

law of the colonies, which forbids you to shoot him.

The kangaroo, the wallaby, the opossum—the chief denizens of the forest—are all animals with the soft gaze of a gazelle, and perfectly inoffensive; even the little bear of the country, if you take up your gun to shoot it, sits staring up at you, and seems to say, "I have done you no harm, why do you aim that wicked thing at me?"

The wild duck, the hare, the magpie, the paroquet, the love-bird, all these you will find in great numbers in the bush, besides a host of superbly plumaged birds, among which the lyre-bird, with its tail-feathers forming a perfect lyre shape, stands pre-eminent.

Besides these, there is a creature impossible to overlook—the hated rabbit, pursued and dreaded more than a wild beast by the Australians, whose pastures he devours. The hatred is not to be wondered at, for the rabbits make such ravages that squatters go to the expense of putting wire fences all round their immense stations to keep them out. The rabbit race never could have dreamt that it would one day acquire such tremendous importance. More than once the rabbit question has occupied the attention of the parliaments of the different Australian colonies. The authorities were even for a long while in communication with M. Pasteur, seeking to obtain a virus which might be the means of exterminating the race.

A sad-looking figure is the "sundowner," who, as his name implies, turns up at sundown and claims the hospitality of the squatter. He is supplied with rations and a shelter for the night. Next morning he goes on his way if there is no work for him, and directs his steps towards some

neighbouring station, where he will meet with the same kindness. He is always on the move. Sometimes there is work which he can do, and he stops to earn a few shillings; but more often he is not wanted, and he tramps through the bush, forgotten, lost in its immense solitudes. On his back are all his goods and chattels.

Another figure you meet—always on horseback or driving—is the minister. The good man is going to some squatter's station to pray with the family, who are too far removed from the nearest town to come often to service in church or chapel. He wears a moustache and rabbit-paw whiskers, in the Australian fashion, and he is white with dust from head to foot. Presently it is the doctor you pass, who is perhaps going on a fifty or sixty mile journey through the bush to attend an urgent case. Every one rides in Australia, the shop boy the postman, the telegraph boy, the lamp-lighter, the beggar, even.

One grazier has twenty thousand sheep to be shorn, another, thirty thousand or more. Their flocks and herds astonished me, until I had been to Queensland, and had heard of a station as large as the whole of England, belonging to one man. Even then, it was difficult to restrain an exclamation of amazement at the sight of the great mobs of cattle and sheep one is constantly meeting on the road.

The sheep farmer pays a pound for the shearing of each hundred sheep, and there are some shearers so clever at the work that they can shear two hundred a day.

Australia is a vast continent, equal to four-fifths of the superficial area of Europe. It contains a tract of sterile land here and there, but, roughly speaking, its bowels are full of precious ore, and its surface is admirably suited