

out of the bush and take him in the back, and some poor wretch—half a dozen perhaps—will dance in the air for it. Well, your good health, Fred. How are matters progressing at Waringa ? ”

“ Fairly well. His Excellency said some very complimentary things to me in his last letter, and hinted at the possibility of his paying a visit here after the worst of the summer is over. By the way, my wife is shortly returning to Sydney for a few months. She has latterly had several fainting fits, and I am feeling somewhat anxious.”

“ Weather has been very trying lately,” said the doctor, trying to speak with sympathy, but not succeeding too well in the effort ; “ no doubt she will find that the sea air will do her good. Do you accompany her ? ”

Lathom shook his head. “ No, I cannot, unfortunately ; I should not like to apply for leave just now. However, she is taking Helen with her, and they can go down to Port Hunter very comfortably in the boat, and from there by sea to Sydney.”

Haldane nodded. “ You’ll feel lonely. Better invite me to come and stay a few weeks with you. I want to murder some of those ducks in the creek.”

Lathom’s face lit up with pleasure. “ I shall be delighted. ’Tis just like you to suggest what I fear will be an inconvenience to you. And yet I quite intended to ask you to come.”

“ Then it’s settled. I’ll come next week, and kill every duck within ten miles.”

During luncheon Mr. Marsbin told Mrs. Lathom all the latest news—the arrival of a fleet of transports under the convoy of His Majesty’s ship *Marlborough* ; the dinner given by the Governor to the captain and officers ;