

throat, and shook me roughly, shouting, "A parson! a parson! I will do for the parson!"

Others with great difficulty relieved me from his grips, and dragged him away, cursing as if at his mortal enemy.

After tea, we got into the only bedroom in the house, available for two. The Teacher and I locked ourselves in and barricaded the door, hearing in the next room a large party of drunken men gambling and roaring over their cards. By and by they quarrelled and fought; they smashed in and out of their room, and seemed to be murdering each other; every moment we expected our door to come crashing in, as they were thrown or lurched against it. Their very language made us tremble. One man in particular seemed to be badly abused; he shouted that they were robbing him of his money; and he groaned and cried for protection, all in vain. We spent a sleepless and most miserable night. At four in the morning I arose, and was glad to get away by the early coach. My friend also left in his own conveyance, and reached his home in safety. At that period, it was not only painful but dangerous for any decent traveller to stay at many of these wayside Inns in the new and rough country. Every man lived and acted just as he pleased, doing that which was right in his own eyes; and Might was Right.

CHAPTER XLVII

AMONGST SQUATTERS AND DIGGERS

AFTER this, I made a Mission tour, in a somewhat mixed and original fashion, right across the Colony of Victoria, from Albury in New South Wales to Mount Gambier in South Australia. I conducted Mission Services almost every day, and three or more every Sabbath, besides visiting all Sunday Schools that could be touched on the way. When I reached a gold-digging or township, where I had been unable to get any one to announce a meeting, the first thing I did on arriving was to secure some Church or Hall, and, failing that, to fix on some suitable spot in the open air. Then, I was always able to hire some one to go round with the bell, and announce



"Utterly exhausted, I lay down on the sand."

the meeting. Few will believe how large were the audiences in this way gathered together, and how very substantial was the help that thereby came to the Mission fund.

Wheresoever railway, steamboat, and coach were available, I always used them; but failing these, I hired, or was obliged to friends of Missions for driving me from place to place. On this tour, having reached a certain place, from which my way lay for many miles across the country, where there was no public conveyance, I walked to the nearest squatter's Station and frankly informed the owner how I was situated; that I could not hire, and that I would like to stay at his house all night, if he would kindly send me on in the morning by any sort of trap to the next Station on my list. He happened to be a good Christian and a Presbyterian, and gave me a right cordial welcome. A meeting of his servants was called, which I had the pleasure of addressing. Next morning, he gave me £20, and sent me forward with his own conveyance, telling me to retain it all day, if necessary.

On reaching the next squatter's Station, I found the master also at home, and said, "I am a Missionary from the South Sea Islands. I am crossing Victoria to plead the cause of the Mission. I would like to rest here for an hour or two. Could you kindly send me on to the next Station by your conveyance? If not, I am to keep the last squatter's buggy, until I reach it."

Looking with a queer smile at me, he replied, "You propose a rather novel condition on which to rest at my house! My horses are so employed to-day, I fear that I may have difficulty in sending you on. But come in; both you and your horses need rest; and my wife will be glad to see you."

I immediately discovered that the good lady came from Glasgow, from a street in which I had lodged when a student at the Free Normal College. I even knew some of her friends. All the places of her youthful associations were equally familiar to me. We launched out into deeply-interesting conversation, which finally led up, of course, to the story of our Mission.

The gentleman, by this time, had so far been won, that he slipped out and sent my conveyance and horses back to their owner, and ordered his own to be ready to take me to the

next Station, or, if need be, to the next again. At parting, the lady said to her husband, "The Missionary has asked no money, though he sees we have been deeply interested; yet clearly that is the object of his tour. He is the first Missionary from the Heathen that ever visited us here; and you must contribute something to his Mission fund."

I thanked her, explaining, "I never ask money directly from any person for the Lord's work. My part is done when I have told my story and shown the needs of the Heathen and the claims of Christ; but I gratefully receive all that the Lord moves His people to give for the Mission."

Her husband replied, rather sharply, "You know I don't keep money here." To which she retorted with ready tact and with a resistless smile, "But you keep a cheque-book; and your cheque is as good as gold! This is the first donation we ever gave to such a cause, and let it be a good one." He made it indeed handsome, and I went on my way, thanking them very sincerely, and thanking God.

At the next Station, the owner turned out to be a gruff Irishman, forbidding and insolent. Stating my case to him as to the others, he shouted at me, "Go on! I don't want to be troubled with the loikes o' you here."

I answered, "I am sorry if my coming troubles you; but I wish you every blessing in Christ Jesus. Good-bye!"

As we drove off, he kept growling after us. On leaving his door, I heard a lady calling to him from the window, "Don't let that Missionary go away! Make haste and call him back. I want the children to see the idols and the South Sea curios."

At first he drowned her appeal in his own shoutings. But she must have persisted effectually; for shortly we heard him "coo-ee-ing," and stopped. When he came up to us, he explained, "That lady in my house heard you speaking in Melbourne. The ladies and children are very anxious to see your idols, dresses, and weapons. Will you please come back?"

We did so. I spent fifteen minutes or so, giving them information about the Natives and our Mission. As I left, our boisterous friend handed me a cheque for £5, and wished me great success.

The next Station at which we arrived was one of the

largest of all. It happened to be a sort of pay-day, and men were assembled from all parts of the "run," and were to remain there over night. The squatter and his family were from home; but Mr. Todd, the overseer, being a good Christian and a Scotchman, was glad to receive us, arranged to hold a meeting that evening in the men's hut, and promised to set me forward on my journey next day. The meeting was very enthusiastic; and they subscribed £20 to the Mission—every man being determined to have so many shares in the new Mission Ship. With earnest personal dealing, I urged the claims of the Lord Jesus upon all who were present, seeking the salvation of every hearer. I ever found even the rough digger, and the lowest of the hands about far-away Stations, most attentive and perfectly respectful.

A lively and memorable extemporised meeting on this tour is associated in memory with one of my dearest friends. The district was very remote. He, the squatter, and his beloved wife were sterling Christians, and have been ever since warmly devoted to me. On my arrival, he invited the people from all the surrounding Stations, as well as his own numerous servants, to hear the story of our Mission. Next day he volunteered to drive me a long distance over the plains of St. Arnaud, his dear wife accompanying us. At that time there were few fences in such districts in Australia. The drive was long, but the day had been lovely, and the fellowship was so sweet that it still shines a sunny spot in the fields of memory.

Having reached our destination about seven o'clock, he ordered tea at the Inn for the whole party; and we sallied out meantime and took the only Hall in the place, for an extemporised meeting to be held that evening at eight o'clock. I then hired a man to go through the township with a bell, announcing the same; while I myself went up one side of the main street, and my friend up the other, inviting all who would listen to us to attend the Mission meeting where South Sea Islands idols, weapons, and dresses would be exhibited, and stories of the Natives told.

Running back for a hurried cup of tea, I then hastened to the Hall, and found it crowded to excess with rough and boisterous diggers. The hour struck as I was getting my

articles arranged and spread out upon the table, and they began shouting, "Where's the Missionary?"—"Another hoax!"—indicating that they were not unwilling for a row. I learned that, only a few nights ago, a so-called Professor had advertised a lecture, lifted entrance money till the Hall was crowded, and then quietly slipped off the scene. In our case, though there was no charge, they seemed disposed to gratify themselves by some sort of promiscuous revenge.

Amidst the noisy chaff and rising uproar, I stepped up on the table, and said, "Gentlemen, I am the Missionary. If you will now be silent, the lecture will proceed. According to my usual custom, let us open the meeting with prayer."

The hush that fell was such a contrast to the preceding hubbub, that I heard my heart throbbing aloud! Then they listened to me for an hour, in perfect silence and with ever-increasing interest. At the close I intimated that I asked no collection; but if, after what they had heard, they would take a Collecting Card for the new Mission Ship, and send any contributions to the Treasurer at Melbourne, I would praise God for sending me amongst them. Many were heartily taken, and doubtless some souls felt the "constraining love," who had till then been living without God.

CHAPTER XLVIII

JOHN GILPIN IN THE BUSH

THE crowning adventure of my tour in Australia came about in the following manner. I was advertised to conduct Services at Narracoort on Sabbath, and at a Station on the way on Saturday evening. But how to get from Penola was a terrible perplexity. On Saturday morning, however, a young lady offered me, out of gratitude for blessings received, the use of her riding horse for the journey. "Garibaldi" was his name; and, though bred for a race-horse, I was assured that if I kept him firmly in hand, he would easily carry me over the two-and-twenty miles. He was to be left at the journey's end, and the lady herself would fetch him back. I shrank from the undertaking, knowing little of horses, and having vague

recollections of being dreadfully punished for more than a week after my last and almost only ride. But every one in that country is quite at ease on the back of a horse. They saw no risk; and, as there appeared no other way of getting there to fulfil my engagements, I, for my part, began to think that God had unexpectedly provided the means, and that He would carry me safely through.

I accepted the lady's kind offer, and started on my pilgrimage. A friend showed me the road, and gave me ample directions. In the bush, I was to keep my eye on the notches in the trees, and follow them. He agreed kindly to bring my luggage to the Station, and leave it there for me by and bye. After I had walked very quietly for some distance, three gentlemen on horseback overtook me. We entered into conversation. They inquired how far I was going, and advised me to sit a little "freer" in the saddle, as it would be so much easier for me. They seemed greatly amused at my awkward riding! Dark clouds were now gathering ahead, and the atmosphere prophesied a severe storm; therefore they urged that I should ride a little faster, as they, for a considerable distance, could guide me on the right way. I explained to them my plight through inexperience, said that I could only creep on slowly with safety, and bade them Good-bye. As the sky was getting darker every minute, they consented, wishing me a safe journey, and started off at a smart pace.

I struggled to hold in my horse; but seizing the bit with his teeth, laying back his ears, and stretching out his eager neck, he manifestly felt that his honour was at stake; and in less time than I take to write it, the three friends cleared a way for us, and he tore past them all at an appalling speed. They tried for a time to keep within reach of us, but that sound only put fire into his blood; and in an incredibly short time I heard them not; nor, from the moment that he bore me swinging past them, durst I turn my head by one inch to look for them again. In vain I tried to hold him in; he tore on, with what appeared to me the speed of the wind. Then the thunderstorm broke around us, with flash of lightning and flood of rain, and at every fresh peal my "Garibaldi" dashed more wildly onward.

To me, it was a vast surprise to discover that I could sit more easily on this wild flying thing than when at a canter or

a trot. At every turn I expected that he would dash himself and me against the great forest trees; but instinct rather than my hand guided him miraculously. Sometimes I had a glimpse of the road, but as for the "notches," I never saw one of them; we passed them with lightning speed. Indeed, I durst not lift my eyes for one moment from watching the horse's head and the trees on our track. My high-crowned hat was now drenched, and battered out of shape; for whenever we came to a rather clear space, I seized the chance and gave it another knock down over my head. I was spattered and covered with mud and mire.

Crash, crash, went the thunder, and on, on, went "Garibaldi" through the gloom of the forest, emerging at length upon a clearer ground with a more visible pathway. Reaching the top of the slope, a large house stood out far in front of us to the left; and the horse had apparently determined to make straight for that, as if it were his home. He skirted along the hill, and took the track as his own familiar ground, all my effort to hold him in or guide him having no more effect than that of a child. By this time, I suspect, I really had lost all power. "Garibaldi" had been at that house, probably frequently before; he knew those stables; and my fate seemed to be instant death against door or wall.

Some members of the family, on the outlook for the Missionary, saw us come tearing along as if mad or drunk; and now all rushed to the verandah, expecting some dread catastrophe. A tall and stout young groom, amazed at our wild career, throwing wide open the gate, seized the bridle at great risk to himself, and ran full speed, yet holding back with all his might, and shouting at me to do the same. We succeeded—"Garibaldi" having probably attained his purpose—in bringing him to a halt within a few paces of the door. Staring at me with open mouth, the man exclaimed, "I have saved your life. What madness to ride like that!" Thanking him, though I could scarcely by this time articulate a word, I told him that the horse had run away, and that I had lost all control.

Truly I was in a sorry plight, drenched, covered with mud, and my hat battered down over my eyes; little wonder they thought me drunk or mad! Finally, as if to confirm every suspicion, and amuse them all,—for master, mistress, governess,

and children now looked on from the verandah,—when I was helped off the horse, I could not stand on my feet! My head still went rushing on in the race; I staggered, and down I tumbled into the mud, feeling chagrin and mortification; yet there I had to sit for some time, before I recovered myself, so as either to rise or to speak a word. When I did get to my feet, I had to stand holding by the verandah for some time, my head still rushing on in the race. At length the master said, "Will you not come in?"

I knew that he was treating me for a drunken man; and the giddiness was so dreadful still, that my attempts at speech seemed more drunken than even my gait.

As soon as I could stand, I went into the house, and drew near to an excellent fire in my dripping clothes. The squatter sat opposite me in silence, reading the newspapers, and taking a look at me now and again over his spectacles. By and by he remarked, "Wouldn't it be worth while to change your clothes?"

Speech was now returning to me. I replied, "Yes, but my bag is coming on in the cart, and may not be here to-night."

He began to relent. He took me into a room, and laid out for me a suit of his own. I being then very slender, and he a big-framed farmer, my new dress, though greatly adding to my comfort, enhanced the singularity of my appearance!

Returning to him, washed and dressed, I inquired if he had arranged for a meeting? My tongue, I fear, was still unsteady, for the squatter looked at me rather reproachfully, and said, "Do you really consider yourself fit to appear before a meeting to-night?"

I assured him he was quite wrong in his suspicions, that I was a life-long Abstainer, and that my nerves had been so unhinged by the terrible ride and runaway horse. He smiled rather suggestively, and said we would see how I felt after tea.

We went to the table. All that had occurred was now consummated by my appearing in the lusty farmer's clothes; and the lady and other friends had infinite difficulty in keeping their amusement within decent bounds. I again took speech in hand, but I suspect my words had still the thickness of the tippler's utterance, for they seemed not to carry much conviction. "Dear friends, I quite understand your feelings;

appearances are so strangely against me. But I am not drunken, as ye suppose. I have tasted no intoxicating drink, I am a life-long Total Abstainer!"

This fairly broke down their reserve. They laughed aloud, looking at each other and at me, as if to say, "Man, you're drunk at this very moment."

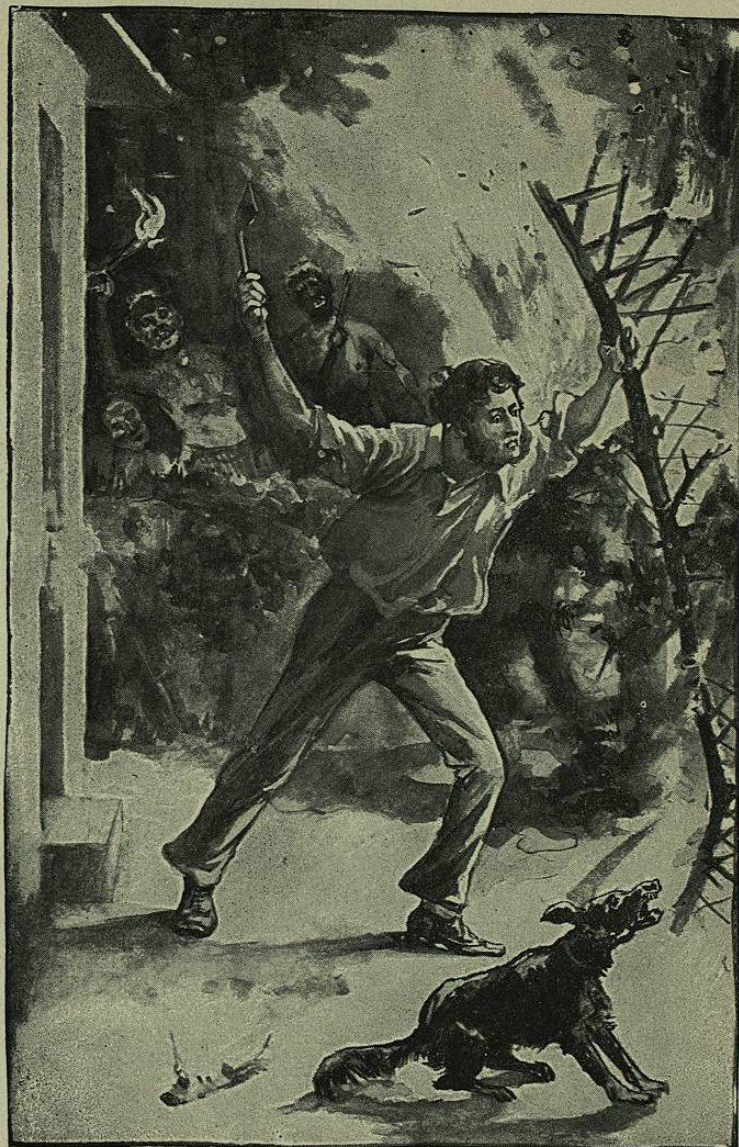
Before tea was over they appeared, however, to begin to entertain the idea that I *might* address the meeting; and so I was informed of the arrangements that had been made. At the meeting, my incredulous friends became very deeply interested. Manifestly their better thoughts were gaining the ascendancy. And they heaped thereafter every kindness upon me, as if to make amends for harder suspicions.

Next morning the master drove me about ten miles farther on to the Church. A groom rode the race-horse, who took no scathe from his thundering gallop of the day before. It left deeper traces upon me. I got through the Services, however, and with good returns for the Mission. Twice since, on my Mission tours, I have found myself at that same memorable house; and on each occasion, a large company of friends were regaled by the good lady there with very comical descriptions of my first arrival at her door.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA

DETAINED for nearly a week at Balmoral by the breakdown of the coach on these dreadful roads, I telegraphed to Hamilton for a conveyance; and the Superintendent of the Sunday School, dear Mr. Laidlaw, volunteered, in order to reduce expenses, to spend one day of his precious time coming for me, and another driving me down. While awaiting him, I came into painful and memorable contact with the Aborigines of Australia. The Publicans had organised a day of sports, horse-racing, and circus exhibitions. Immense crowds assembled, and, amongst the rest, tribe after tribe of the Aborigines from all the surrounding country. Despite the law prohibiting the giving of strong drinks to these poor creatures, foolish and



"I ran to the burning reed fence and tore it up."

unprincipled dealers supplied them with the same, and the very blankets which the Government had given them were freely exchanged for the fire-water which kindled them to madness.

Next day was Sabbath. The morning was hideous with the yells of the fighting Savages. They tore about on the Common in front of the Church, leading gentlemen having tried in vain to quiet them, and their wild voices without jarred upon the Morning Service. About two o'clock, I tried to get into conversation with them. I appealed to them whether they were not all tired and hungry? They replied that they had had no food all that day; they had fought since the morning! I said, "I love you, black fellows. I go Missionary black fellows far away. I love you, want you rest, get food. Come all of you, rest, sit round me, and we will talk, till the *jims* (= women) get ready tea. They boil water, I take tea with you, and then you will be strong!"

By broken English and by many symbols, I won their ear. They produced tea and *dampier*, i.e. a rather forbidding-looking bread, without yeast, baked on the coals. Their wives hastened to boil water. I kept incessantly talking, to interest them, and told them how Jesus, God's dear Son, came and died to make them happy, and how He grieved to see them beating and fighting and killing each other.

When the tea was ready, we squatted on the green grass, their tins were filled, the *dampier* was broken into lumps, and I asked the blessing of God on the meal. To me it was unpleasant eating! Many of them looked strong and healthy; but not a few were weak and dying creatures. The strong, devouring all they could get, urged me to be done, and let them finish their fighting, eager for the fray. But having gained their confidence, I prayed with them, and thereafter said, "Now, before I leave, I will ask of you to do one thing for my sake, which you can all easily do."

With one voice they replied, "Yes, we all do whatever you say."

I got their leaders to promise to me one by one. I then said, "Now you have got your tea; and I ask every man and boy among you to lie down in the bush and take a sleep, and your wives will sit by and watch over your safety!"

In glum silence, their war weapons still grasped in their

hands, they stood looking intently at me, doubting whether I could be in earnest. I urged them, "You all promised to do what I asked. If you break your promise, these white men will laugh at me, and say that black fellows only lie and deceive. Let them see that you can be trusted. I wait here till I see you all asleep."

One said that his head was cut, and he must have revenge before he could lie down. Others filed past showing their wounds, and declaring that it was too bad to request them to go to sleep. I praised them as far as I could, but urged them for once to be men and to keep their word. Finally, they all agreed to lie down, I waiting till the last man had disappeared; and, being doubly exhausted with the debauch and the fighting, they were soon all fast asleep. I prayed that the blessed Sleep might lull their savage passions.

Before daylight next morning, the Minister and I were hastening to the scene to prevent further fighting; but as the sun was rising we saw the last tribe of the distant Natives disappearing over the brow of a hill. A small party belonging to the district alone remained. They shouted to us, "Black fellow all gone! No more fight. You too much like black fellow!"

For three days afterwards I had still to linger there; and if their dogs ran or barked at me, the women chased them with sticks and stones, and protected me. One little touch of kindness and sympathy had unlocked their darkened hearts.

Who wonders that the *dark* races melt away before the *whites*? The pioneers of Civilisation *will* carry with them this demon of strong drink, the fruitful parent of every other vice. The black people drink, and become unmanageable; and through the white man's own poison-gift an excuse is found for sweeping the poor creatures off the face of the earth. Marsden's writings show how our Australian blacks are destroyed. But I have myself been on the track of such butcheries again and again. A Victorian lady told me the following incident. She heard a child's pitiful cry in the bush. On tracing it, she found a little girl weeping over her younger brother. She said, "The white men poisoned our father and mother. They threaten to shoot me, so that I dare not go near them. I am here, weeping over my brother till we die!"

The compassionate lady promised to be a mother to the little sufferers, and to protect them. They instantly clung to her, and have proved themselves to be loving and dutiful ever since.

CHAPTER L

NORA

WHILE I was pondering over Kingsley's words,—about the blacks of Australia being "poor brutes in human shape," and too low to take in the Gospel,—the story of Nora, an Aboriginal Christian woman, whom I myself actually visited and corresponded with, was brought under my notice, as if to shatter to pieces everything that the famous preacher had proclaimed. A dear friend told me how he had seen Nora encamped with the blacks near Hexham in Victoria. Her husband had lost, through drink, their once comfortable home at a Station where he was employed. The change back to life in camp had broken her health, and she lay sick on the ground within a miserable hut. The visitors found her reading a Bible, and explaining to a number of her own poor people the wonders of redeeming love. My friend, Roderick Urquhart, Esq., overcome by the sight, said, "Nora, I am grieved to see you here, and deprived of every comfort in your sickness."

She answered, not without tears, "The change has indeed made me unwell; but I am beginning to think that this too is for the best; it has at last brought my poor husband to his senses, and I will grudge nothing if God thereby brings him to the Saviour's feet!"

She further explained that she had found wonderful joy in telling her own people about the true God and His Son Jesus, and was quite assured that the Lord in His own way would send her relief. The visitors who accompanied Mr. Urquhart showed themselves to be greatly affected by the true and pure Christian spirit of this poor Aboriginal, and on parting she said, "Do not think that I like this miserable hut, or the food, or the company; but I am and have been happy in trying to do good amongst my people."