

articles of food and drink were temptingly displayed. The next stage was a long and weary one of another fifteen miles, mostly through heavy sand. It was a fine warm afternoon, like a September day in England; but the drive was uneventful, and even monotonous except for the numberless jolts.

At the end of the thirty-one miles we came to one of the advanced railway villages inhabited by the pioneers of civilization. A couple of miles farther brought us in sight of a tidy little house and homestead standing in the midst of a small clearing, surrounded by haystacks and sheds, and really looking like a bit of the old country. Right glad we all were to get out and stretch our weary limbs after the shaking and jolting; and still more welcome was a cup of good tea with real cream, home-made bread, and fresh butter, offered with the greatest hospitality and kindness, in a nice old-fashioned dining-room.

If it had been difficult to reach this inn from the high road, it seemed ever so much more difficult to get away from it by quite another route. It was like leaving the palace of the Sleeping Beauty, so dense was the forest and so impossible to find the ancient track, already quite overgrown. The road is cut through a forest of high eucalyptus-trees, varying from 100 to 450 feet in height, and from twenty to fifty, and even seventy feet in girth. At intervals roaring torrents rush down gullies overgrown with tree-ferns. I had always been told that these fern-gullies were charming, but I never thought anything could be half so lovely as this romantic ravine. Across the River Watt is thrown a primitive bridge, consisting of the trunk of a big tree cut into halves. Very slippery and slimy it looked, and I did not feel inclined to attempt the perilous passage. A little perseverance, however, brought us once more to the main road, along which we bowled and jolted at a merry pace.

At length we came to a large homestead and farm, near which a number of sheep were folded. On the opposite bank stood a substantial-looking wooden house, surrounded by a veranda and by a clump of trees, in the middle of what might have been an English park, to judge from the grass and the fine timber. I felt thoroughly chilled, and quite too miserably ill to do justice to any of the many kindnesses prepared, except that of a blazing wood fire.

*Friday, May 13th.*—It was a cold night, the thermometer falling to freezing-point. The difficulty of housekeeping here must be extreme. It is almost impossible to keep servants in the far-away bush; they all like to be near a town.

About half-past nine Mr. Hassall took me for a drive round the