

#### 4 THE MEASURE OF THE RULE

bush-fire, and yearns for more, seems adapted for progression along that line.

At the moment when the respective claims of mathematics and science swung in equal adjustment, there was slowly approaching me across the fields and through the woods a young man of my own age who was destined to settle the matter. Looking out of the window of the white school-house on the hill one afternoon, I saw this young man with bent back and wide-spread legs in the field below, peering through a little telescope on a tripod. He was making incantations with his hands, waving now the right, now the left, and far down the valley stood another chap, holding upright a red and white wooden pole taller than himself, which he adjusted this way or that in response to the manual signs made by his chief. I knew at once what was afoot. These were the advance scouts of the railway which had been talked about for years and years. Nobody in the neighbourhood believed it would ever be built, and yet the other day I read that the world's record of railway speed had been broken along the line this young man was surveying.

It was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon, and as no pupil is likely to complain if the school is dismissed a few minutes too soon, I let the class go, climbed a fence, crossed a field, and struck up an acquaintance with the civil engineer. The young man was as glad to meet me as I was to meet him, for as the sun declined he became anxious about a stopping place for the night. On this point I was able to relieve his mind. I lived at a house some two miles further west, and there I assured him he could secure a room, and something to eat, such as it was. He was accompanied by a retinue of axe