

Improvements at Russell Vale in May 1895.

Extensive improvements have recently been carried out on that fine estate belonging to Mr F P MacCabe and known as "Russell Vale". As many of our readers are aware, Mr MacCabe became seriously ill some months ago, and it is pleasing to us to be able to report that, although still weak, he has recovered sufficiently to be able to take regular driving exercise. Owing to his illness he has been unable to superintend the improvements which form the subject of this article and which therefore, have been supervised by his son, Mr Russell MacCabe who may be complimented upon the thoroughness of the work, which has converted the property into a model dairy farm and shown what can be done by the judicious expenditure of a little capital. It is not 18 months since Mr MacCabe returned to 'Russell Vale' after a trip to England and decided to go in for dairy farming on his own account instead of leasing his land to others as previously; and in that short period about £1,500 has been expended in giving effect to his desires. The estate consists of 250 acres all of which, with the exception of 30 or 40 acres (for clearing which a contract has been recently let) is now cleared of bush. A quantity of the land was overrun with lantana, but this has all been eradicated and replaced by English grass, which presents an appearance worthy of the acknowledged fertility the soil of that locality. Another proof of the fertile nature of "Russell Vale" soil is to be seen in the form of a magnificent crop of planter's friend covering 13 or 14 acres of the flat north of the homestead which averages fully 13 ft in height, and is beautifully headed. The seed, it may be stated, is carefully saved, and a surprising quantity is already to be seen in the seed house. The total area under crop is about 40 acres. At present Mr MacCabe has 45 cows milking, but he intends to increase this number in the course of a few months to 88. The cattle are a mixed lot, but the district breed predominate. They were all specially selected by Mr Russell MacCabe from well known Illawarra herds and are of very good quality. The cattle yards and milking sheds are patterns of what such things should be, and it is impossible for the visitor to refrain from expressing his admiration of the perfect system which is followed, and of which the absolute cleanliness is a conspicuous feature. The yards are stoutly fenced and metalled to the depth of over a foot, so that even in

the wettest weather they are easily kept clean. The milking shed which is close by, contains five bails, arranged on a very ingenious principle. The floor is of bricks, coated with cement, and, water being laid on to the centre of the building, the floors are washed after every milking. One of the pleasant results of this practice is the entire absence of the milk-yard odour. Situated about 20 yards away is the creamery, which also is a picture of cleanliness, the walls and floor being spotlessly white, and the milk cans, vat, "Alpha" separator, and other utensils polished in such a way as to make it clear that there is a good deal of "elbow grease" expended in this direction. The cows are milked morning and evening, but the milk is separated only in the morning, the evening's supply being kept cool by the cans being placed in tanks of water. At present the supply averages between and 80 and 100 gallons per day, and after being separated the cream is sent to Bellambi station, which is about a mile distant, in time for the milk train, which conveys it to the FF&ICo in Sydney. The separated milk is used for feeding pigs. The piggery, which is situated about 300 yards to the north of the homestead, contains five substantial breeding pens and large fattening pen, capable of accommodating 12 animals it being Mr MacCabe's intention to have that number always ready for the market. There is a paddock in connection with the piggery 25 acres in extent, which forms a fine run for the occupants, whose number Mr MacCabe means to increase before long to 250, being confident that there is a good deal of money to be made in this line. He also intends carrying out a capital idea of conveying water to the piggery by means of pipes leading from the tanks which supply the milking shed, by which means the pens will be kept well cleansed. As already stated, all these improvements which, by the way, have given employment for some time to a large number of men have been executed in the most praiseworthy manner and reflect credit on Mr Russell MacCabe under whose direction they have been carried out. In concluding this notice it may be stated that the homestead retains its charming appearance, the well kept grounds and nicely laid out garden now bright with gorgeous chrysanthemums and other flowers giving evidence of a cultured taste.