

at her till she said; 'What do you look a-me so steady for, Edward? I know I don't look as I used to; but it's because I always have a pain in my heart, now.'

'You ought not to be walking alone then Fanny,' said I. 'Let me go home with you.' 'No,' she replied, 'I don't want you—I can take care of myself—I'm not crazy, Edward, though I suppose you think I am; but I've got all the reason I ever had, and that was too little to do me any good when I stood most in need of it. There, go away now, for I shan't say any more.'

She crossed over to the other side of the street, and walked very fast till she got out of sight. Mr Waters visited her constantly and endeavoured to direct her thoughts to religion; and he said it was his belief that the light of the gospel broke in on her mind before she died, and gave her that peace which the world can neither give nor take away. It was just a year from the day that was to have been her wedding day, that we went to her funeral; and, if ever any one died of a broken heart, it's my belief that Fanny Ross did.'

Collins was silent, and seemed to have finished his story; when Harry said, 'You've forgotten Philip. You have not told me anything further about him, since you took him home that night.'

'True enough!' answered Collins; 'I had forgotten him in talking of poor Fanny. If you had ever seen her in her bloom, you would have said her equal was not to be found for beauty. But Phil never got over the disappointment and mortification of that affair; and, to keep from thinking of it, he went to the bottle. He knew that he had lost Fanny forever, and so he gave up all female society. He never was much of a ladies' man, and I don't believe he ever saw any other girl that he would have been willing to marry. He used to skulk about the streets, and keep out of everybody's way as much as he could, only when he was about drunk. At Fanny's funeral he cried like a child; and after that he tried to do better for some time; but, as they say, 'the ruling passion is strong in death,' so with him it was strong in life. His habits became confirmed; and, though sometimes months would pass away without his drinking to excess, he still drank enough to scatter the seeds of disease through his system. I often spoke to him about it, but he used to stop me with 'It's too late now, Ned. I've nothing to live for; and if I did not sometimes lose my senses in liquor, I should lose them altogether, and be sent to a mad-house. You couldn't persuade me when I had everything at stake; and what's the use of trying now?'

'But you won't live out half your days,' said I, if you go on in this way.

'Well, and what of that?' he answered, 'I shan't be missed. An old bachelor is only in the way, and most people are willing to let them have a short life and a merry one if it's their own choice.'

And so he took his own course, until about six years ago there came a temperance lecturer to Mapleton. It was a novelty, and everybody went to hear him. At first they were all carried away with his eloquence, and listened as though all he said was fiction—like the plays at the theatre. But after hearing him two or three times, they began to realize the truth of his words; and, one after another, our townsmen all went forward and signed the pledge, which has been the saving of many of them from ruin. Nobody thought that Phil Merton would be persuaded to do it, but he was; and it made him a changed man. He found he had broken down his constitution, and tried hard enough afterwards to build it up; for when a man really thinks he is going to die, he is apt to grow very anxious to live, and is quite willing to make up his quarrels with the world and take it as it is, provided he can renew his lease of the mortal tenement. But, as Phil had so often said himself, 'it was too late.' He never got quite well, though he continued to be a sober man, and his long course of intemperance killed him in the end. He was only fifty-three years old when he died. My story is finished Harry, and the hour is up also. So come, it's time for the auction.'

An auction was a rare occurrence in the quiet village of Mapleton. The inhabitants seldom changed either houses or furniture, which descended from generation to generation, with but little alteration or improvement. But Philip Merton had been an old bachelor, and left no successor to his worldly goods, over which the auctioneer's hammer was then about to be raised.

Collins and Moore arrived just in time to see the exhibition of the wedding coat, which had been set up on a bid of three dollars.

'That's it,' said Collins to his companion; 'a blue coat with brass buttons. I remember the fashion of it thirty years ago. Come, Harry, you're fond of antiquities, why don't you bid?'

'Going,' cried the auctioneer, 'going at three dollars; not a quarter of its value. Who'll bid another dollar? Can't throw it away—it's disgraceful!'

'Why don't you buy it yourself, for the sake of old acquaintance?' said Harry in reply to Collins, while the crier still kept on.

'Who says four dollars? There aint such another coat nowhere. It'll fit any man on the ground.'

Collins had turned to Harry and exclaimed 'I, Harry Moore? Why I wouldn't have Phil's wedding coat for a gift.'

'Four dollars bid,' cried the auctioneer—'going at four dollars—four—four' and the hammer went half way down and was raised again. 'Blame it! the hammer won't strike at that—look at the cloth—it's superfine—none of your homespun—going at only four—'

'You wouldn't have it! why not?' asked Harry of Collins, looking at the same time at the auctioneer, and giving him a nod.

'Five dollars—I have it,' cried the seller.—'Mr Moore bids five dollars. Will nobody bid over him? See these buttons, as bright as gold, and they be gold, for aught I know—going at five dollars—going—going—gone!'

'I'm glad you've bought it,' said Collins, 'and now I'll tell you why I wouldn't have it. It was too full of old memories; and I never want to rake them up again, as I have done to-day. But it's different with you. You didn't see it all, as I did; and it will do you no harm to remember it. So just keep the coat for the sake of its history and the moral; and, if ever you have a friend in danger of being wrecked on the shoals of intemperance, show it to him, and tell him the story of Philip Merton.'

#### UNRECKONED TAXES.

It is a fact worthy of consideration that all our good things in which mankind have either hand or voice must be paid for in some shape or other, every article over and above the original cost of time, talent or labour by which it was obtained. Fame, however well earned, pays a heavy impost of envy and general criticism. Rank and position pay a world of indirect taxes to public opinion and established custom, to what society expects, and what people will say. Our home pleasures must be paid for in family cares and anxieties, our social enjoyments in a thousand forms of conventionalities, and our loves and friendships in many risks and forfeits. So life goes on teaching us that there is but one blessing 'which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow.'

#### NEW WORKS.

From Tallangetta; the Squatter's Home. By W. Hewitt.

#### FIRE IN THE BUSH.

If the fire reached him and his herd before they escaped into the open plains, they must be consumed like stubble. The cattle began to show signs of exhaustion, hanging out their parched tongues, and panting heavily; the perspiration on himself and horse was dried up by the awful heat, and the dogs ran silently, or only whining lowly to themselves, as they hunted every hollow on their way for water. Suddenly, they were out in an open plain, yet with the forest on either hand, but at a considerable distance. What a scene! The woods were flaming and cracking in one illimitable conflagration. The wind, dashing from the north in gusts of inconceivable heat, seemed to sear the very face and shrivel up the lungs. The fire leaped from tree to tree, flashing and roaring along, with the speed and the destructiveness of lightning. The sere foliage seemed to snatch the fire, and to perish in it in a riot of Jemimaal revelry. On it flew, fast as the fleetest horse could gallop; and consuming acres of leaves in a moment, still remained to rage and roar amongst the branches and in the hollow stems of ancient trees. The whole wood on the left was an enormous region of intensest flame; and that on the right sent forth the sounds of the same ravaging fires; but being to windward, the flames could not be seen for the vast clouds of smoke, mingled with fiery sparks, which were rolled on the air. There was a sound as of thunder, mingled with the crash of falling trees, and the wild cries of legions of birds of all kinds; which fell scorched, and blackened, and dead to the ground. Once out on this open plain the cattle were speedily lost in the blinding ocean of smoke, and the young settler, obliged to abandon them, made a dash onward for his life. Now the flames came racing along the grass with the speed of the wind, and mowing all smooth as a pavement; now they tore furiously through some near point in the forest, and flung burning ashes and tangles of blazing bark upon the galloping rider. But Sorcerer, with an instinct more infallible than human sagacity, sped on, over thicket, and stone, and fallen tree, snorting in the thick masses of smoke, and stretching forward his gaping jaws to catch every breath of air to sustain impeded respiration. When the wind veered, the reek, driven backward, revealed a most amazing scene. The blazing skirts of the forest; huge isolated trees, glaring red—standing columns of fire; here a vast troop of wild horses with flying manes and tails, rushing with thundering hoofs over the plain; there herds of cattle running with bloodshot eyes and hanging tongues, they knew not whither, from the fire; troops of kangaroos leaping frantically across the riders' path, their hair singed and giving out strongly the stench of fire: birds of all kinds and colors shrieking piteously as they drove wildly by, and yet seeing no spot of safety; thousands of sheep standing huddled in terror on the scorched flats with singed wool, deserted by the shepherds,

who had fled for their lives. But onward flew the intrepid Sorcerer, onward stretched his rider, thinking lightning winged thoughts of home, and of his helpless, paralyzed mother there.

#### FLIGHT CONTINUED.

But, behold! the gleaming, welcome waters of Lake Colac! Sorcerer rushed headlong towards it; and wading hastily up to his sides in its cooling flood, thrust his head to the eyes into it, and drank as if he could never be satisfied with less than the whole lake. Englishmen, new to the scene, would have trembled for the horse; but the bush steed knows well what he needs, eats and drinks as likes him best, and flourishes on it. Smoking hot, the rider lets him drink his fill, and all goes well. The heat produces perspiration, and the evaporation cools and soothes him. Robert Patterson did not lose a moment in following Sorcerer's example. He flung himself headlong from the saddle, dressed as he was, dived, and splashed, and drank exuberantly. He held again and again his smarting face and singed hands into the delicious water, then threw it over the steed that now, satiated, stood panting in the flood. He laved and rubbed down the grateful animal with wave after wave, cleaning the dried perspiration from every hair, giving him refreshment at every pore. Then up and away again. He had not ridden two hundred yards before he saw, lying on the plain, a horse that had fallen in saddle and bridle, and lay with his legs under him, the head stretched stiffly forward, with glaring eye-balls; but dead. Near him was a man, alive, but sunk in exhaustion. His eyes turned wildly on the squatter, and his parched lips moved, but without a sound. Robert Patterson comprehended his need; and running to the lake brought his pannikin full of water, and put it to his mouth. It was the water of life to him. His voice and some degree of strength came quickly back. He had come from the north, and had ridden a race with the fire, till horse and man had dropped here, the horse never to rise again. But Patterson's need was too urgent for delay. He found the man had no lack of provisions the carried him in his arms to the margin of the lake, mounted, and rode on. As he galloped forward, it was still fire—fire everywhere. He felt convinced that the conflagration—fanned by the strong wind, and acting upon fires in a hundred quarters—extended over the whole sun-dried colony. It was still early noon, when, with straining eyes, and a heart which seemed almost to stand still with a terrible anxiety, he came near his own home. He darted over the brow of a hill—there it lay safe! The circle within his cleared boundary was untouched by the fire. There were his paddocks, his cattle, his huts, and home. With a lightning thought his thanks flew up to heaven, and he was the next moment at his door, in his house, in his mother's arms.

Everywhere around was a scene of desolation, death, and misery. Houses were burnt to the earth, children had perished in the flames, and at every point there was wailing and woe. Patterson made the most earnest inquiries for the safety of their neighbours the Maxwells, and determined to ride over to their house, and render any aid they might require at his hands.

#### THE RESCUE.

He was about crossing a small creek, when he saw an Irishman—a shepherd of the Maxwell sitting on its bank; his clothes were nearly all consumed from his back, his hat was the merest remaining fragment, scorched and shrivelled. The man rocking himself to and fro and groaning, 'Fehan!' exclaimed Patterson. 'What has happened to you?' The man turned upon him a visage that startled him with terror. It was, indeed, no longer a human visage; but a scorched and swollen mass of deformity. The beard and hair were burnt away. Eyes were not visible; the whole face being a confused heap of red flesh and hanging blisters. The poor fellow raised a pair of hands that displayed equally the dreadful work of the fire. The young squatter exclaimed, 'How dreadful! Let me help you, Fehan—let me take you home.' The man groaned again; and opening his distorted mouth with difficulty and with agony said, 'I have no home—it is burnt.'—'And your family?'—'Dead—all dead!'—'But are your sure—are you quite sure?' said Robert, excitedly. 'I saw one—my eldest boy: he was lying burnt near the house. I lifted him, to carry him away; but he said, 'Lay me down, father—lay me down; I cannot bear it.' I laid him down, and asked, 'Where are the rest?' 'All fled into the bush,' he said; and then he died. They are all burnt.' Robert Patterson flung the wretched man a linen handkerchief, bidding him dip it in the creek and lay it on his face to keep the air from it, and turned his horse, saying he would look for the family. He soon found the place where the hut had stood. It was burnt to ashes. On the ground not far from it lay the body of the dead little boy. Patterson hastened along the track of the old road to the Maxwell's station, tracing it as well as he could in the fire and the falling flaming branches.—He felt sure the flying family would take that way. In a few minutes it brought him again upon the creek by which the poor man sat but

lower down. There stood a hut in a damp swamp, which had been used years ago for the sheep washing but had long been deserted.—It was surrounded by thick wattles still burning. The hut was on fire; but its rotten timbers sent out far more smoke than flame. As he approached he heard low cries and lamentations. 'The family is fled thither,' he said to himself, 'and are perishing of suffocation.' He sprang to the ground and dashed forward through columns of heavy smoke. It was hopeless to breathe in it, for its pungent and stinging strength seemed to close his lungs, and water rushed from his eyes in torrents. But, pushing in, he seized the first living thing that he laid his hands on, and bore it away.—It was a child. Again and again he made the desperate essay, and succeeded in bringing out no less than four children and the mother, who was sank on the floor as dead, but who soon gave signs of life as she came into the air.

Patterson rode on, and encountered Ellen Maxwell, a lovely young girl, to whom he had once been affianced, but which engagement was suddenly and inexplicably broken off by her. He inquired for the safety of her family, and was riding homewards, when Ellen's brother, George, was seen dashing forward on horseback to a ravine, into which he plunged, and although marvelously escaping death, had his leg severely shattered.

#### RECONCILIATION.

From the moment of this tragic occurrence Robert Patterson was constantly in attendance at the Mount on his friend. He slept in the same room with him, and attended with Ellen as his nurse in the day-time. From this moment the cloud which so long hung over the spirit of Ellen Maxwell had vanished. She was herself again; always kind and open, yet with mournful tone in her bearing towards Robert which surprised and yet pleased him. It looked like regret for past unkindness. As they sat one evening over their tea, while George was in a profound sleep in the next room, Ellen, looking with emotion at him, said, in a low, tremulous voice, 'Robert, I owe much to you.'—'To me?' said Robert, hastily. 'Isn't George as much a brother to me as you?'—'It is not that which I mean,' added Ellen, colouring deeply, yet speaking more firmly; 'it is that I have done you great wrong. I believed that you had said a most ungenerous thing, and I acted upon my belief with too much pride and resentment. I was told that you had jested at me as the daughter of a convict.' Robert sprang up. 'It is false! I never said it,' he exclaimed. 'Who could tell you such a malicious falsehood?'—'Calm yourself,' added Ellen, taking the young man's hand. 'I shall tell you all. Hear me patiently; for I must impress first on you the strange likelihood of what was reported to me. You were driven to a stockman's hut, it was said, by a storm—you and a young friend. You were very merry, and this friend congratulated you in a sportive style on having won what he was pleased to call the richest young woman in the colony. And with a merry laugh you were made to add, "and the daughter of the most illustrious of lags!" Robert Patterson, with a calmness of concentrated wrath, asked, in a low, measured tone, "Who said that?"—"The woman whom you lately saved with all her family. It was Nelly Fehan."—"Nelly Fehan!" said Robert, in amazement. "What have I ever done to her that deserved such a stab?"—"You threatened to send Fehan to prison for bush ranging. You reminded him of his former life and unexpired sentence."—'That is true,' said Robert, after a pause of astonishment. 'And this was the deadly revenge—the serpents! But O Ellen! why could you not speak? One word, and all would have been explained.' 'I could not speak Robert. Wonderful pride silenced me. But I have suffered severely, have been fearfully punished. I can only say forgive me!' One long embrace obliterated the past. The late Mr Maxwell had been transported for the expression of his liberal political principles in hard and bigoted times. There was not a man in the penal settlement who did not honor his political integrity and foresight, and who did not reverence his character. But the convicts as a body was proud to claim them as of their own class, though sent thither only for the crime of a Hampden or a Sidney. Whenever reproach was thrown on the convict section of society, the insulted party pointed to the venerable exile, and triumphantly hailed him as their chief. No endeavours, though they were many, and conducted by powerful hands, had ever been able to procure a reversal of his sentence. The injuries of a man of his high talents and noble nature might be comparatively buried at the antipodes; at home they would be a present, a perpetual, and a damaging reproach. He had lived and died a banished, but a highly honoured man. Still, as he rose to a higher estimation, and an unusual affluence, there were little minds who delighted occasionally to whisper—After all, he is but a lag.—And it was on his tender point that the minds of his children, whose ears such remarks had reached and wounded, had become morbidly sensitive.

Be kind even in your reproofs, and reserve them till the morning. No one can sleep well who goes to bed with a flea in his ear.