NOTES ON THE PRESENT STATE AND PROSPECTS OF SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES, WITH AN HISTORICAL, STATISTICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF MANILLA AND SINGAPORE,
By ALICK OSBORNE, Surgeon Royal Navy, 1832.
(Extract concerning Illawarra)

November 3.—Set off on an excursion to the district of Illawarra, about ninety miles distant, in company with Dr. Imlay, staff-surgeon. You first arrive at Liverpool, twenty miles from Sydney, situated on the northern bank of George’s river, or rather creek, which is now beginning to assume the appearance of a neat village. There is a snug church, a court-house, barrack, and a magnificent hospital; and perhaps, from an hundred and fifty to two hundred houses,—many of them substantially stone and lime.

There is a good hotel, with all necessary accommodation, though by the bye I never proved it, for the kindness of my excellent friend Dr. Hill, whose hospitality (the spontaneous result of the most kindly benevolent nature) afforded me and many others a resting-place of the most agreeable description. The road from hence to Campbell Town leads through an improving country, with a prospect of Glenfield, the hospitable mansion of Mr. Throsby; Denham Court, Mr. Brooks; Lippington, Mr. Cordeaux; Eagle Vale, Mrs. Jenkins; besides many other respectable establishments which are not so conspicuous.

Campbell Town, twelve miles from Liverpool, possesses a neat, small brick church, a court-house, an excellent hotel, kept by Mr. Tate, another decent public-house also, and a few houses, say twenty or thirty. The country around Campbell Town is becoming populous; small farm-houses are visible in all directions; and indeed the general appearance of the country in this district, in point of cultivation, is such as might realize the reasonable expectations of the friends of Australia.

We got refreshments and fed the horses at Tate’s, and proceeded at a slow pace to Appin, distant about ten or twelve miles. We arrived at sunset, and found the future town of Appin to consist of one solitary inn, on the left-hand of the road, and another house, formerly an inn, “vis-a-vis,” on the other. The inn is kept by a man named Carey, an Emerald, and at his house we got every thing in the most hearty abundance, if not in the very best style. Our dinner consisted of rashers of bacon and eggs, grilled fowl, brown bread, nice new butter, black tea, and brown sugar; and it was difficult to convince Mrs. Carey, his kind and bustling spouse, that the fare was approved, until demonstrated by the demolition of almost all the edibles on the table. A glass of gin and water, a good bed, and a fatiguing day’s ride, insured an enviable night’s rest.

On approaching the door of the inn to alight, I observed a rough, round, bushheaded Hibernian, ready to take the horse, and scrutinizing me rather earnestly at the same time, I recognized him instantly “Riley, is that you?” “It is, your honour, me sure enough, but, och
"Doctor jewel," and bolting off to the rear of the premises, hallooing out with might and main, "Miky, Miky, bad luck to you, run man, here's our own Doctor come again." Returning promptly with Michael, they were overjoyed to see me, and I was well pleased to meet the poor fellows, apparently comfortable; they had been transported from Ireland in 1825, went out under my superintendance, had served out their time, and were now working for themselves.

"Well, Riley, how have you got on since I left you?"—"Bless'd be God, your honour, I hadn't much cause to complain; I served all my time with two masters; and barring the want of the blank in some times in cou'd weather, and the belly often very light, I got on pritty well; sometimes it was hard enough, but I nivir went before the gentlemin to complain; for being no scholar, your honour, I didn't want to come under any regulation, good or bad; and now I've got the run of the house here, and if it wasn't for the thoughts of the woman and child at home, your honour, (scratching his head and turning half round to hide the moisture gathering in his eyes) I believe I'd be comfortable enough." He had been a soldier in the 87th, and wounded at the battle of Barrossa; he heard that the regiment got in to trouble at home, which gave him great concern.

The native unsophisticated Hibernian had neither envy, hatred, nor malice against any one; sometimes, he said, "when the master would be cross there would be a kind word put in by the mistress, and if it wasn't that the women have all their own way here, it would be a very bad country, your honour." How different the warm, grateful attachment of these creatures, who had received from me no kindness beyond the sober discharge of duty, to that of English convicts, who went out with me at other times.

Many are free and getting on well in Sydney; and often have I observed them skulk past me in the street, and in the market, at a quickening pace, and looking askew lest I should recognize them. I always rejoiced to hear they were doing well, and always carefully abstaining from hurting their feelings by accosting them.

Paddy stands alone, an isolated being, for kindliness and warmth of feeling; and I can never sufficiently admire and applaud the sentiment of a distinguished foreign traveller, who attributes all Paddy's faults "to a warm heart and poetic imagination."

The road from Appin to Illawarra crosses Tuggerah Creek, by a shelving precipitous dangerous path, and then ascends the summit of the range of coast mountains, which incloses the Illawarra district, a low fertile tract extending from Lima to Shoal Haven, a distance of fifty or sixty miles. Proceeding along this ridge about twelve miles, you must alight and lead the horse down the most steep,
rugged, and impracticable pass that can well be conceived, to the residence of Mr. O’Brien, whose windmill is a land-mark in the wilderness.

The name is sufficient to assure the wayfarer of every kindness and hospitality; it is literally the oasis in the desert, where the unaffected cordiality and frankness of an ancient Irish family give double zest to the excellence and abundance of their domestic fare.

From Mr. O’Brien’s to Woollingong the tract is along the beach, winding round the shore of several small bays which indent the coast, and is covered with sand, making it alike tiresome to man and beast. Woollingong is a township, and possesses an indifferent boat harbour, where is shipped cedar and farm produce for Sydney boats starting regularly three times a week. It is likewise a small military station, and the residence of a district magistrate; there is an inn, and a few houses in the neighbourhood.

Almost all the land in the district of Illawarra is located, in large grants of two thousand five hundred and sixty acres, but as a number of small settlers, discharged soldiers, &c., are also settled here, it will soon make one of the most improving and populous districts in the colony.

The road to the southward winds through a flat forest country, with occasionally several hundred acres of fine meadow land, without a tree, and covered with the most luxuriant grass, on which herds of cattle, of the best description, seem to thrive uncommonly well.

We passed the farms of Mr. Spearing, Captain Waldron, Mr. Blaxland, Mrs. Jenkins, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Brown, Messrs. Johnson, and Dr. Elyerd, and arrived at four o’clock in the afternoon at our destination, the farm of Mr. O——, a recent Irish settler. We were soon refreshed with a comfortable dinner, and had an opportunity of observing the great progress made by industry and perseverance in forming a comfortable establishment in the wilds of Australia in a short time. The owner received the grant in 1829, and now (November, 1832) resides in a commodious and substantial brick cottage, with two parlours and five smaller apartments, and a convenient brick kitchen detached: employs, free and prisoners, about twenty-one men. He had a considerable surplus of corn last year, and at present seventy acres of wheat in ear, and four down with maize, (it was a jungly forest when he begun) with abundance of the best stock; viz. horses, sixteen; horned cattle, one hundred and twenty; twenty dairy cows, and sixteen working bullocks; pigs, from eighty to a hundred; all this in three years, without sinking five hundred pounds.

And though last, not least, there has been an addition to the family circle, of two sons and one daughter, which has assisted to subdue mamma’s repugnance to the bush; and she now declares,
that in place of being lonely and tiresome, that it is more cheerful
and interesting than living in a town which she had been accustomed
to the previous portion of her life.

The admirable management of this young establishment, the
healthy appearance of the children, and contented aspects of the
parents, (having realized to the utmost their anticipation of emigra-
tion,) with their present prospect of peace and plenty, present a
picture at once gratifying and delightful to every one interested in
the perfect success of emigration.

I am aware of the fallacy of citing particular cases for general
encouragement or imitation; because, to have the same success,
they must have the same prudence, the same industry, and above all
they must have the same good fortune, circumstances which seldom
chance alike to different individuals; but I mention it merely to
demonstrate how much may be done in a short period, without the
command of extraordinary means. The common and fatal error which
new settlers commit, is commencing on too large a scale, in the
hope of quick returns. They lay on too much stock, and sink their
small capital at first; and having no surplus for the market for a
couple of years, with increasing expenditure, they find themselves
perhaps involved with the shopkeeper or money-lender; and once in
debt, nothing far short of a miracle afterwards can extricate them.

A farmer arriving in the territory with one thousand pounds in
his possession, should place five hundred at interest immediately,
(he will have no difficulty in procuring ten per cent. with unexcep-
tional security).

We will suppose he gets a grant on the old system of two
thousand acres he must procure a small house for his family, at
5l. per month; purchase ten dairy cows, 30l.; one steady-trained
draught ox, 8l.; four four-year-old oxen, to train himself, 16l.; two
mares in foal, 30l.; two breeding sows, 4l.; one strong cart, 16l.;
plough and farming implements, 20l.; kitchen utensils, &c., 10l.;
stock poultry, 2l.; seed-wheat and maize, 10l.; one ton of flour, 13l.;
one ton of beef and pork, 15l.; one chest of tea, 4l.; one year’s cloath-
ing for four servants, 12l.; carpenter’s tools, 10l.; sugar, 6l.—Total,
206l.

Let him proceed to his grant, before his family,
and expend 100l.
in building his house, the remaining 200l. will meet the incidental
expenses of the first two years, besides the incalculable advantage
of purchasing every thing wanted for ready money, he may also be
able to put on a dozen or two of sheep, when he is ready for them;
with such a beginning, and ordinary industry and attention, success
will be certain.

Nevertheless, until the free grant system is resumed, it would
be rashness in a small capitalist, say 500l., to embark for Australia. The
expenze, risk, and trouble, certain; the success, in many cases,
from the nature of the soil and climate, only problematical; and if
two or three such seasons as 1827 and 1828, succeed after the loca-
tion of a new settler of small means he must inevitably be ruined.

If all new settlers, bona fide farmers or occupiers of the soil, were entitled, on production of satisfactory testimony of property to a certain grant, subject, after seven or ten years, to the usual quit-rent, it would act as a stimulus to emigration, and be the most economical and effectual premium a liberal and paternal government could bestow. That land should be sold in the present form is highly advantageous to capitalists and to others wishing to extend their possessions, nothing can be more beneficial; but the plan of selling to new settlers will undoubtedly deter many persons, who reflect on the nature and quality of the soil, from embarking in an undertaking which only threatens them with poverty and disappointment.

(To be continued)
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(Extract concerning Sydney)

(Continued from November Bulletin)

Of the state of society in Sydney I can say little. There are occasional parties, given by the public functionaries, but perhaps more formal than social; and from the conflicting collision of interests and opinions which existed, I may venture to say that a friendly unreserved social intercourse was almost unknown.

At the same time I am proud to be able to state, that in the domestic circle of Mr. M'Leay, Mr. Justice Dowling, Mr. Commissary Laidly, Lieut.-Col. Shadforth, Mr. Hely, Dr. Bowman, Mr. Raymond, &c., one is sure to experience all the gratification of refined society, accompanied with the most kind and friendly hospitality.

Of the mercantile portion of the community, I have only the pleasure of acquaintance with Messrs. Dawes and Gore (connected with that very respectable firm in Lawrence-lane), whose establishment fully supports the respectable and honorable character of the British merchant.

General Bourke has commenced very auspiciously: he gives the utmost attention to every thing tending to advance the interests of Australia, and I have no doubt, that, by a steady, impartial, and uncompromising career, neither stooping for popularity on the one hand, nor conceding too much to the prejudices or feelings of an old established party on the other, he will continue to enjoy the confidence and co-operation of every good man in the colony. He has just now returned from a tour of inspection at Bathurst and the Western Provinces, where he was received with every loyalty and attachment—in demonstrations alike honourable to the givers and receiver.

I had almost forgotten one of the most interesting circumstance connected with the growing importance of the Australian capital. Sydney, with a rapidly increasing population, 30,000, was miserably supplied with very indifferent water, which soon excited the attention of General Darling.

The engineer (Mr. Busby, a man of sound sense and extensive practical knowledge,) was directed to make the necessary surveys, and he reported the practicability of bringing an abundant supply of good water from a lagoon near Botany Bay, by making a certain embankment, and boring a tunnel through some inconsiderable elevation.

General Darling embraced the plan with the zealous eagerness of a man vitally interested in the well-being of the town; and, in despite of the most violent, virulent, and vindictive efforts of a free and enlightened press, and contrary to the expressed opinions of nine-tenths of the population, carried it forward, and had the satisfaction of proving Mr. Busby an engineer of the first order, and himself the greatest public benefactor to the capital of the territory.

The constant flow of pure water from the fountain in Hyde Park (besides supplying the barracks, dock-yard, shipping, &c.) will be a
more imperishable monument of General Darling's government, than the crazy, tumble-down edifices which used to disgust one at every corner, inscribed with the name of the founder, anno domini, &c., in large characters.

"Who builds a church to God, and not to fame, 
Will ne'er inscribe the marble with his name."—Pope.

Those who formerly paid fourpence a bucket for muddy water, and even that scarce at times, can only fully appreciate the benefit conferred on Sydney by General Darling. The comfort and convenience resulting from it are now universally acknowledged, but, such is party malice, never in grateful conjunction with the name of the patriotic individual to whom the credit is entirely due.

(Concluded)