

the best of companions, books. His greeting to me was very polite:—

"My dear sir," said he "what can I do for you."

"Mr. Merriman," said I, "do you remember having a lot of books for your library, shipped from Liverpool in the brig *Imperial* ten years ago."

"Well, I should say I do. I have mourned over the loss of those books ever since. More than half of them I bought myself; the others were gifts."

"Have you any idea what became of them," I inquired.

"None, except that the ship must have foundered; no trace of her was ever discovered."

"Well," said I, "I can relieve your mind on that point; the books are not lost; they are safe; they are here and within five miles of Melbourne."

If I had made a personal assault on the librarian he could not have been more astonished than he was at the receipt of this news. He fairly jumped from his seat, "Why bless me," said he "not lost did you say; you have them here; tell me about it; how did you get them."

I sat down, and related, as briefly as I could the whole story of my captivity and of the preservation of the books. As I proceeded I could see that his wonder grew, and every minute or two he uttered an acclamation of surprise.

"Well," said he, after I had concluded "that is the most remarkable story ever I heard. You have done us an inestimable service, for the books were enormously valuable, some of them being so rare that they could not be purchased with money at all."

"You will find them perfect," said I, "no ant or other insect has ever had his tooth in them, for I re-packed them every three months."