

"This attack on Feilding's house, now. We all know that Feilding has a number of well-armed servants, who are quite able to protect him. That they did not do so gives me no surprise; no doubt they were in collusion with the escaped convicts. And yet only five miles from Mr. Feilding's house is Major Waller's farm, inhabited by but four persons—the major, his wife, and his two daughters. Waller himself is, as you know, a rheumatic cripple, and unable even to hold a pistol in his hand. Yet his house contains much more than that of Feilding to tempt any lawlessly-inclined person. How is it that he has never yet been attacked? For seven years he has lived in the most absolute security."

"It has long been known to me, sir," said Marsbin severely, "that Major Waller has on several occasions shown a misplaced sympathy with the criminal classes."

"Misplaced! No, sir, not misplaced, but a human, an honourable sympathy—a sympathy that does him the greatest credit. As a disciplinarian he was the terror of his regiment; as a gentleman and a Christian he gained the respect and, I firmly believe in some cases, the love and gratitude of certain convicts who were rapidly being turned into wild beasts by the floggings given them until they came under his control."

Then seeing that Mr. Marsbin's face was flushing purple with anger, he ceased, and at once became the courteous host, with but the one thought of entertaining his guest.

"Now, Mr. Marsbin, will you give me the pleasure of showing you over the new maize mill we have just erected on the banks of the creek? 'Twill prove, I trust, a great boon to the settlers hereabout."