, and consequently a good authority, the reason why Mr. Gaunson has been engaged is that he may be able to secure a private interview with the prisoner and his friends. It is asserted that the gang carried away a great deal more money from the banks they stuck-up than was reported by the officials. There is no doubt that the balance of the booty is planted, and that Ned Kelly is the only person alive who knows where the plant is concealed; hence the desire to have a private interview between him and his friends. Mr. Gaunson, on his arrival, proceeded at once to the gaol, and had a long interview with his client.

(*In the column next to this in the "Argus" is a telegraphed article entitled "The Tallarook Mystery." In this report there is mention of a police hunt for a wild man who had been living for some years in some mysterious cave. The first cave in the series where he lived and slept was black with smoke, and so was the furniture in it. The wild man turned out to be a Swede and the caves proved to be those first inhabited by Harry Power, the notorious bushranger, who first initiated Ned Kelly into the arts of outlawry. The Kellys certainly took refuge in them.*)

August 7, 1880.

(*Three and a half columns are occupied in the "Argus" by a telegraphed report from Beechworth of the preliminary examination of Ned Kelly in the police court. The charge was that he had, on the 26th day of October, 1878, murdered Michael Scanlan at Stringy Bark Creek. He was also charged with having murdered Thomas Lonigan. A lengthy argument ensued between Mr. Gaunson, counsel for the defence, and Mr. C. A. Smyth, counsel for the*

prosecution. Mr. Gaunson wanted a remand to have time to prepare a defence. This was refused, however, and the case went on. The chief point of the day's proceedings was that Mr. Gaunson failed to secure freedom of access to Kelly by his friends and relatives. He telegraphed to the Chief Secretary urging that the restrictions should be cancelled as illegal, arbitrary and unjust to a man standing for his life. Below are given extracts from Constable M'Intyre's evidence.)

Constable M'Intyre's Evidence.

"Argus," August 7, 1880.

"I left Mansfield with Constables Scanlan and Lonigan in charge of Sergeant Kennedy. We left at about 5 o'clock in the morning to search for Edward and Daniel Kelly. . . . We camped at Stringy Bark Creek, about twenty miles from Mansfield. . . . There had been a hut on the clearing, but only remains of it were left standing. A number of logs were lying about. The opening was about an acre or two in area; we camped immediately behind the old hut, erecting a tent there. . . . On the following morning, 26th of October, after breakfast Sergeant Kennedy and Constable Scanlan left to patrol on horseback, and Lonigan and I remained in charge of the camp. Scanlan carried a revolver and Kennedy had a Spencer repeating rifle. Lonigan and I had a revolver each, and one double-barrelled fowling-piece. During the day I was occupied for some time in baking bread and working about the tent. Lonigan was looking after the horses, and sometimes reading a book. He had also two saddle-horses and a pack-horse to look after. Kennedy and Scanlan left about 6 o'clock in the morning. About 12 o'clock Lonigan called my attention to some noise in the creek. I went down the creek to search, and took my fowling-piece. I could not find the cause of the noise, and thought it was a wombat. On my way back I fired two shots at parrots. I reloaded the gun with small shot, and placed it in the tent. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon Lonigan and I kindled a large fire to guide Kennedy and Scanlan, and prevent them from getting bushed. This fire was lit about twenty yards from the tent, and was at two logs which crossed each other. About ten minutes to 5 o'clock I went to the tent for a billy to make tea. I had the tea made, and Lonigan was standing on the opposite side of the fire, when I suddenly heard some voices calling out, 'Bail up; hold up your hands!' I quickly turned round, and saw four men, each armed, with a gun at his shoulder, and pointing it in front of himself. I noticed the man on the right of the party particularly, and saw that his weapon was in a fair line for my chest. I was unarmed, and held out my arms horizontally. I then saw the same man point the gun more to the right and fire. He fired at Lonigan, who

had started to run towards a tree. He was about fourteen yards from Lonigan when he fired, and I heard Lonigan fall immediately the shot was fired. He had only run four or five steps. I heard him breathing stentorously and heavily. The man at the right of the party was the prisoner at the bar. The bushrangers were in a line, two or three yards between each other. When the prisoner had discharged his gun he threw it into his left arm, put his right hand behind his back, and drew a revolver and called out to me, 'Keep your hands up!' I raised my hands above my shoulder. At this time my revolver and fowling-piece were both in the tent. The prisoner and the three others rushed up to where I was standing, stood at a distance of about three yards from me, and covered my chest with their firearms, three of them with guns, the prisoner with a revolver. Prisoner said to me, 'Have you got any firearms?' I replied, 'I have not.' Lonigan was plunging along the grass very heavily, and as the bushrangers rushed up to me, he cried out, 'Oh, Christ! I'm shot!' The prisoner was within hearing distance. Six or eight seconds afterwards Lonigan ceased to struggle, and to breathe a few minutes afterwards. I saw him stretched out on his back, and that he was dead. When I replied to the prisoner that I had no firearms, he asked, 'Where is your revolver?' I said it was at the tent. He then said to his mates, 'Keep him covered, lads.' They kept me covered with their guns, and the prisoner himself searched me. He passed his hands all over my body and under my coat. Finding nothing on me, he jumped across a log to where Lonigan was lying. He remained away a moment, and then returned with Lonigan's revolver in his hand. He said, 'Oh, dear, what a pity that man tried to get away.' One of the others—Dan Kelly—said, 'He was a plucky fellow; you see how he caught at his revolver?' and moved his hand at the same side as Lonigan had done. The prisoner went over to the tent, and in the meantime the other three had lowered their firearms, but still kept them pointed in my direction. When he returned from the tent, he had my revolver, and he told his mates to let me go. They then all went to the tent. I remained standing near the fire. Daniel Kelly returned to me with a pair of handcuffs. Edward Kelly came up at the same time, and heard his brother say, 'We will put these upon the ——' I appealed to the prisoner, saying, 'What is the use of putting these on me? How can I get away while you are all armed as you are?' Prisoner said to Dan, 'All right; don't put them on him. This,' tapping his rifle, 'is better than handcuffs.' Then turning to me he said, 'Mind you don't try to get away, because if you do I'll shoot you. If I had to track you to the police station, I would shoot you there.' Dan remarked, 'The b——s would soon put the handcuffs on us if they had us.' We then all went to the tent. They called upon me to go with them. I recognised Edward and Dan Kelly from the description, and a photograph we had of Edward Kelly.

When I arrived at the hut the prisoner was sitting outside the tent with his gun across his knee. The other three were inside the tent. Prisoner said to me, 'This is a curious old gun for a man to be going about the country with.' I replied, 'It is, but perhaps it is better than it looks.' He then said, 'You might say that, for I will back it against any gun in the country. I can shoot a kangaroo at 100 yards.' It was an old short-barrelled gun. It seemed to be rifled, and the stock and barrel were tied together with a waxed string, which covered three or four inches. At this time the prisoner took possession of the fowling-pieces I had left in the tent. He then said to me, 'Who is that over there?' pointing to Lonigan's body. I replied, 'That's Lonigan.' He said, 'No; that is not Lonigan, for I knew him well!' I repeated, 'Yes, it is Lonigan,' when he said, 'Well, I am glad of that, for the —— gave me a hiding in Benalla once.' Dan remarked, 'He will lock no more of us poor —— up,' at which the prisoner smiled."

(*The evidence given by Constable M'Intyre then goes into details of a general conversation between himself and the four bushrangers. Continuing his evidence the following day, he told of the shooting of Scanlan and Kennedy. Below are given some significant extracts.*)

At this time it was getting late—between half-past 5 and 6 o'clock—and I expected that Kennedy and Scanlan would shortly arrive. I therefore said again that I would try to get them to surrender if he would promise faithfully not to shoot them. A moment afterwards Kennedy and Scanlan came in sight, 100 yards down the creek. Prisoner said, "Hist! lads, here they come." He said to me, "You stop at that log and give no alarm, or I will put a hole in you." . . . I stepped towards Kennedy and said out loud to him, when five or six yards away from him, "Oh, sergeant, I think you had better dismount and surrender, for you are surrounded." At the same time the prisoner cried out, "Bail up! Hold up your hands!" Kennedy smiled, and playfully put his hand upon his revolver, which was in a case on his side. Immediately he did so the prisoner fired at him, but missed. Kennedy's face then assumed a serious aspect. I turned and looked at the prisoner and his mates. They came out from their concealment, ran up with their guns, each crying out, "Bail up! Hold up your hands!" When the prisoner fired at Kennedy he was behind the log, resting on his right knee. He then threw down his discharged gun, picked up the loaded one, and pointed it in the direction of Scanlan. I again looked at Kennedy, and saw him throw himself on his face on his horse's neck, and roll off on the offside. At the time he did this about four more shots were fired. Scanlan, who had pulled up at about thirty yards from the prisoner, was in the act of dismounting when he first heard the call, "Bail up!" In dismounting he fell on his knees, and caught at his rifle as if he were

taking it off his shoulders, over which it was slung in a strap. He endeavoured to get up on his feet, but again fell on his hands and knees, and when in that position he was shot under the right arm. The prisoner covered Scanlan with his gun, and fired at him, but three or four other shots were fired by the others at the same time. Seeing Scanlan fall, I expected no mercy, and therefore caught and mounted Kennedy's horse, which was close to me. Before I mounted the horse was restless with the firing. I turned his head north, and he moved a full length of himself whilst I struggled to get into the saddle. Having mounted, I got the horse to start. Kennedy must have seen me mount, but he said nothing. Whilst I was riding away, I heard shots fired, but at whom I could not say. I had seen that Scanlan was hit under the right arm, for I noticed a blood spot on his coat immediately after he was shot, and *he fell over on his back*. . . .

(*Cross-examined by Ned Kelly's lawyer, Mr. Gaunson, Constable M'Intyre admitted that he had no warrant for the arrest of the Kellys, and he doubted whether Sergeant Kennedy, Lonigan or Scanlan had one. M'Intyre also stated, "Fitzpatrick is not now a member of the police force. He has been discharged, but I do not know the reason. If he possessed truthfulness, uprightness and decency, I believe he would not have been discharged from the force. Although Fitzpatrick has been dismissed from the force, I have not heard of Mrs. Kelly's sentence being commuted.*")

August 10, 1880.

(*The hearing of the evidence against Ned was continued at great length. As usual, however, the chief interest is in the facts to be gleaned from the special telegraphic despatches. One of these explains in detail how the Kelly gang with their sympathisers made horse-stealing a well-organised business. The chief receivers of the stolen horses were two brothers named Gustav and William Baumgarten, living at Barnawartha, on the Murray. They posed as respectable well-to-do farmers, but in the end they were caught, tried, and W. Baumgarten was sentenced to four years, while Gustav Baumgarten was acquitted. Two other associates, Cook and Kennedy, were sentenced to six years each.* *See extract dated October 14, 1878.*)

August 11, 1880.

(*During the further hearing of the evidence against Kelly, mention was made of the life of the outlaw, written by himself. One witness, Edward Richard Living, who was a teller at the Bank of New South Wales at Jerilderie, mentioned that part of this autobiography had been published. It appears to have referred chiefly to Kelly's reasons for killing the police. The*

prosecutor, Mr. Smyth, said that the documents might not be received as evidence. It would be interesting to-day to discover a copy of it. The prisoner was formally committed for trial at Beechworth on the 14th October.)

That Hidden Treasure.

A rumour is very current in Beechworth at present that some difficulty has arisen in connection with the plant of the gang. That there is a large amount of their loot planted somewhere is undoubted, but where it is remains a mystery. If it is concealed in the bush, no one but the members of the gang knows of it. Ned Kelly is, of course, the only person alive who can tell where it is, and even had he an opportunity of giving his friends the desired information, it might be, after all, as difficult to discover as the pot of sovereigns which were hidden by Weiberg at the Tarwin River. On the other hand, it may have been concealed in a place he could easily explain to his friends. The rumour is that a certain friend has managed to learn where the loot is, that he has "sprung the plant," and that he has disappeared. By whom this statement was originally made is not known to the authorities. So far as can be ascertained, it must either have come from a sympathiser, or have arisen from peculiarities that have been observed in the conduct of certain relatives of the gang.

(*Kelly was committed for trial for having murdered Constable Scanlan. Despite his counsel's protests he was still forbidden to receive any friends or relatives, and was not even allowed to have the daily papers.*)

October 28, 1880.

(*We now take an extract from the "Sydney Morning Herald." The following paragraph is taken from "Our Melbourne Letter," October 25, but not printed until October 28.*)

We are not only improving commercially, according to our political authorities, but morally also. Consequently, the police are being reduced in numbers, some districts being left without any such protection. This is very encouraging to the dangerous classes, and will greatly extend the number of those who are grateful to the present Government. The complaint has been that we are not enough police protected, and that those who are robbed and half killed are unreasonable in their demands for more constables, seeing that crime must always be a part of our social institutions, or else, why do

we build gaols and make judges? Probably this is the feeling of Mr. Edward Kelly, whose trial is fixed for to-day, but who will very likely be accommodated with a further postponement, being, as he is, so very popular a character, and enjoying, as he does, such a large measure of public sympathy.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIAL AND CONVICTION OF NED KELLY

Kelly's trial commenced this morning, Thursday, October 28, before Judge Barry. The interest in the proceedings seems to have somewhat subsided, as the crowd was not so great as on the previous occasions. An application was made for postponement until next sittings, but the Judge said he did not feel justified in acceding, as the public time was devoted to the discharge of public duties. . . .

The trial lasted until nearly 11 tonight, when the evidence was more than half gone through. There was nothing new elicited. The jury are locked up for the night. The trial will finish some time to-morrow. The evidence given traced out the career of the Kellys from 1878, and has already been several times published.

The trial of Kelly was resumed this (Friday) morning. The attendance on the part of the public was much smaller, and there was an absence of all excitement. Prisoner appeared listless at times, but generally paid great attention to the evidence. The witnesses examined were Frank Beecroft, draper's assistant; Scott, bank manager at Euroa; Henry Richards, constable at Jerilderie; Edward Living, clerk in the Bank of N.S.W. at Jerilderie; J. W. Tarleton; Senior Constable Kelly and Sergeant Steele. This closed the case for the Crown, and Mr. Bindon addressed the Court for prisoner. When he concluded his speech, Judge Barry summed up, only occupying a few minutes, and the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. The prisoner, having been asked in the usual way if he had any statement to make, said, "Well, it is rather too late for me to speak now. I thought of speaking this morning and all day, but there was little use. There is little use blaming anyone now. Nobody knew about my case except myself, and I wish I had insisted on being allowed to examine the witnesses myself. If I had examined them I am confident I would have thrown a different light on the case. It is not that I fear death; I fear it as little as to drink a cup of tea. On the evidence that has been given, no juryman could have given any other verdict. That is my

opinion. But, as I say, if I had examined the witnesses, I would have shown matters in a different light, because no man understood the case as I do myself. I do not blame anybody, neither Mr. Bindon nor Mr. Gaunson, but Mr. Bindon knew nothing about my case. I lay blame on myself that I did not get up yesterday and examine the witnesses; but I thought that if I did so it would look like bravado and flashness."

The Court-crier, having called upon all to observe a strict silence, whilst the Judge pronounced the awful sentence of death, his Honor said:—"Edward Kelly, the verdict pronounced by the jury is one that you must have fully expected."

The Prisoner: "Yes, under the circumstances."

His Honor: "No circumstances that I can conceive could have altered the result of your trial."

The Prisoner: "Perhaps not from what you now conceive, but if you had heard me examine the witnesses it would have been different."

His Honor: "I will give you credit for all the skill you appear to desire to assume."

The Prisoner: "No, I don't wish to assume anything. There is no flashness nor bravado about me. It is not that I want to save my life, but because I know I should have been capable of clearing myself of the charge, and I could have saved my life in spite of all against me."

His Honor: "The facts are so numerous and so convincing, not only as regards the original offence with which you are charged, but with respect to a long series of transactions, covering a period of eighteen months, that no rational person would hesitate to arrive at any other conclusion but that the verdict of the jury is irresistible and that it is right. I have no desire whatever to inflict upon you any personal remarks. It is not becoming that I should endeavour to aggravate the sufferings with which your mind must be sincerely agitated."

The Prisoner: "No; I don't think that. My mind is as easy as the mind of any man in this world, as I am prepared to show before God and man."

His Honor: "It is blasphemous for you to say that. You appear to revel in the idea of having put men to death!"

The Prisoner: "More men than I have put men to death, but I am the last man in the world that would take a man's life. Two years ago, even if my own life were at stake, and I am confident that if I thought a man would

shoot me, I would rather give him a chance of keeping his life and would part rather with my own. But if I knew that through him innocent persons' lives were at stake, I certainly would have to shoot him if he forced me to do so; but I would want to know that he was really going to take an innocent life."

His Honor: "Your statement involves a cruelly wicked charge of perjury against a phalanx of witnesses."

The Prisoner: "I dare say; but a day will come at a bigger Court than this, when we shall see which is right and which is wrong. No matter how long a man lives he is bound to come to judgment somewhere, and as well here as anywhere. It will be different the next time there is a Kelly trial, for they are not all killed. It would have been for the good of the Crown if I had examined the witnesses, and I would have stopped a lot of the reward, I can assure you; and I don't know but I won't do it yet if allowed."

His Honor: "An offence of this kind is of no ordinary character. Murders have been discovered which had been committed under circumstances of great atrocity. They proceeded from motives other than those which actuated you. They had their origin in many sources. Some have been committed from a sordid desire to take from others the property they had acquired; some from jealousy; some from a desire of revenge, but yours is a more aggravated crime, and one of larger proportions; for, with a party of men, you took arms against society, organised as it is for mutual protection and for respect of law."

The Prisoner: "That is how the evidence came out here. It appeared that I deliberately took up arms of my own accord, and induced the other three men to join me for the purpose of doing nothing better but shooting down the police."

His Honor: "In new communities, where the bonds of societies are not so well linked together as in older countries, there is, unfortunately, a class which disregards the evil consequences of crime. Foolish, inconsiderate, ill-conducted, and unprincipled youths unfortunately abound, and unless they are made to consider the consequences of crime, they are led to imitate notorious felons whom they regard as self-made heroes. It is right, therefore, that they should be asked to consider and reflect upon what the life of a felon is. A felon who has cut himself off from all, and who declines all the affections, charities, and all the obligations of society, is as helpless and degraded as a wild beast of the field; he has nowhere to lay his head; he had no one to prepare for him the comforts of life; he suspects his friends, and he

dreads his enemies. He is in constant alarm lest his pursuers should reach him, and his only hope is that he might lose his life in what he considers a glorious struggle for existence. That is the life of an outlaw or felon, and it would be well for those young men who are so foolish as to consider that it is brave of a man to sacrifice the lives of his fellow-creatures in carrying out his own wild ideas, to see that it is a life to be avoided by every possible means, and to reflect that the unfortunate termination of the felon's life is a miserable death. New South Wales joined with Victoria in providing ample inducement to persons to assist in having you and your companions apprehended; but by some spell, which I cannot understand—a spell which exists in all lawless communities, more or less, and which may be attributed either to a sympathy for the outlaws, or a dread of the consequences which would result from the performance of their duty—no persons were found who would be tempted by the reward or love of country, or the love of order, to give you up. The love of obedience to the law has been set aside, for reasons difficult to explain, and there is something extremely wrong in a country where a lawless band of men are able to live for eighteen months disturbing society. During your short life you have stolen, according to your own statements, over 200 horses."

The Prisoner: "Who proves that?"

His Honor: "More than one witness has testified that you made that statement on several occasions."

The Prisoner: "That charge has never been proved against me, and it is held in English law that a man is innocent until he is found guilty."

His Honor: "You are self-accused. The statement was made voluntarily by yourself that you and your companions committed attacks on two banks, and appropriated therefrom large sums of money amounting to several thousands of pounds. Further, I cannot conceal from myself the fact that an expenditure of £50,000 has been rendered necessary in consequence of acts with which you and your party have been connected. We have had samples of felons such as Bradley and O'Connor, Clarke, Gardiner, Melville, Morgan, Scott and Smith, all of whom have come to ignominious deaths. Still the effect expected from their punishment has not been produced. This is much to be deplored. When such examples as these are so often repeated, society must be reorganised, or it must soon be seriously affected. Your unfortunate and miserable companions have died a death which probably you might rather envy, but you are not offered the opportunity."

The Prisoner: “I don’t think there is much proof that they did die the death.”

His Honor: “In your case the law will be carried out by its officers. The gentlemen of the jury have done their duty, and my duty will be to forward to the proper quarters the notes of your trial, and to lay before the Executive all the circumstances connected with your trial that may be required. I can hold out to you no hope, and I do not see that I can entertain the slightest reason for saying that you can expect anything. I desire to spare you any more pain, and I absolve myself from saying anything willingly in any of my utterances that may have unnecessarily increased the agitation of your mind. I have now to pronounce your sentence.” His Honor then sentenced the prisoner to death, in the usual form, ending with the usual words, “May the Lord have mercy on your soul.”

The Prisoner: “I will go a little further than that, and say I will see you there where I go.”

The Court was cleared and the prisoner was removed to the Melbourne Gaol. Everything was very quiet, and nothing approaching to any scene occurred, though some of Kelly’s relatives were in Court.

November 1, 1880.

Kelly was allowed to see some of his relatives in the gaol on Saturday. He conducted himself quietly, but at one time commenced to sing secular songs.

November 4, 1880.

At a meeting of the Executive Council to-day, it was decided that Kelly should be executed on Thursday, the 11th instant.

November 5, 1880.

Kelly continues to be visited by his relatives. He has sent in a rambling statement to the Executive, much to the same purport as his remarks in Court. He says he did not go out to shoot the constables—they went out to shoot him—and he was not guilty of the charges they proposed arresting him on.

CHAPTER XVI.

A REPRIEVE WANTED.

The Sympathisers Get Busy.

November 6, 1880.

An immense meeting of Kelly sympathisers was held at the Hippodrome, Stephen Street, on November 5. About 4,000 were inside the building, and about 6,000 outside, and there were several hundred women amongst those present. Hamilton, a phrenologist, was chairman. The principal speaker was Mr. David Gaunson, the Chairman of the Committees in the Assembly, and W. Gaunson, his brother. A resolution was unanimously carried in favour of a petition to the Government for a reprieve, on the ground that Kelly was not guilty of murder, and that the police came out to shoot him and his brother, and that he did not intend shooting the police, but only make them prisoners and take their firearms away; further, that he only shot at them when they attempted to fire at him; Kelly's offence, under such circumstances, did not justify capital punishment. It was intended to form a procession to present the resolutions tonight to the Governor, but it was intimated that the Governor would not receive them tonight, but at half-past 10 to-morrow morning.

November 8, 1880.

In accordance with the understanding arrived at on Friday night at the Hippodrome, about 200 persons assembled at half-past 10 o'clock on Saturday morning at the Town Hall for the purpose of accompanying the brothers Gaunson to Government House to appeal for a reprieve on behalf of Edward Kelly. The crowd was, however, of such an idle and seedy-looking character, that the Gaunsons were evidently ashamed of it, and they quietly slipped away to Government House in a cab, without giving any intimation of their departure, and only took with them Mr. Hamilton, the chairman of the meeting, young Caulfield and Kate Kelly. They were duly received by His Excellency, and Mr. Hamilton presented the resolution passed at the meeting praying that the condemned man's life might be spared.

His Excellency said that he could but forward the document to the Government, and say that it would come before the Executive on Monday. The case had, however, already received careful consideration, and the decision arrived at was not come to without due care. He would be deceiving them and acting cruelly towards the condemned man if he held out any hope of mitigation.

Mr. David Gaunson assured His Excellency that in the action he was taking he had no sympathy with crime. The question he begged His Excellency to consider, however, was the state of the prisoner's mind at the time the alleged murders were committed. The prisoner was fully under the belief that the police were going to shoot him and not merely to put him under arrest, and that being so, the state of his mind deprived his actions of the character of murder in the legal sense. He would also urge that it would be very undesirable to have an execution in our midst at this particular time, when all the nations of the earth were our visitors.

His Excellency said he could not enter into arguments. The duty he had to perform was the most painful a Governor could fulfil. The decision of the Executive Council had only been arrived at after the fullest and most complete consideration, and the matter could proceed no further.

Mr. W. Gaunson stated that numerous and largely-signed petitions for a reprieve were coming in, and that the numbers which would yet come in would be something enormous if time were given.

His Excellency replied that this was not a case in which petitions could have any effect. The law had to be carried out, and if it were not, those who had the responsibility would have to answer to the country.

Mr. Hamilton then brought Kate Kelly forward by the hand, explained that she was a sister of the condemned man, and said it might have some effect if she went down on her knees before His Excellency and begged for mercy.

His Excellency: No, no. I have a painful duty to perform, and I do not see that anything can be got by prolonging this interview.

Mr. Caulfield made a few remarks about the majority of the people being in favour of showing mercy to Kelly.

The deputation returned to town, and were met at Prince's Bridge by the crowd from the Town Hall, who had waited there until their patience was exhausted, and had then set out on their own accord for Government House. The result of the interview was explained to them and they then dispersed.

November 9, 1880.

The agitation for the reprieve of Edward Kelly was continued yesterday by William Gaunson. The proposed procession of ladies to Government House was not a success, but during the morning about 200 persons of both sexes turned out from the back slums of the city and assembled at the Town Hall. They had the impudence to enter the building, but Sub-inspector Larner, with some constables, soon appeared on the scene and turned them out. William Gaunson with Mrs. Skillian, Kate Kelly, James Kelly and Wild Wright eventually arrived, and set out for Government House with the unwashed-looking mob at their heels. At Prince's Bridge Sub-inspector Larner endeavoured to check the crowd, but not willing to use violence, he was obliged to let them pass. He, however, proceeded in front to the Domain gates and had them closed. In the meantime Gaunson and his Kelly friends got into cabs. When the crowd reached the Domain gates they were refused admission, but after a little discussion the cabs and their occupants were admitted and, driving right up to Government House, the occupants, through Gaunson, requested an interview with the Governor. Captain Le Patourel, His Excellency's private secretary, received Gaunson and told him that His Excellency would positively receive no deputations that day. He intimated, however, that petitions which were spoken of could be sent to His Excellency at the Treasury up to 2 o'clock, the hour appointed for the meeting of the Executive. The self-elected deputation then returned to town, and were followed back by the crowd. James Kelly and James Wright, who returned on foot, were evidently objects of veneration to the mob, for they were accompanied by a large number of them through the streets to the Robert Burns Hotel in Lonsdale Street West. Their loafing-looking retinue were not, however, satisfied with gazing at them in the streets, but they also besieged the hotel, crushing through the passages and into the rooms in order to feast still more their morbid curiosity. In the afternoon William Gaunson attended the Treasury with Mrs. Skillian and Kate Kelly to await the decision of the Executive Council—as if it had not been given a week before. Over 1,000 idle persons collected at the same time outside the building. Gaunson and the Kelly sisters were admitted to a retiring room, and the former handed Captain Le Patourel the petitions he had been getting signed for presentation to the Governor, stating that they contained 32,434 signatures. An examination of the petition showed that they were signed principally in pencil and by illiterate people, whilst whole pages were evidently written by one person. The Executive, of course, determined to adhere to their decision—that the convict shall be executed on Thursday

morning. This having been communicated to the prisoner's relatives they left, and returned to the Robert Burns Hotel. They were accompanied, as before, by a crowd, and during the whole afternoon and evening the hotel was rushed. Immediately after their return James Kelly addressed the crowd from the door, and told them that "it was not all over yet"—a remark that was loudly cheered. On Thursday last when the sisters visited their brother in gaol, they stated that they were going home on Saturday, and were told that they could see the condemned man again before they left. Since then, however, the Gaunsons have started the present agitation, and the consequence is that the sisters remain in town, but do not seek another interview with their brother. Another mass meeting is to be held tonight on the Supreme Court reserve, and petitions are being sent by W. Gaunson all over the colony for signatures. The object of tonight's meeting is to carry a resolution in favour of a reprieve, and to present it to the Chief Secretary. In yesterday's proceedings Mr. David Gaunson did not appear.

November 10, 1880.

The agitation in favour of a reprieve for the condemned murderer, Edward Kelly, or for a reconsideration of his case by the Executive Council, was continued yesterday. In the afternoon a large crowd of persons assembled about the reserve near the gaol, it having been announced that a public meeting would be held there at 8 o'clock to consider Kelly's case. On arrival there, however, it was found that about a dozen policemen were on the reserve, and they warned all persons off it. By 8 o'clock there were not less than 1,500 persons near the reserve, and as some of the rough youths among the crowd began calling out to each other to rush the grounds, a further body of police, numbering about fifty, were brought on the reserve, and effectually kept it clear. The police were under the command of Superintendent Winch and Inspectors Montfort and Larner, and they acted under authority of the law relating to the gaol, which forbids the assemblage of any crowd of persons within its precincts. A little after 8 o'clock a lorry drawn by a horse was brought into Latrobe Street, and on it were seated Mr. William Gaunson, Mr. T. P. Caulfield and a number of men and women. Several rough-looking persons bearing torches accompanied the lorry, and torches were also held by two or three of the people seated on it. The appearance of the lorry was the signal for cheers from a portion of the crowd, but it was observable both then and afterwards that the greater portion took no part whatever in either the cheers or groans that were uttered.

November 12, 1880.

EXECUTION OF NED KELLY.

Kelly expiated his career of crime this morning (November 11) on the gallows in Melbourne Gaol. Up to a short period before his execution he entertained sanguine hopes of reprieve, and made frequent written appeals for clemency, but without avail. Yesterday the governor of the gaol informed him that there was no hope and told him that he must prepare for the worst. Kelly made a final appeal that his body should be given up to his relatives for burial, but this was also refused as against prison regulations. His three sisters paid him a farewell visit last night and an affecting scene ensued. Kelly retired to his bed at half-past 1 o'clock this morning, and was restless for one hour, but then slept well until 5 o'clock, when he arose and engaged in prayer for twenty minutes. He then lay down again, and was visited shortly afterwards by the Rev. Deans Donohy and O'Hea, who ministered spiritual consolation and remained with him until the last. They would not allow him breakfast. Just before 9 o'clock his irons were knocked off, and Kelly was conducted to the condemned cell. He walked jauntily from his former cell, and had to pass through the Governor's garden, where he exclaimed, "Oh, what a pretty garden!" He had not been shaved. Kelly then remained in the cell in prayer with the priests. Precisely at 10 o'clock the governor of the gaol and sheriff went to the door and the warder announced that the fatal moment had arrived. The priests, one bearing a tall crucifix and intoning prayers, preceded the prisoner, who exhibited some signs of faltering, but made great efforts to hold up. The gallows was situated opposite the cell door and the rope was adjusted to a beam in the gallery in the new wing of the gaol, the drop being seven feet and a half. Kelly, on coming out, explained, "Ah, well! It's come to this at last!" He gave one look at those present beneath, and then cast his eyes down and stepped on the fatal spot, where the noose was adjusted and the white cap was pulled over his face. The bolt was drawn, and the prisoner fell with a heavy thud. . . . An immense mob congregated outside, numbering about 6,000 persons, but there was no disturbance. Mr. Berry refused to publish the statements of Kelly, because they were merely a repetition of his defence. Kelly in these statements expressed no contrition, but justified the shooting of the policeman.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE KELLY HAUNTS.

THE FORTIFIED HUT OF THE GANG.

November 13, 1880.

The following description of the fortified retreat of the Kelly gang was furnished about this time by a press reporter:—

Leaving Melbourne one day last week I took train to Longwood, and from thence coached it to Mansfield, the township which derived so much notoriety through the outbreak of the Kelly gang. Procuring a horse well used to rough country, and obtaining the services of a guide, who, I may state, was intimately connected with the Kellys and their friends, and had undertaken to conduct me to several of their haunts, I started early in the morning from Mansfield, and so as to avoid observation, made a slight detour before finally getting on the direct track to the Wombat Ranges. Thence we made our way across country to the scene of the police murders, which, I was informed, was near to the fortified hut of the outlaws. Traces of the murders are still visible; on every side are bullet-marked trees, and a few old posts of Walter Lynch's hut can be noticed almost in the centre of the cleared space, which the Kellys and their confederates approached by creeping up under the shelter of the tufts of spear-grass. Whether Kennedy was aware of it or not, all the time he was retreating and dodging from tree to tree, firing as best he could, and sternly contesting every inch of ground, he was making in almost a direct line for the hut in which the Kellys and their mates had lived for many months before they committed the crime which caused their outlawry.

A ride of about half a mile from the spot where Kennedy's body was found brought me and my companion to the stronghold of the Kellys, situated on a small rise in the midst of a basin, bounded on the east by Ryan's Creek, on the west by a very high and steep mountain, forming part of the Wombat Ranges, on the north by a small creek flowing down from between the hills, and on the south by a medium-sized ridge, which is,

however, high enough to effectually conceal the hut from view in that direction. Reining in my horse on the crest of this ridge, and taking a glance at the scene which lay before me, I could not but be struck with wonderment that such a perfect concealment should have existed so long within half a dozen miles of selections without its existence being discovered. A farmer named Jebb lives within four, and another named Harrison within six miles of it, and yet neither—at least so they assert—were even aware that the Kellys were in the locality, although the latter must have lived on this spot many months or they could never have got matters into such an improved state. The plateau contains altogether, I should say, about seventy acres, and this is fenced in on three sides (north, south and east) by a sapling, dogleg and brush fence, the west side requiring no fencing owing to the steepness of the hill which constitutes its boundary.

Immediately surrounding the hut some twenty acres have been cleared, the trees ringed, and the timber—principally swamp gum and peppermint—placed in heaps ready for burning. The ground has even been raked so as to give every chance for the grass to grow, and the aspect of the whole place denotes that the Kellys had lived in this secluded retreat many a long day before the Wombat murders took place; and as a proof that someone knew of their existence, I may mention that on a large peppermint tree within a short distance from the hut the name "J. Martain" has been carved in the sapwood of the tree after the sheet of bark had been taken off to put on the roof of the hut. In the creek flowing to the north of the hut a considerable amount of gold-digging has been done, sluicing being the principal means employed, and from appearances gold has been got in payable quantities, and the workings are of such an extent that it would be utterly impossible for any four men to carry them on under a period of several months.

Perhaps, however, the most startling sight of all is the appearance of the hut and its immediate surroundings. Imagine a house erected of bullet-proof logs, fully 2ft. in diameter, one on top of the other, crossed at the ends after the fashion of a chock and log fence, and with a door 6ft. high by 2ft. 6in. wide, made of stiff slabs and plated with iron nearly a quarter of an inch in thickness, which was loopholed to fire through. The door is on the north side opposite the gold workings in the creek, and a well-built log chimney occupies the greater part of the west end of the hut. Such was the home of the Kelly gang for some months before the police murders. Its interior was fitted up just as substantially as its exterior, and in a manner calculated to stand a long siege, there having been every provision made for the storage of flour, beef, tea, sugar and other necessaries of life; and to show that in fresh meat, at least, they were not wanting, we discovered portions of several

carcases, together with seven or eight heads of cattle, with bullet holes in the centre of the forehead, lying outside the hut, which may have belonged to "scrubbers" out of the ranges, or the fat bullocks of some not-far-distant squatter or farmer, most probably the latter. Empty jam and sardine tins, old powder flasks, cap boxes, broken shovels, old billy-cans, glass bottles, door hinges, and a great variety of other articles were to be seen all round the hut. But the crowning wonder of all was the evident pains taken by the Kellys to improve themselves as marksmen. In every direction—taking the hut as a standing-point, we saw trees which were marked by bullets, from five to fifty having been fired into each, at ranges varying from twenty to 400 yards. The bullets afterwards being chopped out, were melted down and converted again into their former state. On one small tree a circle of charcoal 6in. in diameter had been traced, and into this two or three revolver bullets had been fired, one striking the black dot meant to represent the bulls-eye in the centre, and the other two being close to it. Some of the bullets had gone to a depth of four inches in the trees, and consequently a great deal of chopping had to be done to get them out, and there was abundant evidence, too, to prove that the more practice the outlaws had, the more they improved in the use of the rifle and revolver, the shooting at some marks on the trees being very wide, and on others remarkably straight and dead into the bulls-eye.

I did not attempt to inspect the country in the vicinity of this stronghold of the outlaws. By the time I had taken a hurried sketch and picked up a few relics, it became time to think of turning homewards; so only waiting a few moments to inspect the track which led from the hut across the creek and over the gap towards Greta, my guide and I turned our horses' heads southwards, and after rather a rough ride reached Mansfield late at night, from whence I took coach to Longwood next day, reaching Melbourne the same night, none the worse for my trip in the Kelly country.

THE END.

HAVE YOU YET READ THESE OUTSTANDING NOVELS?

“APRON STRINGS”, by Mary Kelaher.

The central character, David, is superbly portrayed, from his early years on a sheep-station to his hectic final phase among the Bohemians of King’s Cross. David might have been a great man, with a glittering career to his credit—had not his mother, by her overwhelming love, smothered all initiative in him. He is destined from his childhood to be thwarted by his womenfolk—and when at last, breaking the bonds of a futile marriage, he takes refuge in the arms of the one woman who has ever really loved him, he is not strong enough to master her! What happens then makes a fitting climax to a novel that begins slowly and steadily increases in tempo and dramatic intensity.—6/-.

“IN BEN BOYD’S DAY”, by Will Lawson.

During the period between the years 1843 and 1849, Ben Boyd’s interest in the South Coast of N.S.W. was an intimate one, since he established at Twofold Bay the town of Boydtown, which was the outlet for raw products from the Monaro and Riverina. He also set up a whaling station there for bay whaling, for which Twofold Bay is still so well-known.

Ben Boyd was a pioneer of Australian whaling. But he was much more than that. He was in Australia a financier of high standing, a merchant, a ship-owner and a sheep-farmer.

Ben Boyd also decided to establish a bank to finance his ventures in Australia. Money would be needed in large quantities and Ben Boyd knew how to get it. With his brother Mark, who never visited Australia, he founded the Royal Bank of Australia, Mark Boyd being its manager.

In his book Will Lawson has woven a romance round the thrilling career of Ben Boyd, one which will remain as history for all time.—6/-.

All these Authors are well-known to you.

Another Astonishing Half-Crown's Worth

"WHEN COBB & CO. WAS KING"

By WILL LAWSON.

How many Australians of the present generation know that Cobb & Co., the vast coaching firm that in pre-railway days, used to travel weekly over 30,000 miles of Australian roads, was originally an American business? Cobb & Co. came over the Rockies into California. Then they migrated to Australia. Cobb & Co.'s history teems with romance. Australia's foremost historical novelist, Will Lawson, has made an enthralling story based on the facts of Cobb & Co.'s enterprises in this country. His hero is "Buster" White, a country youth who aspires to be a Cobb & Co. driver. "Buster" achieves his ambition but long before he marries the girl of his heart, he has to fight bushrangers—and kill her husband—before he gets her! Genuine thrills plus genuine history is the correct label for "When Cobb & Co. Was King".

"FOR THE TERM OF HIS NATURAL LIFE"

By MARCUS CLARKE.

This terrible exposure of the conditions of convict life in Australia and Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) has been published in numerous so-called abridged editions; but none of them contained the full story. Thousands of readers believe that the book ends with the drowning of Rufus Dawes and Dora, locked in each other's arms. The real ending is entirely different.

From the New Century abridged version no essentials of the plot have been omitted. The original version (nearly 700 large pages) has been pruned of many geographical and descriptive passages—that is all. The story now moves briskly to its splendid climax.

(Note: Paper cover editions, 2/6; Library Cloth Cover editions, 4/6; De Luxe Collectors' Copies, at 8/6.)

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Book cover is placed in the public domain.

[The end of *Bail Up!* by Hilary Lofting]