In treating so ambitious a scheme it should first be made clear that I have no wish to dogmatise, nor do I claim that the views herein expressed are anything but my personal impressions, derived from my own observations, or from the conversations of the many persons with whom I have come into contact over a number of years.

The history of Australia, like that of many another country, has depended very largely on accidental factors, and in Brisbane, as was the case with Sydney itself, the first settlement was soon abandoned. After Sydney had been settled for thirty-five years, it was decided to seek a place of settlement further north, and Oxley was dispatched to look for a river whose presence had been missed by Flinders through a mere tidal coincidence.

The actual finding of the river itself was again accidental and due to the knowledge already possessed by the lost timber-getters, Finnegan and Pamphlett, who themselves had come to Moreton Bay, with their companion, Parsons, through a complete misconception of their original position when the storm which drove them out of their course had subsided. However, it is quite probable that Oxley would have found the river, since a systematic coasting of the shores of the Bay must have ultimately revealed it, especially as he came for that deliberate purpose, and not as Flinders did. Flinders, it must be remembered, was in the Bay merely as a detail of a much more extensive voyage and had no time to devote to a complete survey.

Be this as it may, the fact remains that the actual finding was accidental in both its first processes: first the wrong course accidentally taken by Finnegan and Pamphlett and then the chance that they were with the blacks near the shore so as to be seen by Oxley, whereas they might easily have been at a distance as their third man actually was.
Redcliffe Settlement.

The first position to attract the eyes of the officers who founded the settlement was Redcliffe, but the bad water and bad health of the convicts soon occasioned a move up the river, and the actual site of the town was decided by the position of the only water supply then known. That supply came from what was soon to be the old reservoir, or surface tank, at Tank Street, and the convict buildings were then placed at various distances and directions from this water. Cultivated lands were brought into service on the scrub lands at New Farm, at a spot near Newstead and at Eagle Farm; and the easiest way of access to them decided the position of Wickham Street, which passes at the lowest point between Spring Hill and Bowen Terrace and still winds its way down towards Newstead, where, in the once-cultivated fields, the shackle that hangs on the wall before you was recovered. Thus that factor decided the irregular road which still remains with us.

Ipswich Gains Prominence.

Meanwhile, at the other side of the peninsula, another accidental factor was at work. The Darling Downs had developed from the south, and the discovery of Cunningham's Gap and the Toll-bar road led the traffic from that region and to its nearest coastal outlet at Moreton Bay; and the first navigable point to be met on the river was at Ipswich, which soon established itself as the "port." A Gilbertian episode in our history occurred as a result of this ideal, and the consequent intrigues aimed at making Ipswich the capital city to the exclusion of Brisbane. These plots resulted in a wild ride and the ignominious ducking of some worthy but disappointed gentlemen.

With its failure, however—and this was inevitable since road connection was a necessity in any case—the road from Ipswich to Brisbane had to wend its way along so as to meet the pressing need in primitive traffic of an even keel and the almost equal need of avoiding bogs and meeting a suitable ferry site at the end of the journey. These
three circumstances resulted in two termini—the Russell Street ferry and that from Kangaroo Point to Petrie's Bight.

Climatic Factors.

The high road over St. Mary's Hill gave the weight of favour to Russell Street so that, through this and the entry to Wickham Street already mentioned, the direction of Queen Street was decided—a most unfortunate accident and one highly detrimental to the physical comfort of the citizens, since it did not take the climatic factors into consideration. If these had been known and considered—which, of course, they could hardly be by the people who had to do the work—it might have been realised that there are in Brisbane two important winds, namely the winter westerlies and the summer north-easters. The winter westerly is really a south-westerly which reverses in the summer; and therefore to lay the streets out to run in that direction exposes them in the winter to the unpleasant effects of that wind, while in the hot weather the cooling breezes blow past the shops and offices but cannot enter them.

It was common knowledge, and the outcome of experience that the comfortable offices in which one can work most effectively are those on the high north-eastern sides of the buildings, since they are cool in summer and protected in winter, and while their occupants are working in comfort all other people are either chilled in winter or sweltering in summer, and the loss in time and wages from this cause since the inception of the city must have equalled a very large amount.

The even-keel principle, as applying to bullock teams, then decided the position of the Gladstone road as an alternative high level road and the junction of these then fixed the position of Victoria Bridge, which has been a problem ever since. The bridge has the grave inconvenience of being cut off at every high flood—which, however, are by good fortune only experienced at long intervals, although the frequency of these from 1887 to 1898 put a check on the development of South Brisbane from which it has never recovered.
Early Errors Explained.

I would now like you to go back to the beginning, having these facts in your mind, and see how the history of the city of Brisbane illustrates the losses and dangers of accidental and haphazard expedients. First as to the choice of Brisbane as the capital or of any place anywhere in that province. It is hard to know what exactly was in the minds of the administrators of that day, but we know something, and the one thing that excuses their errors is that they had to do something without much loss of time and that they had no knowledge of the country they were about to settle.

First of all the eastern coast of Australia is very deficient in good harbours, though at the same time, it has a few which are among the finest in the world, but of these Brisbane or Moreton Bay is not one. The Bay has shallow foreshores for the most part, and the low-lying land is covered with miasmatic growths, the breeding-grounds of mosquitoes, while the river has at its mouth a shallow bar which after great floods is very seriously silted up, driving shipping to the expensive recourse to lightering which, if another flood like '93 occurs, would be fatal: and such an event is as certain as any event may be.

Choice of Moreton Bay.

The port of Newcastle was already in use and the first land-locked harbour to the north was Moreton Bay—that of Gladstone being at a remoter distance. The shortest distance was thought sufficiently great, and so the experiment in Moreton Bay at Redcliffe was attempted though the settlement had almost at once to be removed up the river. Had a full knowledge of the country proposed to be settled been available it is highly probable that Gladstone would have been the capital, and it has had many advocates. Should at any time a catastrophe overtake Brisbane—such for instance as a flood like that of '93, or even a greater, as aboriginal lore seems to indicate as possible, then it is conceivable that Brisbane might lose its importance and become a secondary town. History can show more unexpected changes than that.
I have tried to show how the lay-out took place by the fixing of the line from Victoria Bridge to Petrie's Bight and via Wickham Street to Newstead, and along to the German settlers at Nudgee and Zillmere.

It can also be seen that the lay-out of the city was caused by the first obvious need of avoiding the hills, coupled with a total want of vision of the city's possible future. There are numerous tales of Queen Street blocks having been sold for £5 and with a chuckle on the part of the vendor at his good fortune in being able to get it.

The result of the first land sales showed the same want of confidence in a future Brisbane. It was to be a little village on the peninsula of North Brisbane with a small village on the south side and access by as level roads as possible to a few farms not far away. The Darling Downs was a poor sort of sheep run that would not grow a cabbage, whereas to-day that tract alone naturally justifies the existence of the city other than as the seat of administration.

**Spring Hill Overlooked.**

It is easy to realise that had there been any anticipation of Brisbane's present state or of the wealth of the Darling Downs, then the great possibilities of Spring Hill as the site for the finest part of Brisbane would not have been missed, but to-day we see the finest part of Brisbane absolutely without any semblance of a plan, with crooked lanes on the site of old bullock tracks and an area of the greatest potentialities as near a slum as is possible in this land. This place that might stand to us like the Acropolis in Athens is lost, while the city itself swelters under the lee of this very hill, cut off from the breezes which would make its long summer more bearable, thereby giving greater value to its workers both by hand and head.

This conception on a village scale has affected us in every way. When it came to the question of building a bridge there was no idea that a great stream of traffic night and day would pass from north to south and back. The only idea was just to
make something that would be more convenient than a ferry, and therefore it was placed where the problem of anything other than wooden piles would not arise.

The flood question did not seem important and, although there had been one big flood, the village then did not feel its effects; and, as there was only one rainfall station (Brisbane), which did not show any outstanding fall till 1887, the real meaning of Lockyer’s statements about the Stanley river (see the Society’s Journal, Vol. II., No. 1, page 65) would appear to suggest that between Oxley’s visit in September, 1824, and his own in September, 1825, there had occurred a flood as great as that subsequently recorded in 1893. Had it been realised that the Brisbane river was subject to floods likely to put a big city out of action and that a high span would be essential in order not to impede the flood flow, then Victoria Bridge would never have been built, but a direct way from north to south would have been thought out and possibly the town would have built a pontoon structure or used a steam vehicular boat and waited until its financial position justified a structure such as that so soon to span the river at Kangaroo Point to Ivory Street. But if such action had been taken at that time, it is more probable that it would have crossed the river from the high bank near the Five Ways, Woolloongabba and landed where George Street enters the old Domain. The street plan would have been a north-south one, draining the peninsular pockets and giving indraught to the summer breezes with the public buildings on the eminences, such for instance, as Spring Hill. A little dreaming will show what a fine city that would have been.