

MISFITS.

The blonde would be brunette,
The short girl would be tall;
The girl with eyes of jet
Loves blue eyes above all.
Stout people would be thin,
The thin ones would be stout;
Each nose displeases him
Who has to wear it out.
Hobbs likes the name of Schnitz.
Luc yearns for that of Kate;
In short, we're all misfits
With our own selves and fate.

When a young man dons his first silk
hat,
The fact may be divined,
That the cover he's chosen to put on his
head
Rests heavily on his mind.

Judge (to man up for having five wives)
—How could you be so hardened a vil-
lain?

The guilty one—Please, your honor, I
was only trying to get a good one.

Jagson says it's always a paradox of
drink that a man will get away with
more than he can carry.

A TRUE STORY.

(Concluded.)

"Just the very thing that is wanted
here," she said; "our diggers go into Cas-
tlemaine to get their hair cut, and once
there they get on a spree, and come back
fly-blown. Now, if you stay here, I'll
recommend you, and, what's more, you
may begin at once on my little girl."

She was a woman of decision; out she
went and returned in a few minutes with
a towel, a pair of scissors, and a little
girl with the most awful shock head of
hair it has ever been my fortune to set
my eyes on.

"Now, I'll leave you to begin," she said,
as she handed Frank the towel and scis-
sors with an encouraging smile, and left
the room.

Frank took the girl between his knees,
adjusted the towel, snapped the scissors,
and touched the girl's head with
dainty fingers. One touch was enough.
Shoving the child away with one hand
he threw the scissors at my head with the
other.

"Hang it! I can't, and I won't," he
cried.

The poor child fled, not knowing what to
make of it, and I roared with laughter.
And never again did Frank Terry attempt
to start in the hair-cutting line. Notwith-
standing this contretemps, we slept there
that night rolled in our blankets on the
kitchen-floor. The good woman accepted
Frank's rather lame apologies, shrewdly

guessing, no doubt, that we were not much
used to work of any kind. Good-natured,
heartly Welsh diggers thronged in, and were
willing to "shout" for us as long as we
would drink, and talked to each other in
their strange native tongue, like croaking
"hoodies," or people with bad colds clear-
ing their throats. In a Castlemaine
paper we found an advertisement for an
assistant miller, and the next morning
Frank said if I would give him the chance
he would apply. We couldn't get work
together, sorry though he was, and so let
us each take the first billet that offered.
What could I say? I knew that I was
not fit for an assistant miller, perhaps
he was—let him try. So in we walked
to Castlemaine, and I lay down on the
open ground while he interviewed the mil-
ler. A long time he was, and eagerly
I asked him when he came back—"Well,
what luck?"

"That miller, Jack, is a true gentleman."

"But have you got the billet? What
did he say?"

"Well, he perceived at once that I was
a gentleman, and spoke so kindly. I told
him that I was an Oxford man—"

"One lie," said I.

"My dear fellow, when you have been
in the colonies as long as I have, you
will learn that you lose nothing by mak-
ing the most of yourself," said my mate,
angrily.

"All right. I bow to your greater ex-
perience; but do tell me, have you got
the billet?"

"Well, no," he replied, slowly: "he said
that not knowing the work, glad as he
would have been to have me, he was afraid
I might get killed by the machinery."

I was rather sore at his eagerness to
desert me, and I fear I laughed a scornful
laugh. However we tried the town with-
out success till late in the evening; and
though Castlemaine streets are literally
"paved with gold," there is none visible
to the naked eye. But we did see a curious
sight—half a dozen Chinamen with long
handled brooms sweeping the streets, which
are metalled with quartz, and carefully
collecting the dust in cradles, in which
they carried it off and washed it out, and
now and then found some very small bits
of gold left at the bottom of the cradle.
Some time afterwards I heard that the
authorities had stopped this practice, on
the ground that the Chinamen swept all
the streets away!

Poor persecuted Mongolians! cleanliness of
cooks, staidness of servants, always sober,
willing, and active, patient under abuse,
never bearing malice, is it simply a ques-
tion of fear of cheap labor, or is it that
the staidness and sobriety of the "heath-
en Chinese" puts to shame the Australian
Christian, that the colonies are now going
to close their ports against you?

But to return to my story. I had part-

ed from my mate for a while, as it was
now settled each should try for himself;
so we hunted in a couple no longer, but
tried different streets alone, when suddenly
he overtook me with a jubilant face, and
announced that he had engaged himself
as a billiard marker. A billiard marker!
of all hopeless occupations for a broken-
down swell, surely the most degrading.
Never away from the great curse of Aus-
tralia, the weary drink, seeing nightly
the worst specimens of human nature at
their worst. What a deadly pitfall!
How few ever get out of it!

Poor Frank! a little selfish, perhaps,
but a good mate on the whole; amusing
enough when in the vein, but, like all
people of sanguine temperament, prone to
fits of deepest melancholy. I only saw
you once again, and in good faith the
billiard room had not improved you. And
you, too, sleep under the gum trees. Ah,
well may I say with poor Gordon's sick
stockrider, slightly altering the words:

"Ah! nearly all my comrades of the old
Colonial school,

My ancient boon companions, long are
gone;

Hard livers for the most part, somewhat
reckless as a rule;

It seems that I am left here all alone."

Well, we parted friends. We went to
the billiard room and spent the whole
last shilling in drinking to each other's
luck. And I tramped out of Castlemaine
all alone with fourpence-halfpenny in my
pocket.

CHAPTER III — JACK THE SHEPHERD.

The first night alone in the bush must
be a curious sensation to any man. To
me, sick at heart, doubly lonely, having
lost my mate, utterly uncertain how long
I might have to tramp on like the wan-
dering Jew, the future a blank, the past
a remorseful recollection of folly—it was
a night never to be forgotten, to be
marked with the blackest chalk. How
vividly at such a time do all one's past
errors come back to us! What a fool I've
been! What chances I've thrown away!
How I've wasted all my talents! Such and
such-like thoughts crowded my brain in
rapid succession, and, to add to it all,
it was a dark, black night, the great
drops began to fall, and then it began to
pour with rain, no gentle shower, but
sheets of water coming down as if all
the clouds of sea and land had burst over
my devoted head. Then the thunder, at
first grumbling in the distance, then near-
er and louder, while the forked lightning
played in the forest, and lit up the huge
trunks of the gum trees. Then a crash
and a mighty tree, not a hundred yards
away, was struck, a huge limb fell off,
and the great trunk stood stout black and
smouldering. A night or two like this
and I would lose my head, wander off
into the bush, lie down and die—unwept