

lynched wherever and whenever found. The Australian flag of blue with a white cross was hoisted; a provisional Government was formed, and supplies levied in its name. An express arrived in Melbourne on the 4th December, announcing that a party of diggers were on the road to that city in order to get up an agitation there. On the same day a proclamation was issued declaring the whole district of Ballarat to be under martial law. That day also the intelligence of the engagement between the military and the diggers arrived, and there was a general regret everywhere expressed outside of the goldfields that the line of demarcation between constitutional agitation and illegal resistance by physical force had been passed.

No. XXVII.

THE TERMINATION OF THE BALLARAT RIOTS.

I have shewn, I think, with tolerable clearness and fidelity the causes which led up to the Ballarat rebellion. It had been seen coming as are the storm clouds which rise dark and threatening above the horizon. Small at first, they increase in volume and expand over a larger area of the heavens, until all is overcast. There is a deep gloom, a profound silence, when suddenly the clouds are rent by lightning, the rain descends in torrents of water, the gale rises, and the angry storm rages furiously. So what was seen would come, came at last.

At a late hour of the night, early in December, 1854, lights were to be seen in the tents of the diggers at a time when generally all was dark and the inhabitants of the field in deep sleep after the heavy toil of the day in a scorching midsummer sun and a sweltering atmosphere. Signals were exchanged, when, suddenly, the sentries who had been placed at various outposts were fired upon and driven in. Two privates and a corporal were killed; but the sentries having fled to the camp, nothing more was done that night. The diggers had extinguished the lights in tents, and rested in temporary safety in the obscurity of the night.

The following morning the officer in command of the troops, having made a reconnaissance, discovered large numbers of the diggers at drill, most of them armed and equipped. They were seen being told off in companies, and a spy who had been sent among them returned and stated that he had heard one who appeared to be the chief in command of the rioters address the diggers. He told them that those who had no other arms should get an iron pike secured on to a pole. This would reach the hearts of the tyrants.

That day an order from the Government camp was issued that no lights would be allowed in the diggers' tents after eight o'clock at night; and that no firearms were to be discharged on any pretence whatever. Whoever disobeyed this command would be fired upon without further note or warning.

Two days after the sentries had been driven in, news was brought to the camp at Ballarat announcing the fact that the diggers in large numbers were occupying an entrenched camp at Eureka. The intention of the diggers was to intercept the troops which they had secretly learned were hourly expected from Melbourne and Geelong. During this time the goldfield was in possession of the diggers, all official authority was set at defiance, but there was not a claim being worked. The diggers had been led to believe that the soldiers who had been sent up sympathised with them. This was certainly the case, so far as individual feeling dared give expression, but there was nothing approaching to a disobedience of command. Then it was also that the diggers commenced levying contributions on all classes, in money, ammunitions, stores, provisions, and bedding.

The officer in command now considered the time had arrived to employ the whole of the military forces in suppressing the outbreak. He was unable to attack the insurgents during the day, and he was not sufficiently strong to leave a reserve so necessary for the protection of the camp. So at night a surprise was resolved on, and circumstances favoured this very bold attempt. The rioters had not contemplated any active measures on the part of the military authorities until the main body of the troops and the commanding officer had arrived. It was Sunday morning, and a very great portion of them were away, and those, no doubt, had drunk deep. They were surprised by Capt. Thomas, a brave officer, who resolved to seize the favourable opportunity of delivering a most effectual blow against them.

The insurgents were posted in a very advantageous position in a fortified camp, or rather stockade, at the Eureka. It rested on a gentle eminence, and was of considerable strength. The leaders, as might have been expected, were not very skilled in military engineering, for the enclosure was much too large, and was not protected by proper bastions or outworks to aid the defenders in a general assault, should opportunity offer. But notwithstanding all these disadvantages, the diggers would have repulsed the military had the attack not been made at a time when totally unexpected and when the great body of the disaffected were absent. Capt. Thomas had planned and carried out the whole affair with great skill and foresight. It was remitted to Capt. Parsley, of the Engineers, to make the advance with skirmishers and generally to direct the assault. The military were fortunate in having one of the commissioners to act as their guide, who, being well acquainted with the locality, led the troops to the exact spot where the operations were to commence. The force under Captain Thomas reached the ground a little before daylight. The mounted constabulary and foot soldiers numbered close upon four hundred men. When the whole of the forces reached to within a few hundred yards of the intrenchments, detachments were extended to the front, rear, and sides of the stockade, while the main body advanced to the attack. The diggers received the attack with great coolness, determination, and bravery. When the military were at a distance of 150 yards the insurgents poured in a tolerably effective fire. Then the order was given to the military to commence the attack, when throwing in a steady fire on the camp in front, the infantry and armed constabulary advanced in unbroken order, undaunted by the continuous discharges made against them.

As the diggers appeared in earnest and shewed a desire to act either on the defensive or aggressive as might answer their object, the reserves and foot police were now brought up for the struggle. A sharp fight was kept up for some time, but in consequence of the ammunition becoming scarce among the diggers, their fire slackened, and in a few minutes the military carried the entrenchment at the point of the bayonet. Among the mounted constabulary who distinguished themselves on that morning for coolness and bravery was a mounted constable named Parly, who was afterwards recommended for promotion. But in those days promotion was for those whose voices were heard loudest at the Government doors. Real merit or solid worth was seldom taken into account.

The engagement scarcely lasted half-an-hour. The leaders of the insurgents commanded well and fought desperately. Mr Lalor (after member of the Assembly and a Minister of the Victorian Parliament), having been wounded, was left for dead in the stockade, while several others were cut down at their posts. The insurgents lost forty men, while twice as many were more or less severely wounded. About one hundred and fifty of the insurgents surrendered themselves as prisoners.

The loss of the day at the stockade in no way daunted the diggers, for within a few days from a thousand to twelve hundred men, all well armed, collected together in the mountainous roads leading to the diggings settlement at Creswick Creek.

Sir Robert Nickle, who was now in command, was an old and experienced officer; he was besides this a most humane man. He immediately restrained the violence of the police and military, while he held several parleys with the disaffected diggers, during which he urged them to return to their duty. This exhibition of forbearance, in conjunction with the promised appointment of a Commissioner to enquire into their grievances, calmed down the excitement. The magistrates, by order of the Government, were very lenient with the prisoners, and only convicted in very glaring cases. Meetings were subsequently held in Geelong, Melbourne, Bendigo, and other places where resolutions strongly condemning the policy of the Government towards the diggers were carried. A meeting was also held in Ballarat, when resolutions were passed praying the military officials to enforce martial law with as much forbearance and humanity as the peculiar circumstances of the outbreak would allow. Mr Humphray, a compositor by trade, who was the bearer of the resolutions, was arrested upon presenting himself at the camp, but liberated after it had been discovered he was a moral and not a physical force opponent of their measures.

The members forming a Commission of Enquiry presided at Ballarat, where they proceeded to take evidence from all classes of residents at the goldfield. It was shewn incontestably that the diggers had been grievously wronged, and that Sir Charles Hotham had been kept in a complete state of ignorance as to the condition of affairs on the goldfields. Then, but not until then, were the diggers legislated for in a spirit of fairness and conciliation. If anything had been wanting to convince the Government of the real state of public feeling, the result of the trials of the prisoners taken in the stockade and committed must have sufficed for the purpose. The prisoners were charged with high treason. The several

juries empanelled were the citizens of Melbourne, who resided far from where the outbreak against the military had taken place. But so thoroughly were they convinced of the misgovernment and misconduct which had been apparent in the management of the goldfields that notwithstanding very great exertions made by the Crown lawyers, not one of the prisoners was found guilty. So excited, indeed, were the spectators who thronged the Court, that long and prolonged cheers rang through the building when the verdict was returned in the case of a poor negro, who was the first prisoner of many placed on his trial. The shouts were taken up outside the Court, and then extended through the city and its now vast and accumulating suburbs. Thus terminated a most eventful period in the history of the Victorian goldfields. The diggers had taught the Government a lesson it has never since forgotten, but it was only at a great sacrifice of life. The workers on goldfields in Victoria now, as in New Zealand, return their own representatives, and nothing of oppression is now tolerated in the Parliament of that great colony.

No. XXIX.

By SNYDER.

COLONIAL NEWSPAPERS.

How very little do people outside of the world of newspaper life know what goes on in the inner circle. What wrong notions and erroneous perceptions they have to be sure of the infinite number of details, small and large, required for the successful management of a public journal. It shall be my business, then, out of the depths of my experience, to justify the ways of newspaper proprietors to their fellow men.

Before any man who is not wholly insane starts a newspaper, the first thing he asks himself, and also asks a good many others, is *Will the speculation pay?* A newspaper has to be looked upon as a business transaction from the first, and must be carried on as a business transaction to the last. What a proprietor may write, or has caused to be written in his introductory articles about patriotism, his love for his town and district, his thorough independence; his intention to write down all abuses; his anxious desire to work reforms in political institutions, with the grand mottoes over the leading articles, where his readers are informed to the effect that he is in the place where he is demanded of conscience to speak the truth, and the truth he will speak, impugn it whose list is—well! is that which never was, yet, and never will be.

If speaking an unpleasant truth, and persistently maintaining it, will ruin and seriously damage the interests of a newspaper, my humble opinion is, that the unpleasant truth will not always be spoken. It will be allowed to stand over for a more convenient period. The leading newspapers of the world at various times and in divers manners have changed their policy and modified their tone considerably. And I am very far from sure that they have not acted right. A newspaper editor, who I will say is also whole or part proprietor, has his commercial credit to maintain, salaries and wages to pay punctually once a week, together with many little outgoings too numerous to mention. Perhaps he has a wife, and having a wife, it is not unreasonable to suppose he may have a family, who have to be maintained in something like respectability and comfort. He looks forward, as a reward for his ever-beginning, never-ending labours, that he may indulge in a few of the vanities of life, upon which he has set his heart.

Now, if that editor was always blurring out his convictions, perhaps formed without giving them that consideration they should have received, my opinion is, that he would not be long in running short of supplies requisite for the gratification of his desires, be they never so humble and innocent.

I will illustrate what I mean in what I have here written. When a butcher is about to start business in a new neighbourhood he will first ascertain whether there is a sufficient population to give him support. When he has satisfied himself on this point he next enquires what particular class of customers is likely to deal with him?—what are the kind of joints there will be a demand for? If for delicate dairy-fed pork, or sirloins of beef, or saddles of mutton, he provides accordingly. He must please his customers if he wishes to succeed in business, and escape the Bankruptcy Court. So with the newspaper proprietor engaged on a new journal if he really understands his business. He ascertains the political

bent of those likely to be his customers, he learns their local wants finds out all about their municipal or parish affairs, and other matters in which his subscribers will be likely to feel interested, as pertaining to their good government, their commercial progress, and their social happiness. Now the proprietor, if he is not an editor himself, hires one, and says your policy must be so and so. Your advocacy, so and so. Your columns are intended to keep readers acquainted with such and such matters. And the editor writes so and so, and such and such.

The butcher in his line might say, my customers are very foolish to be running so much on pork, which is indigestible, or undercuts, which are expensive, or saddles of mutton, which are all bone. I could serve them much cheaper and better with shoulders and legs; but if his customers will have pork, and won't do without undercuts, and will not have shoulders and legs of mutton, the butcher is a simpleton if he don't study them. So again with an editor. He may, by his superior intelligence, be under the impression that what he is advocating is either a fallacy or impracticable, or his too effete, or too advanced; but if people demand that sort of thing what is he to do? I never hear of a thoroughly patriotic editor—one who cannot bring himself to modify his principles to suit the land he is a dweller in, but that I think of his wife, wanting a decent dress for Sunday, and his children, shoes and socks.

But the true power of the Press lies in this: Men in the aggregate admire what is right, what is true, and what is outspoken. They infinitely prefer a good article to an inferior one, whether it be as to what they eat, or drink, or wear, or

what they read; and this being so, those who have the conduct of the newspaper Press fall in with the wishes of their customers. Men like what is decent; they like to see abuses exposed; they like to see honest measures advocated; they like to be posted up in what is passing around them within hail of their own doors, as well as what is happening at a distance. Editors know this, and knowing, produce papers in accordance with public feeling. And public feeling in all essentials seldom makes a mistake.

It is not newspapers which direct public opinion so much as that public opinion directs the tone of the newspaper Press. If public opinion was vicious, if the bulk of the people were licentious, if in the aggregate they were venal and corrupt, depend upon it we should have a vicious, a licentious, venal, and a corrupt newspaper Press. But be it ever borne in mind we certainly should not have the same stamp of writers at the head of it as we have in the present day. These would retire and leave the field to men altogether of an inferior mould. I do not say the newspaper Press does not help greatly in improving the tone and the morals of the people. I am quite sure it does this and very much more. The Press and the people act and react upon each other to the great benefit of both: a movement in the wrong direction on the part of any section of a people, and the press steps in and checks it; shows wherein the wrong lies, lays bare the fallacy, and turns opinion which for a moment has been diverted in the wrong channel to the right one. So with the conductors of the press; let them endeavour to advocate the wrong course—that is a course opposed to all good morals, to common sense and understanding—and public opinion soon makes itself felt. The Press by its wide spread of intelligence has helped to enlighten the people, and the people are not now to be blinded or hoodwinked. Therefore a venally or corruptly conducted newspaper will never exist for any time in an enlightened community. These are to my thinking healthy signs of the times we live in. I believe so. I am sure of it. At any rate them's my sentiments.

It has seldom or perhaps never happened that a newspaper has initiated any great reforms. As a rule these come from the leaders of the people, either on the public platform, or in our parliaments. The Corn Law Bill, Roman Catholic Emancipation, the Extension of the Franchise, the Abolition of Episcopal Abuses, were all initiated by the great leading minds of the day. It was when this came to pass that the Press took up these subjects, and by its great controlling power brought them to become the law of the land. The Press at the outset in all great movements follows in the wake of public opinion,