

ROUGH AND SMOOTH.

"Beechworth has improved very much since your stay here. It now boasts of six hotels, several large stores, looking like well fitted-up shops. A Wesleyan chapel, a school and an assembly-room are amongst its public buildings; while the new post-office is a conspicuous object for admiration. A local press has also been established, and I send you the first number of our *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, edited by our enterprising friend Nixon. * * * Several small gold-fields have been discovered, but none to rival the old place. * * It is gratifying to observe that the majority of the miners now erect substantial wooden huts, as if intending to remain for years. I mention a great many of these little trifles, because I believe you to be very much interested in everything that relates to Beechworth. * *

"Politically, the colony has undergone great changes. * * I don't think I mentioned that our gaol has been at last completed, and a stockade erected round it. Sergeant Quirk is the gaoler. He has his wife and sister here. Your man Frederick I know nothing of, save that he left Beechworth immediately after your departure.

"Dr. Crawford has just returned from England, where he has been since you left, having been recalled by the Admiralty. He has now settled at Beechworth for private practice, to the great damage of our District Surgeon *alias* Assistant-Colonial. The license fee is doomed, and I fear the entire Gold Commission will fall to ruins. The House have confined the Government to £1,300,000 for salaries for the ensuing year, and the sum last year was £2,300,000, so a corresponding reduction must take place in the numbers in each department. Melbourne is in a wretched state. Every trade is dull; bankruptcy is the natural consequence. Few are able to brave the stagnation in trade. Just fancy per-