

Yankees, who overtook me on the road, and were as hungry as myself. Bought two loaves and a quarter of mutton, and borrowed a frying-pan from the butcher's wife; made a fire in the gully and had some breakfast; shared breakfast with the Yankees, who were looking for work on the roads; we parted with mutual good wishes. Reached Chalmers' store towards evening; he and his wife were glad to see me, and begged me to take up my quarters with them as long as I remained. June 22.—Put my pistols in my pockets and helped Chalmers to carry twenty-five pounds of gold to the Escort Office. July 3.—Met Mann, the storekeeper's son, in grief, when returning from Castlemaine. He had just been "stuck up" by two men, and robbed of fifteen ounces, a few minutes before. Two policemen came up, to whom we communicated the mishap, and they at once went into the scrub in search of the robbers, but did not find them. Chalmers, greatly afraid of being robbed, pressed me to remain, as otherwise he would be left alone."

Soon after this Chalmers sold off most of his goods, closed the store and went to Geelong, leaving me in charge of the tent, in which I slept at night, while digging by day in the neighbourhood.

At this time I worked chiefly by myself, sinking shallow holes and surfacing; and though my gains were small, they were pretty regular, so that week after week I saved a little towards my pound of gold. The accumulation went on very slowly, however. On one occasion, indeed, I got three ounces in one day; but this was quite a brilliant stroke of luck, and weeks followed during which I was able to save hardly half an ounce. But I persevered, and used the greatest economy, as I was determined to carry out my idea.

However, I did not always work alone. I met with all sorts of people who had become diggers, among whom were several attornies, a teacher of music, university men, sailors, soldiers and convicts. With some of these I consorted from time to time, as I happened to require their assistance, or as they required mine, in some operation that could not well be managed single-handed; and I have pleasure in recollecting that in no single instance had I the slightest difficulty with any of these fortuitous companions, some of whom were of a rough type, but that, on the contrary, I met with constant civility, and even kindness.

A "mate" who worked with me in October was an elderly man, called "little Jimmy," who, though his antecedents would not bear investigation, for he came from the region of the "Darwent," and confessed that he had been transported many years before, was one of the most satisfactory and honest little fellows I ever met. He had been in the country a long time, having been "sent out" when quite a boy, and