

golden hours on angel wings had flown away too quickly for the lovers. Miss Cobbledick was filled with sudden alarm, and her brief day of glory was clouded. Her mother would be certain to miss the watch, and what was she to do with it? What with Jack, and what with herself? Self-preservation being the first law of nature, Jemima resolved to sacrifice Jack in order to shield herself from her mother's rage. He was not of much account in any respect, so she gave him the watch and chain, telling him to keep them safely till she asked for them, and to hurry round by the yard gate into the stable. This gave great relief to her conscience, and enabled her to meet her mother with a face of untroubled innocence.

Jack had not a lively imagination, but during the night he had a clear and blissful vision of his future destiny, the only dream of fortune his life was ever blessed with. He was to be the landlord of the hotel, when Mrs Cobbledick had gone to bliss, and Jemima was to be his bride, and the landlady.

But early next morning there was trouble in the house. The watch was missing, and nobody knew anything about it. Jemima helped her mother to look for it, but could not find it. A constable was sent for, and he questioned everyone without result. Last of all, Jack was asked if he knew anything of the missing watch. He was faithful and true. How could he betray Jemima, his future partner in life? He said he "had never seen no watch, and didn't know nothing whatsoever about no watch," and the next instant the constable pulled the watch out of Jack's pocket.

At his trial he was asked what he had to say in his defence, and then he told the truth, and said Jemima gave him the watch to keep until she should ask for it. But there is a time for all things, and Jack could never learn the time for telling the truth, or for telling a lie: he was always in the wrong. The judge, in passing sentence, said he had aggravated his crime by endeavouring to implicate an innocent young lady in his villainy, and gave him seven years.

He was taken on board a hulk, where he found two or three hundred other boys imprisoned. On the evening of his arrival a report was circulated among them, that they were all to be sent to another ship which was bound for Botany Bay, and that they would never see England again. They would have to work and sleep in chains; they would be yoked together and whipped like bullocks; and if they escaped into the bush the blacks would kill and eat them. As this dismal tale went round, some of the boys, who were quite young and small, began to cry, and call for their mothers to come and help them; and then the others began to scream, and shout and yell. The warders came below and tried to silence them, but the more they tried the louder grew the uproar, and it continued for many hours during the night.

"Britons rarely swerve

From law however stern, which tends their strength to nerve."

Discipline must be maintained; so next morning the poor little beggars were brought up on deck in batches, stripped, triced up, and severely flogged. Jack, and a number of other boys, said they had not cried at all, but the officer in charge thought it was better that a few of the innocent should suffer rather than that one of the guilty should escape, so they were all flogged alike, and soon after they were shipped for New South Wales.

On his arrival in Sydney, Jack was assigned as a servant to a squatter, and taken into the bush a long way to the west. The weather had been very hot for a long time, all the grass had withered to dust, and the cattle were starving. The first work which he was ordered to do was to climb trees and cut off branches, in order that the cattle might keep themselves alive by eating the leaves and twigs. Jack had never been used to handle an axe or tomahawk, so he found the labour of chopping very hard. He did his best, but that was not good enough for the squatter, who took him to a magistrate, and had him flogged by the official scourger.

While serving his sentence of seven years he was flogged four times; three of the times he said he had "done nothing," and for the fourth flogging he confessed to me that he had "done something," but he did not say what the "something" was. In those days it seems that "doing nothing" and "doing something" were crimes equally meriting the lash.

And now after a long life of labour the old convict had achieved independence at last. I don't think I ever met a richer man; he was richer than the whole family of the Rothschilds; he wanted scarcely anything. Food and clothing he obtained for the asking for them, and he was not particular as to their quality if the quantity was sufficient. Property to him was something despicable; he did not want any, and would not live inside a house if he had one; he preferred the outside. He was free from family cares—never had father or mother, sister or brother, wife or children. No poor relatives ever claimed his hospitality; no intimate friends wanted to borrow half-a-crown; no one ever asked him to buy suburban lots, or to take shares in a limited liability company. He was perfectly indifferent to all danger from bushrangers, burglars, pickpockets, or cattle stealers; he did not even own a dog, so the dogman never asked him for the dog tax. He never enquired about the state of the market, nor bothered himself about the prices of land or cattle, wool, wine or

wheat. Every bank, and brewery, and building society in the world might go into liquidation at once for aught he cared. He had retired from the Government service, had superannuated himself on a pension of nothing per annum, and to draw it he required no voucher.

And yet, notwithstanding all these advantages, I don't think there are many men who would voluntarily choose his lot. I watched him from the end of my verandah, and began speculating about him. What was he thinking about during his solitary watches in the night, or while he tramped alone through the bush year after year in heat and cold, wind and rain? Did he ever think of anything—of his past life, or of his future lot? Did he believe in or hope for a heaven? or had he any fear of hell and eternal punishment? Surely he had been punished enough; in this life he had endured evil things in plenty, and might at least hope for eternal rest in the next.

He was sitting with his back against a gum tree and his feet towards the fire. From time to time he threw a few more sticks on the embers, and a fitful blaze lit up his dark, weatherbeaten face.

Then to my surprise he began to sing, and to sing well. His voice was strong, clear and mellow, and its tones rose and fell in the silent night air with a pathetic and wonderful sweetness. The burden of his song was "We may be happy yet."

"Oh, smile as thou wert wont to smile,

Before a weight of care

Had crushed thine heart, and yet awhile

Left only sorrow there.

We may be happy yet."

He sang three stanzas and was silent. Then some one said, "poor old fellow; I hope he may be happy yet."

Next morning he was sitting with his back against the gum tree. His fire had gone out, and he seemed to be late in awaking, and in no hurry to resume his journey. But his travels were finished; he never awoke. His body was quite cold, and he must have died soon after he had sung the last note of his song. He had only sixpence in his pocket—the sixpence I had given him for his biography. The police took him in charge once more and put him in his last prison, where he will remain until we shall be all called together by the dread blast of the Archangel's trumpet on the Judgment Day.

## THE CHILDREN'S LAND.

(By JOHN JEROME ROONEY.)

I KNOW a land, a beautiful land,  
Fairer than isles of the east,  
Where the farthest hills are rainbow-spanned,  
And mirth holds an endless feast;  
Where tears are dried like the morning dew,  
And joys are many, and griefs are few;  
Where the old each day grow glad and new,  
And life rings clear as a bell;  
Oh! the land where the chimes speak sweet and true,  
Is the land where the children dwell.

There are beautiful lands where the rivers flow  
Through valleys of ripened grain;  
There are lands where armies of worshippers know  
No God but the God of Gain.  
The chink of gold is the song they sing,  
And all their life—time harvesting  
Are the glittering joys that gold may bring,  
In measure they buy and sell;  
But the land where love is the coin and king  
Is the land where the children dwell.

They romp in troops through this beautiful land,  
From morning till set of sun,  
And the Drowsy Fairies have sweet dreams planned  
When the little tasks are done.  
Here are no strivings for power and place,  
The last are first in the mimic race,  
All hearts are trusted, all life is grace,  
And Peace sings "All goes well"—  
For God walks daily with unveiled face  
In this land where the children dwell.

—Catholic World.

## TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

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