

rocky, wooded spurs running down from the wild chaotic mountain-land of the northern Never-Never.

I have not paused on the way to analyse our respective emotions when, after six weeks of ocean and sun-baked deck, we found ourselves at the other side of the world under a seldom-changing sky of clear opalescent blue. It will be readily understood that Maitland and myself did not readily grow accustomed to such a complete change of scene and climate. I doubt, indeed, if Maitland ever did grow quite accustomed to it. I believe that his attitude from beginning to end of the adventures we were destined to experience was never anything but that of a wondering tourist, and, moreover, of a tourist who had undertaken the tour much against his will. As for me, let the reader place himself in my shoes and transport himself from a humdrum country village, with its peaceful lowing of cattle, grunting of pigs and clucking of poultry, its uneventful yearly round, its very local gossip, its tiny scandals and trivial excitements; a village where folks—as I had good reason to know—suffered but little from illness, and mostly attained a sturdy old age; a calm, provincial settlement where Time pursued his “everlasting journey” almost unnoticed—let the reader, I say, transport himself in imagination from such a spot to an Australian coast township, peopled by a mingled assortment of white, yellow, brown and black men, and visited from day to day by a crowd of furtive-eyed, evil-looking, so-called semi-civilised savages, who wore next to nothing in the way of clothing, and always carried spears, clubs and boomerangs. Such was the heat