

had consequently grown up without any education whatever. But he delighted in having books read to him, and was most thankful when, of an evening after work, I would take my book to his hut.

On Sundays I used to read a good deal for him upon subjects about which it may well be supposed the poor fellow was sadly ignorant, and he listened and learned with all the docility of a child. So the months passed; the rainy season was over and the summer came again, when, at last I attained my object; for on Monday, November 8th, I wrote: "No gold since last Tuesday; on that day got eighteen penny-weights; have now a pound less one pennyweight. November 12th. — Went with my *pound of gold* to the Commissioners' and lodged it in the Escort Office; the first I have sent down." On the same day, by a curious coincidence, I received letters from friends at home which confirmed me in my intention of leaving the diggings. I was about to wash a tub of stuff when they were handed to me; but I had no sooner read them, than I determined to sell tools, tub, cradle and all, and start for Melbourne without delay. However, it was necessary that I should wait a few days in order to deliver up the store to the person to whom Chalmers had sold it, and who was now on his way from Melbourne. So I employed the interval in visiting Bendigo, and bidding farewell to the companions with whom I came to the country, and who very soon after followed me. Having accomplished this trip, I returned and gave up my charge, and on the 20th of November took my leave of the diggings. I ought to have mentioned before, that Sunday at the gold-fields was strictly observed, so far as abstaining from digging was concerned. But it was the day specially chosen by the miners generally for cutting firewood, and washing their clothes, &c., and was, I fear, observed by very few after a Christian fashion. For, at the time of which I write, there were, with one exception at Castlemaine, no churches. Nor, indeed, from the nature of the population, could there have been; as a place containing quite a city of tents today, was liable to become a solitude to-morrow.

So much has been written about the scenery of Australia, that it is unnecessary to attempt a description of the park-like appearance of much of the country, which, though sometimes tame and monotonous, is occasionally varied by exceedingly pretty views. Its natural history, too, is well known and described. Of the famous marsupials, I saw only the opossum and the kangaroo-rat. Kangaroos kept clear of the diggings. The beautiful but songless birds were varied and numerous; and flocks of parroquets, white cockatoos and magpies perpetually flew over-head, or settled on the trees at the road-side.

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