



## BY THE AUTOGRATIC IDLER.

balconies, addressing large audiences. Anyway I refused point blank to enter the waggon and in a few seconds I was standing on the platform and the train with the Governor was moving on, at the rate of 60 miles an hour. There was no other available mode of conveyance so I had to walk about 18 miles—and to be with the Governor all the time—a feat which I accomplished quite easily as you may learn when I finish this story.

A Vice-regal  
Barnum.

Provided one does not stand right in front of it, an express train, travelling along the rails at over sixty miles an hour, with a governor like Sir George Bowen aboard, is a suggestive object for contemplation. It's (the engine's) long stream of steam and of vapour, accompanied by sparks and glares from the roaring furnaces make one think, when darkness gathers in, of the fiery tail of Donati's comet, the exact length of which even the Editor of the *Wellington Post* cannot measure to an inch. There was the train bearing His Excellency away to Palaver Land and Happiness; and there was I, a solitary being, on the platform; and whether to laugh at Bowen, or at myself, or at the general plan on which things are constructed in this world—I really didn't know, nor indeed care much. For the Queen's highway was quite close at hand, and it was the privilege of any subject who could not command carriage of any sort, nor yet dog cart, to walk upon it. I watched the train till it disappeared altogether; the snorting and the puffing of the iron horse grew fainter and fainter, and soon the clouds of smoke were lost in darkness. Perhaps no train in this world ever carried, or will ever carry, a greater prince than the express carried, just then. He did not, exteriorly, resemble a prince of any sort very greatly—but he was a great prince all the same—a vice-regal Prince Barnum—and not a bad fellow at all, but only a—hem!

The Morning  
Whisper.

That I was an idiot for not taking a seat in the waggon will, I dare say, be patent to everybody but myself. And for even pretending to take Governor Bowen seriously, I was a still greater ass. There is no doubt whatever that the three rather dejected ones in the waggon, representing the Melbourne *Argus*, the Ballarat *Star*, and the Muddy Gully *Trombone*, concluded I was a fool before the train was out of sight. They had as much comfort as men could wish for: plenty of champagne and other coarser liquors; and the wing of a turkey was available in one of the hampers provided for that occasion, in the waggon. Then the Governor of Victoria was actually within a few feet of them—separated from them only by a board, and by that admirable contrivance called a railway buffer. Quite another sort of buffer sent me tramping on the dusty high road through bush country: noting the gnarled trunks of ancient gum trees assume all sorts of fantastic shapes in the darkness: listening to silence and to solitude, and fancying that the stars had something pregnant to divulge to humanity, and would not be allowed to utter one word, but only to wink! Somewhere about midnight a sharp moaning wind—a sudden and sad rustling of the leaves in the trees, is invariably heard in the Australian forest. That mournful, melancholy, rapid breath of nature strikes the hour in those lonely regions; and one can quite depend on its accuracy. It is the herald of the new day: it whispers through ten million billion leaves, that another morning is born to the weary, toiling, struggling children of men! I heard the whisper, and passed on.

Dark Suns.

When I paced through the High-street of Maryborough, there were the usual two or three persons whom one always observes talking mysteriously at street corners in the early morning, in all towns, but with that exception, not a soul was to be seen. At the McIvor Hotel, His Excellency was, no doubt, fast asleep by this time; but by the aid of the street lamps I could see that the balcony of that establishment had been recently the scene of loyal demonstration, and the Union Jack still fluttered there. As for the office of the *Maryborough Ad-*

*vertiser* it was in total darkness outside, and very little light was there, therein. This was the journal that Sir Julius Vogel for a considerable period conducted; but it is a fact that he was totally unable to get to the front and to shine, either at Maryborough or anywhere else in Victoria, and nobody thought much of his ability in the township mentioned—not yet in any other township, till he came to New Zealand. This present writer filled, for three years, the place on the *Advertiser* previously occupied by Vogel. He—this present writer—didn't shine, any more than Vogel did, in the colony of Victoria. Nor does he shine—as Vogel did—in New Zealand. In the structure of the Universe (it is somewhat of a consolation to know) there are suns—and some of them gigantic suns—which never shine. No mortal recognises any light in them; for they haven't got any. But they occupy space; and go on revolving—and filling some purpose or another in the awful and æthereal regions beyond Neptune—all the same. What that purpose is, Heaven only knows. Sometimes a dark sun presents a wonderful phenomenon to mankind. It begins to shed light, and to brighten. It goes on, shedding more and more light (just as Vogel did), and brightening more and more, finally glittering with an effulgence equal to that of Sirius. Then it goes out utterly like a rocket; like Aspidin the greatest genius that ever landed on these southern shores; or like Buckle whose brilliant dazzling light was snuffed out so suddenly and so disastrously.

A Radical  
Bull.

The powerful establishment was in gloom. The proprietor had gone home (after waiting for hours) in a towering rage, (as I hadn't turned up); and nearly everybody else belonging to the premises had gone also. The editor was resting his weary brain between his hands, with his elbows on the table—and he hadn't the common courtesy even to look up as I entered. I had some trouble in getting things in train, and set going, for everybody thought it was useless to attempt starting at that hour to tell the story of the Governor's progress. But a friendly and sagacious and *nil desperandum* foreman was in charge, and soon enough between us (and he did the most of the work), copy poured into the composing room faster almost than they could take it away. We said very little about the Agricultural Show, for that was not pressing, and we knew all about it. About the Governor's progress and reception—about which we knew very little—we said ever so much. The express journey was fully described; and even a Radical bull, which ran in a large paddock along the line, and which rushed to the railway fence in a very infuriated manner, as the train approached, was mentioned, and the gross democracy of the animal duly condemned, while it was suggested that the owner of the bull was to some extent responsible for his conduct and want of manners, as well as for his too evident political bias.

Rural Carle-  
brook.

Between Baringhup and Maryborough there is a rural district called Carisbrook, where, as we knew, a halt was to be made to enable His Excellency to be seen, and to speak a few words from the balcony of the Wheatsheaf Inn to the farmers and settlers of that district. We didn't hear the speech, but we made it—made it quite easily for His Excellency—all the same. It was, in fact, the rural speech of Sir George Bowen. His Excellency complimented the farmers and the farmers' wives and children—if they had any—on their happy and contented, and prosperous appearance; and referred, in feeling terms, to the dignity of their industrial avocations, which, after all, was the only dignity in this world worth thinking about. What were titles and rank, compared with yeomanry or yeowomanry; what so grandly musical as the whistle of the ploughman, or the song of the churn, making butter? The poet of the rural people of Ireland had answered the question, and Oliver Goldsmith himself had said:—

Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

And so amid cheers and huzzas and applause, and cries of 'That's the sort of Governor we like!' His Excellency descends from the balcony; and smiles, and shakes hands with His Worship the Mayor and a few others—and the journey is resumed.

Mining  
Maryborough.

Although the distance between Carisbrook and Maryborough is only a few miles, the two places are very different, as also are the populations. This latter is a once-celebrated mining district; indeed Kong Meng, the wealthy Chinese merchant who recently died in Melbourne, got his first start there; and there is a well known quartz mine, and indeed a line of reef called after him, to this day! Keeping these matters in view, and remembering that the population were mostly miners, it was easy enough to get on here quite as well as at Carisbrook. The Mayor of Maryborough happened, at that time, to be an undertaker; and we had to make a speech for him also. Now there isn't the slightest difficulty about an ordinary

Bowen on  
Bendigo. To take a good straight look at Governor Bowen, one would conclude, quite wrongly, that there, right before one, stood a comfortable Devonshire farmer with not less than 200 acres of pasture land. One's first impression was, that Bowen was intended by nature to be a British yeoman—a man quite unsophisticated in the crafts and outencases of my excellent friend Barbados. For some reason he did not go down the mine on that occasion. But he came out on the balcony of the celebrated Shamrock Hotel, at Bendigo, and showed his pleasant form and figure to, I should say, 10,000 people—mostly miners and their families. In less than fifteen minutes he had all those people in ecstasies about him. He buttered up those horny handed sons of toil to a nicety, and their wives and their dear little children (if they had any); and showed how titles and rank were next door to nothing at all, whilst honest labour—and especially mining labour—was everything in this world. What said the poet of the people Robert Burns?

Is there, for honest poverty  
That hangs his head, an' a' that  
The coward slave, we pass him by,  
We dare be poor for a' that;  
For a' that, an' a' that,  
Our toils obscure, an' a' that;  
The rank is but the guinea stamp  
The man's the gowd for a' that!

Cheers; cheers from ten thousand throats; hat waving, excitement, exclamations of admiration from Cornish men from Newcastle men; from Lanes, and Pats, and Sandies; while the women were in perfect raptures. And there stood the Governor smiling—never turning a hair; beaming with pleasure and graciousness. He knew the sort of thing that poor humanity liked—and he gave it to the multitude.

Bowen at  
Baringhup. At an agricultural show in the Ballarat district I last met Sir George. There was an immense crowd there, too—but an agricultural crowd. Sir George spoke, of course, to the great gathering—and he collared them, in fifteen minutes, all the same. He told them that rank and titles were of no account, that labour—bucolic labour, and the ploughman's labour; the dairymaid's labour—agricultural toil—was the only thing worth counting. What said the poet—Oliver Goldsmith, the poet of the villager?

Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

Cheers again, of course: Was there ever so splendid a Governor as this Governor—cheers; applause; congratulations; excitement—and again Sir George smiled, and never turned a hair. Wherever he went, he was equal to the occasion, and didn't he know how to lay it on!

The Express  
Train. When the show was over and the reception done with I began to think how I was to get back to Maryborough. An express train, I was informed, would convey the Governor there at 5 p.m. So I took things easy, and about five strolled down to the station. There hissed the engine gaily decorated with gum branches. There was but one carriage—an immense thing, capable of seating 100 persons. I was about opening the door, when the guard interrupted me—'this way please,' he said—and as he invited me down to the attached waggon, he told me that the carriage I was about entering was the Governor's carriage—but this is for the gentlemen of the press—he observed—and opened the door of the waggon. There were three rather dejected beings seated therein. Said I 'This waggon was originally intended for cattle—it won't suit me, now. There is plenty of room in the carriage—three men only don't require all the space of 100? As for the Governor he himself says that rank is nothing whatever, but that labour—the labour of the pen man, of the press man—is everything.' The guard said that Sir George Bowen only said those sort of things on