

The ADVERTISER contained the orthodox leader, then local matter, telling, among other things, of the drowning of a large number of cattle in crossing the Yarra. The Melbourne races are reported. Then follows the latest English news, which is eight months old, followed by extract matter, and garnished in various parts of the paper with advertisements. The ADVERTISER was the size of a sheet of foolscap, having four pages, each page consisting of two columns. There were difficulties to overcome which none but a printer could by any possibility imagine. The ADVERTISER had but a short existence. It was snuffed out by the then existing Government representative, Captain Lonsdale. This official discovered to his horror that the ADVERTISER was really and truly a newspaper, which inserted advertisements and afterwards made a charge for them. Yes, actually charged for advertisements, and the paper not licensed by the Government! Such a thing was not to be borne or tolerated. The proprietor might insert advertisements, but he must on no account presume to charge for them.

So the first printed newspaper published in Melbourne ceased to exist. Captain Lonsdale, and a good many other captains and officials, dreaded the thought of newspapers springing into existence. They had much reason for their dread, as I shall presently shew. Tyranny, robbery, spoliation, corruption, appropriations to personal uses of public moneys do not generally live in company with a free Press without meeting with exposure.

Then, after a time, came a properly-legalised newspaper. It had been licensed at Sydney, with permission to print it in Port Phillip, seven hundred miles distant. This was the PORT PHILLIP GAZETTE, which all old colonists will not fail to remember for the great ability with which it was conducted. The proprietors were Mr George Arden and Mr Thomas Strode. Arden was but a young man then, not more than eighteen, but he was a brilliant journalist: his equal in literary talent the colonies have not since possessed, if perhaps we except Mr Thomas Lockyer Bright. The miserable and untimely fate of the one was that of the other. The editorial and reportorial duties of the GAZETTE devolved on Mr Arden, whilst Mr Strode, who had been overseer of the SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, became the printer. I don't think I can do better than give in Arden's own words, the difficulties which he and his partner had to

encounter. He says:—"Without friends we began our enterprise. A quantity of old type that had been lying in pie in a shed for many years, was purchased at two pence a pound. A rickety wooden press was picked up, the stone of which had a gentle hollow in the centre, which materially interfered with the coming-up of the type. The largest letters for placards and advertisements were only two-line. Ink rollers were also purchased, which turned out to be useless. The glorious mountain of disordered type was deposited on the floor of a newly-furnished house in Queen-street. No friendly compositor was near—not even a printer's devil."

Mrs Strode, like a genuine woman, came to the front. She separated the mass of letters, all so mixed up, one from the other. Then it was found the type had to be cleaned, but there was no lye. After trying the ashes of various woods, the oak was found to be the best for the purpose, and pronounced to be even stronger than soda. With infinite labour and trouble, and by working through the long hours of the night, with fingers blistered and sore, with the brain always at work devising expedients to supply damages or deficiencies, the type was at last sorted into cases, the press set up, and the imposing table in its place. Next came the difficulty with the rollers. The composition on these was so hard that an axe would scarcely make an impression. Mr Strode set about making new ones. But then how was he to do for a cylinder, and no tinsmith within nearer hail than seven hundred miles? But the difficulty, like all other difficulties, was overcome.

During all this time Mr George Arden was laboriously and mentally engaged preparing leading articles, procuring advertisements, and obtaining subscribers. With the names procured in Sydney a list of 300 supporters was secured.

The eventful day came. Notice had been given of the hour the door would open and the light pour forth upon the colonists. The office was surrounded—the office which served at once for parlour,

sleeping room, kitchen, and study—and an attack was made upon it because the GAZETTE was not quite ready.

About mid-day the leaden images of thought had done their work, and the crowd, all being supplied with a copy, retired to read it, while the poor unaided printer, exhausted with his wonderful fortnight's labour, wearied, worn, and fagged out, retired to rest.

Arden's partner, Mr Strode, was no common man. Among other shifts and expedients, he contrived to make an ink-roller of indiarubber, but the small quantity obtainable prevented him making one large enough for use. Eight years after a London gentleman took out a patent for the same discovery. Mr Strode did much more than all which has been here stated of him. At a loss for large printing type, he had to cut all above four-line letters, and after many trials, discovered well seasoned New Zealand pine best able to stand sun and water. As a proof of his capacity for work and endurance, it may be mentioned that this pioneer of the newspaper press managed single-handed, for six weeks to bring out his bi-weekly issue, without inserting "dummy" matter, and with strict punctuality as to the hour of publication. His forefinger became so inflamed with incessant picking-up of type that he had to employ his next finger. The sleep he allowed himself was just two hours in the twenty-four.

As I have already noticed, Mr Fawcner's journal, the ADVERTISER, was suspended because of its illegality. By receiving money for advertisements, it had become a newspaper. In those convict days the law respecting public printed matter was a very strict one. Two sureties had to be found for respectability and propriety, each in the sum of £300. The printer, editor, and publisher each had to give security for good behaviour to a large amount. Should the paper change its office, fresh securities, with due notices, and other formalities had to be given.

Messrs Arden and Strode had complied with these regulations at Sydney. Mr Fawcner, dwelling at Melbourne, did not for the very plain and simple reason that at the time, and until very long after, no money could be tendered to Government in Melbourne. When, however, arrangements were perfected, Mr Fawcner once more came into the field as a journalist proprietor, with a paper known then and for many long years after as the PORT PHILLIP PATRIOT. In a GAZETTE advertisement he intimated that he had been waiting months for permission from Sydney to establish a newspaper in Melbourne, while for six months he had retained the services of a compositor in readiness and for security.

I shall omit all mention of the scurrilities which were passed between the editors of the two journals. Mr Arden's bolts used for attack were pointed with the finest-tempered metal. Mr Fawcner's weapons were, metaphorically speaking, skittle balls, while the language he used was more fit for the skittle-alley than the columns of a newspaper.

But, with all its many faults, the Press did wonderfully good service—killed many gross abuses, "scotched" many corruptions, and finally, at a very early date in the history of the colony, secured at least Her Majesty's subjects from oppression, such as only exists where the power of the Press has not been exercised.

I shall shew what terrible evils existed, and gross outrages were perpetrated before newspapers became a power in the land.

(To be continued.)
BY SNYDER.

No. XVIII.

TOLERATED INFAMIES BEFORE THE POWER OF THE NEWSPAPER PRESS WAS FELT.

It was long before and for some time after the power and influence of the newspaper Press was felt (the early rise and progress of which I have described) that the most terrible abuses were permitted to go unchecked in Victoria and New South Wales, which were then one colony. The Victorian squatters had taken possession of large tracts of land at mere nominal rentals, and finding free immigrant labour both scarce and dear, they, under one Lieutenant Johnston, imported a number of Klings from India, under engagement for five years. The agreement made between Lieutenant Johnston and the Klings, on behalf of the squatters, was that at the option of their employers they should be made transferable from one to the other. These

miserable men were made to do duty as shepherds and hut-keepers. They came from a tropical region to one which to them was as the climate of Iceland might be to a native of the south of England. They had been accustomed to live upon rice, and fish, and vegetables, while here, in Port Phillip, they were compelled all the year round to live upon hard damper and mutton or salted beef. They died off like rotten sheep, and were buried out of sight as carrion would be. Then the Port Phillip squatters, still wanting labour, and finding that the Klings only arrived to die off, importuned the Tasmanian Government to grant tickets of leave to prisoners, and ship them over to Melbourne and Geelong. Only too glad to rid themselves of so much of the criminal element, Tasmania acceded to the request, and in a little time the shores of Port Phillip were infested with murderous burglars and the sweepings of the penal settlements. Sheep, stealing, cattle-lifting, murder, and outrage on women became of daily occurrence. On a smaller scale, all the crimes which disturbed the peace of the respectable inhabitants after the outbreak of the Victorian goldfields were enacted. It was, I think, in 1847 or '48 that the squatters got an act passed, which was entitled "The Masters and Servants Act." It was one of the most Algerine and cruel pieces of legislation which ever disgraced the statute-book of any civilised community of the world. The title of the Act was a misnomer. It should have been called "an Act giving power to masters at their will to maltreat, imprison, and mulct of their hard-won earnings the servants in their employment."

My memory still serves when at the time it became law, and I am not likely to forget the cruelties which were perpetrated under it; and I also do not fail to remember what horrible retribution, in many instances, followed upon it being put in force.

Under this Act a servant disobeying, in the slightest degree, any order of his employer, might be, and often was, sentenced to six, and even twelve months' hard labour—imprisonment with forfeiture of all wages due to him.

I here speak of cases which have come under my own cognizance. I have known a man sent to goal for three months with loss of all wages due, because he has refused to eat mutton putrid with maggots. The charge preferred against the man was for using insulting language to his employer. I have known a shepherd and a hut-keeper sent to goal and hard labour for one year because, while engaged in getting together a flock of sheep, which the wild dingoes had dispersed through the bush, the blacks had gone to the hut and carried off several sheep-skins. The charge was for neglect of duty to his employer. I knew one man on an out-cattle station who was covered with boils, and unable to work, in consequence of living several months upon tainted salt beef. He was dismissed the station without one penny of a half-year's wages due to him being paid.

This man was advised to summons his employer for the amount, and he was foolish enough to make the experiment. Instead of recovering what was rightly and lawfully due to him, he was sent to goal for three months by a brother squatter and J.P., for making an unlawful claim.

One bullock-driver, an excellent, sober, steady man, was deprived of nine months' wages because he had lost a bullock-chain, worth, perhaps, fifteen shillings. The charge was for "not taking due care of his master's property."

Another man, who should have returned with his bullock team and dray to the home station on Thursday, but did not come till the day following, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for disobedience of orders. The man proved that he was delayed by flooded creeks, but his defence availed him nothing. He also, in addition to imprisonment, was ordered to forfeit all wages due to him.

And who, it may be asked, were entrusted with the administration of the law under which such gross acts of cruelty and injustice were continually and systematically perpetrated? My answer is, they were the squatters—the men who got this Algerine law framed to suit their own particular wishes. These squatters got themselves appointed Justices of the

Peace. They lived in the interior, where they dealt out the law. A squatter wishing to punish one of his men would saddle his horse and ride over to some other squatter on a neighbouring station, who might be on the Commission of the Peace. The two would probably dine together, and afterwards confer. The next day a native mounted trooper would serve the man with a warrant, convey him, handcuffed to one of his stirrup-irons, before the justice who had previously been "conferred" with, and the man would be sentenced to three, six, nine, or twelve months' gaol, with hard labour added, and, as was always the case, ordered to have his wages forfeited, whatever these might be.

This forfeiture of wages, which, besides imprisonment, was the leading feature of every clause of the Act, was one mode resorted to by the disreputable section of the squatters—and it was a very large section indeed—of obtaining cheap labour.

In the time I refer to bush engagements were invariably made for twelve months, wages payable at the termination of the engagement. Then, with the class of employers I refer to, when a man's time was nearly up, a charge would be preferred against him for neglect of duty, disobedience of orders, using abusive language, or being wasteful of his master's property. Any charge answered the purpose. No proof beyond the statement was deemed necessary; no defence was admitted. The man was mulct of his wages and imprisoned. One more case I will mention of the law as it existed:—There was a girl, some eight or nine years old, the daughter of a married couple engaged on the home station in a district known as the Colac. This child, either in mischief, playfulness, or by accident, had pulled down a hurdle, by which a flock of sheep got out and mixed with another flock. The occurrence was vexatious, but not serious. A couple of men in three or four hours would have drafted out the sheep, and there would have been an end of the trouble. For this offence the squatter stripped the girl, in the face of the mother, of all her outer clothing, and then flogged her with a thong of bullock hide until the child's body was livid with bruises. This was not sufficient, but he had a warrant issued against the father of the girl for permitting her to do that which he never saw her do; when he was ordered to forfeit all wages due to him, amounting, as I recollect, to some fifty-four pounds.

There is a worthy settler now living in this province who can bear witness to what I have here stated. I have reason to think that squatter regretted his harshness, for, within one week after the cruel act was perpetrated, he woke in the night to discover his household in flames, his sheep broken out from their hurdles, his woolshed in conflagration, and himself a ruined man.

Retribution followed upon injustice (I will not say how), as it had done before and will for all time to come. One squatter, notorious for getting his servants mulcted of their wages, was found one morning at an out-station stark dead, and a two-pronged pitchfork through his breastbones. The murderer was never discovered. In the course of eighteen months no less than fourteen homesteads had been burnt to the ground, and in every instance, with one exception, they were the homesteads of men who had been notorious for exercising the powers given them under the Masters and Servants Act.

There is little doubt but what some of the men on the stations were of the worst class, old convicts doubly dyed and steeped in every rascality. But those were just the men who the squatters were, as a rule, most afraid of. These men, when they earned their wages, received them, or they would have made the reason why very soon known. It was the unoffending class who were fixed upon to be made the subject of oppression.

In those days what of the newspaper Press there was was so trammelled and confined to a narrow mission that it was powerless for good. The time, however, was not long before it became an avenging Nemesis.

It came heavy, and hot, and quick upon them in more than one way. The squatters, having the rule of the country and the monopoly of the lands in their own hands became possessed of large wealth. They lived extravagantly, and speculated wildly. They got into the hands of the banks, and