

formed, and the coach being roughly rigged, as an ambulance waggon and a hearse.

I, who write this, was not required to remain at Bathurst for the inquest, there being plenty other equally competent witnesses, and the several verdicts of Wilful Murder or Justifiable Homicide being reasonably assumed as matters of course, and merely formal. So what little time I could spare in my anxiety to return to Nelly's reassurances could be made available to search out Fred, or at least to gather tidings of his doings and position. In his latter there was no difficulty. Lockyer was well known in the West, it seemed, and well liked, too. Settling there almost immediately after my losing sight of him, and patiently applying himself to faithfully work out a certain small station interest he had somehow managed to purchase, it took but brief acquaintance to establish him as a general favourite among all the squatters round. Dashing, winning, accomplished and high-bred; an expert in almost every manly pastime that Englishmen are wont to love; able, on occasions, to shoe his own horse, as well as to bleed or groom him, and still keeping the light, half-ladylike, snaffle hand, that distinguished him long ago in the Shires,—it was little wonder that Sir James' disinherited heir should have fairly stolen the hearts of these haughty equestrian Shepherd Kings. Little wonder, indeed, for he had been trained in a school valuing muscular power and endurance only second to sheer pluck, and moreover knew the ways of bird and fish, and all game creatures living, pretty nearly as well as Mr. Frank Buckland. And then, of course, the simple country gentlemen could know nothing of how he had stolen my money!

That grating recollection it was that checked effectively the grateful impulse to find and thank him for his seasonable act of gallantry. There was no need to regret his prosperity or his popularity, much less to interfere with either; but, with equal certainty, was there no need, because he had shown some grit in the skirmish, to forgive him inconspicuously for his treason to common honesty, his infidelity to every principle of friendship, his outrage of every canon of the Craft he had so hypocritically claimed to love.

The affair made some little stir in the papers; all the more so from the fact of one of the party of captives, the present narrator, being just then in journalistic capacity. But, after all, "sticking-up" was too common a pastime in those days to create any abiding excitement in isolated instances; and, with the exception of poor Sir Frederick Pottinger, who has since gone to his own account, and whatever other officers made it their duty to hunt down the outlaws, of whom there were many bands in the baronet's district, our little brush, with its own incident of cruel murder, and its own sequel of dashing rescue, was