SOME NOTABLE AUSTRALIAN EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS

Highlights of Early Australian Press History

PART I

(The First of A Series)


(Read by Mr. JOHN T. MAHER, F.R.Hist.S.Q., in the absence of Mr. Lack, at a meeting of the Society on 25 February 1971)

The history of Australian journalism goes back to 1803 when New South Wales was a penal settlement for convicts, and the first newspaper to be published in Australia was the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, the first issue of which appeared on 5 March 1803. George Howe was Australia’s pioneer newspaper publisher, and the first Australian newspaper editor. The *Gazette and Advertiser* appeared weekly until 1825; thereafter it became a bi-weekly until 1827, when it became a tri-weekly, continuing until 20 October 1842, when it ceased publication.

George Howe was the son of Thomas Howe, a printer in the West Indies, and was born at St. Kitts in 1769. In the early 1790’s young Howe went to London. He found employment as a compositor on the *Times*, which had been founded by John Walter in 1788, and was later employed on other London newspapers, working in London until 1799. In March of that year he got into serious trouble; he was tried at the Warwick Assizes for shoplifting at Alcester, under the name of “George Happy, alias Happy George”, with a companion, Thomas Jones. Under the harsh criminal laws of the day, Howe was sentenced to death, but this was commuted to transportation for life. Robert Howe, son of George Howe, in after years described Alexander McLeay—who, in 1825 became Colonial Secretary of New South Wales—as “the benefactor of myself and my poor mother”, and it was probably McLeay who enabled Howe’s family to embark with him in the *Royal Admiral*. 
EDITOR AND GOVERNMENT PRINTER

Howe arrived in Sydney in November 1800, but his wife died on the voyage. Soon after his arrival, Howe succeeded George Hughes as Government Printer. A wooden screw press had been included in the cargo of the First Fleet by Governor Phillip, but it was not used until 1796, in which year Hughes became the Colony's first Government Printer. Hughes's name never appeared on the convict lists, although he performed with convict actors in plays produced in January 1796. Hughes produced, in a small printery behind Government House, some 200 Government Orders, several broadsheets, and a few playbills. Howe replaced Hughes as Government Printer. Howe appears to have been a well-educated man on the classical lines of the 18th century, and he was well read in European literature, as indicated by his later work. In 1802 Howe issued the first book printed in Australia, *New South Wales General Standing Orders*, comprising Government and General Orders issued between 1791 and 1802. His son Robert, born in 1795, helped his father in the printing office when publication of the newspaper began. According to Robert Howe, who followed his father as publisher of the *Gazette*, the old printing press was worth only £2, and they had to manage with a mere 20 lb. of type. But George Howe was an ingenious man, and carried on, in spite of the inadequate press, a chronic shortage of ink and paper, and the refusal or inability of many of his subscribers to pay their debts. He was conditionally pardoned in 1803, and fully emancipated in 1806.

PUBLISHED GAZETTE AT HIS OWN EXPENSE

Howe published the *Gazette* at his own expense; it was a four-page journal smaller than foolscap size, three columns to a page. The only aid received from the authorities was an allowance of £60 a year. The *Gazette* had a circulation of 350, and all matter published had to be submitted in proof for official approval. Largely edited and entirely censored at Government House, the *Gazette*, as a weekly newspaper, alone served New South Wales for 21 years. Sometimes the *Gazette* would come out weekly on two pages of foolscap, and sometimes it would not appear at all. The boxes of the printers' founts used for printing the paper became short, and a "Z" would be used to take the place of an "S", or an "E" would replace an "H". The substitution of one letter for another gave the *Gazette* a curious appearance, and sometimes readers experienced difficulty in guessing what a certain word was.
One of the biggest problems of the editor appears to have been the obtaining of a supply of local news. There were plenty of murders and bush robberies, but these at last became so frequent that they ceased to interest the reader. Of general local news the *Gazette* was frequently barren. To a great extent this was due to the fact that there were no reporters. New South Wales was then under a military dictatorship, where the Governor's word was law. Policing of the settlement was done by soldiers of the New South Wales Corps. Local political news was not published. What, in the journalistic jargon of today, would be classed as "hot" news, mostly consisted of a criminal's escape from custody, or a vivid description of public executions.

There is a wonderful fascination and romantic interest in looking over the pages of Australia's first newspaper, which appeared only 15 years after the Colony was founded. Its appearance must be regarded as an achievement in journalism of the first magnitude. The second singular circumstance, of course, which must also be regarded as an achievement, was that its editor was a freed convict.

**LOOKING THROUGH A TIME TUNNEL**

Admittedly, Howe did not—he could not—publish critical comment which would not, as a matter of course, be tolerated by the authoritarian military regime of the day. Nevertheless, the columns of Australia's first newspaper are remarkably informative, and give us a considerable insight into the social conditions in early Sydney, and the way of life and outlook of those days. A facsimile volume of copies of the first and second year issues of the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* has been published by Angus and Robertson, and one of these volumes can be seen in the library of the Society, at Newstead House, a gift to the Society by the President, Commander Norman Pixley.

Looking through its pages is like looking through a time tunnel—the same news in a different setting—and the nearest approach to actual bodily transference, as achieved by the hero of Murray Leinster's science fiction novel, "Time Tunnel", ex-professor Henry Carroll, who travelled back and forth from a village outside Paris to the Paris of 1804, the Paris of Napoleon Bonaparte and Talleyrand, bringing back flint-lock pistols, jewellery, and various other articles, including freshly printed copies, still hot from the press, of the Paris *Moniteur*, the official Napoleonic newspaper, which were sold as "real antiques" in an antique shop to tourists and collectors.
Instead of our daily stories of the attack on the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, and other phases of the bloody Vietnam war, the Gazette’s columns reported Napoleon’s aggressions and designs against the peace in Europe. There were also news stories of dingoes killing sheep at Lane Cove, and of aborigines staging a battle with spears on the future site of the Sydney Opera House. The Gazette’s news columns reflect the sources of our Australian history. A great deal of space in the Gazette was taken up with proclamations and Government notices. Howe was also the pioneer of classified “ads”.

“FRESH NEWS” NINE MONTHS OLD!

Howe extended his shipping reports by publishing letters arriving from London and New York by sea. These writers were the equivalents of today’s foreign correspondents. Although the news might be nine months old before it was published in the Gazette, it was fresh news eagerly read by his subscribers. Local dramas were well covered when they were of a major nature. In November 1804, the Gazette reported mounting excitement at Sydney Cove when an English ship arrived with a captive Dutch East Indiaman in tow. The drums beat to arms, the New South Wales Corps paraded, as did the civilian Loyalist Association. Howe, as has been noted, was a well-read man. He published accounts of aboriginal battles with epic echoes of the heroes of Homer and Shakespeare, and all the authentic flavour of Attic salt, and a journalistic tour de force of those days was the publication of a long vivid account of the Irish convict rebellion at Toongabbie in March 1804, sent him by a correspondent. The despatch thrilled Howe so much that he ran out of 6 point type, and had to set the last column of the story in much bigger type, which made the effect a little incongruous.

Howe also published an eye witness report of the public hanging of a Parramatta convict. From his tumbril, the condemned man selected a youth at random from the crowd, gave him his blessing, and an exhortation, and harangued the crowd on the evils of a mis-spent life before, in a well-turned phrase by our Mr. Howe, “departing for an unknown region”.

WHIMSICAL ITEMS

Among other whimsical items in the news columns are the death notice of a labourer, “killed by a tree which fell in a direction contrary to the poor man’s expectation”; and
the wedding report of a 92-year-old resident of the Rocks to a girl of 24, which added a postscript that "the odds are nearly four to one in her favour".

Then there is the bawdy account of the nuptials of two Pitt Row septuagenarians which concluded in these terms:

"Mirth and frolic floated around on surfaces nectareous, until a sudden reserve becoming visible in the countenances of the happy couple, suggested the propriety of taking leave and, after a number of engaging compliments which could only be answered with a blush, they retired to the bridal chamber, where the venerable bridesmaid (aged 69) resigned her envied charge to transports that were before only known by anticipation".

The Colony of New South Wales then had only a population of 7,000. The Gazette was Australia's only newspaper until 1810, when the Derwent Star briefly appeared in Hobart, to be followed in 1814 by the Van Diemen's Land Gazette, and in 1816 by the Hobart Town Gazette, which survived until 1827.

Howe died on 11 May 1821.† The Gazette was his private speculation, but he was allowed to use the Government type and press. In addition to buying the paper, setting the type, and working the press, he also delivered the copies to subscribers. His office was a ramshackle building near Government House. In 1806 he had begun publication of the New South Wales Pocket Almanac, which appeared annually from 1808 till 1821. The Almanack was issued in conjunction with the Gazette. It supplemented the dissemination of news and knowledge throughout the Colony, while the Gazette kept the settlers in touch with affairs in England. George Howe published extracts from English literature, and did much to encourage education and a love of literature. Before 1810 he published more than 40 poems in the Gazette; many of these he wrote himself.

During Governor Macquarie's administration, he printed another 70 poems, including the patriotic odes of M. M. Robinson. Robinson's was the first verse published in Australia. "All Robinson's odes except one were published in the Gazette, and it became the author's practice to recite his new verse at each birthday levee at Government House. They are stilted and rhetorical in style and lack true imaginative invention, but are not without pathos; they appealed to Robinson's contemporaries through their stimulation of memories of

† For further biographical details of George Howe and his sons see Appendix.
what it meant to be a convict, and they expressed the ardent community spirit which informed Macquarie’s Sydney”.

(Australian Dictionary of Biography).

WENTWORTH AND WARDELL

Active journalism, as the term is understood today, did not really begin in Australia until 14 October 1824, on which date *The Australian*, a weekly newspaper founded by William Charles Wentworth and Dr. Robert Wardell, made its appearance. Wentworth was a barrister and Wardell was both barrister and journalist. Wentworth had been born in the Colony and sent to England to be educated. Wardell was English by birth. They had met in England, when Wentworth was at Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1823, and in the following year Wentworth returned to Australia, Wardell accompanying him. In September 1824, both were admitted as barristers to the Supreme Court of Sydney. When Wardell and Wentworth became acquainted, Wardell was editor of the *Statesman*, a London evening newspaper, and they brought back with them to New South Wales plant and equipment for the purpose of starting a newspaper in Sydney.
The *Australian* was published weekly, and its price was 1/-.
In its first editorial, the newspaper proclaimed its purpose and mission: “to convert a prison into a colony fit for a free-
man to inhabit himself and to bequeath as an inheritance
to a free prosperity”.

“A free Press”, declared the *Australian*, “is the most legiti-
mate, and at the same time, the most powerful weapon that
can be employed to annihilate influence, frustrate the designs
of tyranny, and restrain the arm of oppression”. Until he
vacated its editorial chair on 27 June 1828, Wardell was the
*Australian*. Wardell was one of the notable men of his gen-
eration. He was a powerful, if prolix writer. C. H. Currey,
in a biography of Wardell in the *Australian Dictionary of
Biography* (Volume 2, 1788-1850), says that, read today,
his articles repel by their undertone of sarcasm and frequent
notes of arrogance and condescension. “His favourite
medium was satire, sometimes light, often heavy, generally
wounding. Yet he could go directly and unerringly to the pith
of a matter, and state and elucidate a proposition with con-
cision and precision”.

**CAMPAIGN AGAINST GOVERNOR DARLING**

Wardell and Wentworth played notable parts in their cam-
paign against tyrannical Governor Darling in the struggle
for freedom of the press, in which they were associated
with Edward Smith Hall (1786-1860), editor of the *Monitor*,
the third newspaper to be established in Sydney.

Wardell fell foul of several of his political and legal con-
temporaries. A gentleman who felt that his honour had been
besmirched, had a weapon available to him in those days;
duellling was still permitted, and in fact, up to 1843, duelling
was almost recognised as an obligation. Twice Wardell was
“called out”, first by Saxe Bannister, on whom, on 18 Oc-
tober 1826, Wardell made a bitter attack. Bannister had
just resigned the position of Attorney-General. Bannister
asked Darling to prosecute the offender; Darling refused,
since Bannister was no longer an official, and Bannister
challenged Wardell. They met at Pyrmont on 21 October, ex-
changed shots that damaged only their clothing, and were
then persuaded by their seconds to leave the field. The
*Sydney Gazette* of 25 October made guarded reference to the
affair, describing the parties as an “ex-Crown Officer” and
the “learned Editor of a certain Colonial Journal”. Five
months later Wardell was again involved in a duel. The
*Sydney Monitor* of 23 March 1827 gives an account of
this affair. The principals were referred to as Col. D.........
and Dr. W. The seconds were said to be Mr. W. and Dr. B., probably W. C. Wentworth and Dr. William Bland. Colonel Dumaresq, an erstwhile friend of Wardell's, challenged Wardell on the ground that he had taken undue liberties with his name. The duellists met on the Race Ground. Three shots were fired but no one was hurt. Dr. Wardell made an oral apology. The encounter with Dumaresq, a brother-in-law of the Governor, was in itself sufficient to put Wardell "out of bounds" at Government House.

Colonel Henry Dumaresq (1792-1838), the eldest of three brothers who migrated to Australia when their brother-in-law, Ralph Darling, was made Governor of New South Wales, entered the army at the age of 16, and attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1817. He took part in six battles of the Peninsular War, and served on Wellington's staff at Waterloo, where he was badly wounded. He was Darling's military secretary during his administration of the Mauritius (1819-24), and was sent ahead of him to Australia. On 21 December 1825, he became Darling's private secretary, a post which he held with one intermission until 1831. In 1826-27 he was Clerk to the Executive Council, but in June of 1827 was sent to England with dispatches, met the directors of the Australian Agricultural Company—in which he had become interested through the Macarthurs—and impressed them so favourably that later he was chosen to succeed Sir Edward Parry as commissioner for the company in Australia. He took over the post on 9 March 1834 and discharged his duties so efficiently that the directors increased his salary and proposed to extend his term of office; but on 5 March 1838 he died, at Port Stephens, of an apoplectic stroke. From 1831 to 1834 he lived on his estate at St. Helier's, near Muswellbrook, on the Hunter River. In 1834 he took up Saumarez station near Armidale, and thus became one of the pioneer settlers of New England.

WARDELL WAS A MAN OF SUBSTANCE

In 1834 Wardell was a man of substance. Not only did he have a considerable legal practice but he had also speculated wisely. He also had an estate at Petersham of about 2,500 acres which had valuable stands of timber. From 25 cultivated acres of the estate he had reaped 500 bushels of good quality wheat in 1830. On the afternoon of Sunday, 7 September 1834, riding his hack, he left his cottage at Petersham to visit his estate. Near the Cook's River boundary, he discovered that a hut had been built on his land, from which,
as he approached, emerged three rough-looking strangers. He suspected, correctly as it happened, that these gentry were convicts unlawfully at large. There was a violent altercation, during which John Jenkins, leader of the convicts, shot him fatally. Wardell's body was found next day. The three men were arrested a week later, the youngest of them turned Approver, or King's Evidence, and the other two were executed. A beautifully executed marble tablet memorial to Wardell, on which is moulded a side view of the head of Wardell, is in St. James' Church, Sydney. It comprises a portrait bust on a tablet on which the manner of his death is recorded by the phrase, "A Latrone Vagante".

It should be remembered that at this time the colonists were without benefit of trial by jury, without a legislative assembly, almost without a single popular right except the liberty of the Press, which they regarded as, next to the Supreme Court, their most effectual protection against absolute power. It was fortunate for the people of New South Wales that Chief Justice Forbes was not only a sound constitutional lawyer, but a man whose courage was equal to his capacity. Sir Francis Forbes previously had held successively the posts of Advocate-General in Bermuda and Chief Justice of Newfoundland.

**DARLING PLANS TO SHACKLE THE PRESS**

Darling anticipated little difficulty in shackling the newspapers in such a manner as to prevent all freedom of discussion. He needed the concurrence of the Legislative Council, but all the members who were not officials were his own nominees. Darling planned to have two legislative Acts passed—one of them to render the publication of newspapers illegal without a licence, which licence should in no case continue in force for more than a year and might be withdrawn at any time at the pleasure of the Government. The intention of the second Act was to impose a crushingly prohibitive stamp duty of fourpence on each copy printed for sale. The position, talents, and courage of Chief Justice Forbes enabled him to prevent the accomplishment of Darling's tyrannical designs. Forbes had been appointed first Chief Justice of New South Wales on 13 October 1823. In December 1825, he was also appointed a member of the Legislative Council. These positions, which were of a political character, were in conflict with Forbes's appointment as Chief Justice. In addition, he had been given, against his wishes, an exceptional power with regard to legislation. As Chief Justice, he was required, before any Bill was sent
to the Legislative Council to certify that it was not, in his opinion, inconsistent with the law of England. Section 29 of the Act (4 Geo. IV. c.96) forbade the Governor to submit any Bill to the Legislative Council unless the Chief Justice had been sent a copy and had transmitted to the Governor his certificate to the effect that the proposed measure was not repugnant to the law of England. As he pointed out, this requirement invested him with the power of veto over proposed legislation. Darling's first communication to Forbes did not contain any direct proposal that the Press should be fettered, but enclosed a despatch from the Colonial Office, in which it was suggested that a law should be enacted "that no newspaper should be published without a licence to be applied for to the Governor; that such licence should in no case continue in force for more than a year, and that it should be made resumable before the expiration of the year, if an order to that effect be issued by the Governor with the advice of his Executive Council". Further, "that each number of each successive newspaper ought also to be subjected to a stamp duty, and that the proceeds of such duty should be devoted to defraying the charges of printing public acts, proclamations, and orders".

"REPUGNANT TO THE LAW OF ENGLAND"

Chief Justice Forbes intimated in reply that the proposal to grant to the Press a licence resumable at pleasure contained a principle repugnant to the law of England, and he suggested that it would be better to suspend any legislative action on the subject. Governor Darling rejoined: "The intemperate tone of the papers has increased to an alarming, if not dangerous degree". He asked Forbes to give the subject further consideration. The Chief Justice said, in reply, that he was quite ready to certify any ordinance "so far as I am authorised by law". Darling transmitted to Forbes the drafts of two bills which he desired the Chief Justice to certify "with as little delay as possible". Forbes reiterated that he could not certify to the legality of an Act "which made licences resumable at His Excellency's pleasure", and again begged that legislation might be postponed in order that the question might be referred to the English law officers "because", he said, "I am anxious to avoid setting my hand solemnly to a certificate that a measure recommended by so high an authority as the Secretary of State is repugnant to the law of England."

The Chief Justice remained adamant in his refusal to certify that the proposed licensing bill was in accordance
with the law of England. Failing to get his proposed Licensing Act certified, Darling fell back on the Stamp Duty. To carry out his wishes, a Bill was prepared in which the amount of the duty was left blank, and in that state it was transmitted to the Chief Justice for his signature. He certified that the principle of a stamp on newspapers was not repugnant to the law of England, and as no amount of duty was named in the draft Bill, he concluded that so soon as that point had been decided, he would be called upon for a formal certificate, as required by law.

The wily Governor, however, having got Forbes' signature to the draft Bill, did not wait for his sanction of the amount of duty, but called the Council together and, in the absence of the Chief Justice, filled in the blank space with the words "four pence"!

The Chief Justice, upon learning what had been done, protested that he had been trapped into an appearance of compliance with the Government's wishes, and in his letter to Darling denied that he had certified to the Bill as passed, and positively refused to agree to such an imposition as a tax of four pence upon every copy of a newspaper published. A long correspondence ensued, pending the result of which the duty of four pence on each newspaper was levied by the Government, but Darling, finding his position wholly untenable, at last gave way, and the tax was abandoned.

The Chief Justice, who had thus been forced into a position of antagonism to the executive branch of the government, wrote to the Secretary of State (Lord Bathurst) and wrote fully on the whole subject of the gagging of the Press, and gave his reasons for his refusal to comply with the Governor's wishes.

CROWN UPHOLDS FORBES

The despatch received from Downing Street, in answer to the Chief Justice's letter, appeared to indicate that the remarkable instructions which directed Darling to propose the enactment of Press licensing and Stamp Duty Acts, must have been written in consequence of misrepresentation or exaggeration as to the state of the Colony having been sent home. These misrepresentations had been corrected by the Chief Justice's letter, for the reply informed Governor Darling that "the law officers of the Crown have expressed their opinion that in refusing to grant his certificate to the Act for licensing newspapers, the Chief Justice correctly executed his duty; and that the reasons assigned by him for that decision were valid and sufficient. And further, that they
(the law officers of the Crown) thought the Judge* had done his duty correctly in acting upon the opinion he had formed in reference to the four penny Stamp Duty”.

Two prosecutions for libel had been instituted by Darling against Wardell. These were held in October and December 1827. In both trials, the jury of naval and military officers could not agree on their verdict and the defendant was discharged.

EDWARD SMITH HALL OF THE MONITOR

Possibly the greatest name in the history of the struggle for the freedom of the Press in Darling’s time was Edward Smith Hall (1786-1860), a remarkable man, who played an outstanding part in the battle for the release of the printed word from official censorship and restriction on public issues. Hall had come to Sydney as a free man, armed with personal recommendations written by Robert Peel, later Sir Robert Peel, the great statesman, son of Sir Robert Peel, a wealthy cotton spinner, from whom he inherited a great fortune; George Canning,† the distinguished British statesman and orator, who made his reputation by his speeches in favour of the abolition of the slave trade; and William Wilberforce, the abolitionist and philanthropist. He was a sensitive, ambitious young man of 25, well-educated, and a man of ideals and principles. His father, Smith Hall, was the manager of a private bank. On 19 May 1826, Hall and Arthur Hill published the first issue of the Monitor, Sydney’s third newspaper. On its masthead was the motto: “Nothing Extenuate Nor Set Down Aught in Malice”. In its attacks on Governor Darling, it certainly lived up to the first two words. Hill left the partnership in 1827. Hall was fearless and uncompromising, vigorously attacking the despotic measures of Government House, the tyranny of country magistrates, and the oppression of the convicts. Hall “espoused the cause of any convict, who should he be ever so

* Sir Francis Forbes (1784-1841), Chief Justice of New South Wales, was a notable personality in the early history of New South Wales. The eldest son of Dr. Francis Forbes and his wife Mary, née Tucker, his grandfather, Dr. George Forbes, came of ancient Scottish lineage, but after the Battle of Culloden, when the attempt by Prince Charles Edward Stuart (“Bonnie Prince Charlie”) to gain the throne of England was defeated, and the hopes of the Jacobites finally destroyed, Dr. Forbes had settled in the Bermudas. With his sons he had considerable economic interests in America. Francis Forbes went to school in America and travelled widely there, and was said to have “acquired political opinions of the freest tendency”. In this connection, C. H. Currey, in a lengthy biography of Francis Forbes in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, says that although Francis Forbes was later credited with “American sympathies” and “Yankee principles”, he was a King’s or Queen’s man, to the end.

† Canning was also a clever journalist who, in his satirical newspaper The Anti-Jacobin (1797-98) lashed the “New Philosophy”, as it was called, promulgated by the French Republicans.
vile, was punished contrary to law”. The Monitor influenced public opinion by its advocacy of a representative assembly and trial by common jury. The Monitor also vigorously condemned Governor Darling for oppressive rule.

“AN APOSTATE MISSIONARY”

Hall speedily came into conflict with Darling who described him as “a fellow without principles, an apostate missionary”. Darling wrote in September 1826 that “the Monitor” of 8 September . . . is calculated to be as mischievous as any of the former . . . The editor of the Monitor is no doubt endeavouring to . . . establish himself with the lower classes of the community”. He was of the opinion that Hall was deliberately courting prosecution, and observed that “nothing short of positive coercion will answer with such a man”.

The trial of strength between Darling and the Press, as represented by Wentworth’s Australian and Hall’s Monitor began at the end of November 1826. The Gazette was a semi-Government organ and cannot therefore be considered as a protagonist in the great battle between Governor and Press that was about to begin. Wentworth, Wardell, and Hall were active leaders in the agitation for the establishment of a Colonial legislative assembly. The draft of the New South Wales Bill was sent to England by the Chief Justice, Sir Francis Forbes, in October 1826. It frustrated the hopes of the Wentworth Emancipist Party.

THE SUDDS AND THOMPSON CASE

The rupture between Governor and Press was precipitated by what has gone down in Australian history as the Sudds and Thompson Case. Facts in the Sudds and Thompson affair were, briefly, that the soldiers on garrison and guard duty in the Colony believed, with some reason, that the lot of the convicts, especially the emancipists, was very much superior to the rigorous disciplined life of a soldier. Soldiers who sought to seize opportunities of acquiring independence and comfort, at least in a relative sense, committed petty crimes with the deliberate intention of being discharged from military service and undergoing a term of imprisonment. Darling decided to make an example of the next case, and the luckless victims were Joseph Sudds and Patrick Thompson, privates of the 57th Regiment,* stationed in Sydney. In

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* The 57th (West Middlesex) Regiment was sent to Australia in 1825, and served until 1832. The defence of Port Jackson was originally undertaken by a detachment of 21 Marines, under the command of Major Robert Ross that arrived with the First Fleet. Between 1790 and 1792 the Marines were replaced by the notorious New South Wales Corps, which had been specially recruited in England for service in New South Wales, and was commanded by Major Francis Grose.
broad daylight Sudds and Thompson stole some cloth from a draper's shop. Darling altered their sentence from seven years' transportation to a penal settlement to seven years' labour in the road gangs, and caused chains to be locked on their ankles, connected with iron collars around their necks. Darling also ordered that the prisoners undergo the ceremony of military degradation. The military punishment was carried out on 22 November 1826. Privates Sudds and Thompson were marched from the cells to the barracks, stripped of their uniforms in the presence of the assembled regiment, and dressed in felon's clothing. They were then drummed out of the barracks to the strains of *The Rogues' March*, and marched back to gaol. Sudds, who was ill, died in hospital five days after the military punishment. Thompson worked in both collar and irons at Lapstone for 11 days. Then, allegedly "on account of his good conduct", his collar and additional chains were removed. The chains weighed 13 lb. 8 oz. Six months later—July 1827—he was pardoned by order of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who held that the Governor had no authority for his action in varying the sentences imposed on the two men. *

**THE PRESS ATTACKS DARLING**

Strong feeling was aroused by the case of "the tortured soldiers". Wentworth†, Robert Wardell and Edward Smith Hall attacked Darling. It is very likely that their criticisms were a not inconsiderable factor in bringing about, in 1831, his recall. Nine years later, in 1835, a Select Committee

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* Bibliography on the Sudds-Thompson case includes the following Parliamentary Papers of Great Britain and Ireland: Copy of the record of the conviction of Joseph Sudds and Patrick Thompson; Copy of the General Order commuting the sentence and Correspondence respecting the death of J. Sudds (1828); Return of all the Letters addressed by the Secretary of State in reply to Governor Darling's Despatches, relative to the death of Private Joseph Sudds (1832); Report from Select Committee on the conduct of General Darling while Governor of New South Wales (1835).

† William Charles Wentworth (1790-1872), explorer, author, barrister, landowner and statesman, was the son of Catherine Crowley, who was convicted at the Staffordshire Assizes in July 1788 of feloniously stealing "wearing apparel", was sentenced to transportation for seven years, reached Sydney in the transport *Neptune* in June 1790, and in the *Surprise* arrived at Norfolk Island with her infant son William on 7 August. Dr. D'Arcy Wentworth, who also sailed in the *Neptune* and *Surprise*, acknowledged William as his son. William accompanied his parents to Sydney in 1796 and then to Parramatta, where his mother died in 1800. At the turn of the second half of the 19th century the amazing and versatile William Charles Wentworth was the dominant figure in New South Wales.

In his youth he had, in a prize ode, pictured Australia as arising "A new Britannia in another world". Probably that is why he wanted to include a "gum-tree aristocracy", with hereditary titles, in the New South Wales Constitution, which he largely shaped. Satirists laughed him out of the idea by picturing the "Duke of Woolloomooloo" or the "Earl of Parramatta". Wentworth was one of the chief founders of the Sydney University. He also tried to acquire the South Island of New Zealand, or most of it, from seven Maori chiefs. But Governor Gipps ruined that plan. Finally, Wentworth went to live and die in England. Wentworth was the first great native-born politician.
of the House of Commons, which investigated charges against Darling, exonerated Darling of all blame, stating that he was “under the peculiar circumstances of the colony, entirely free from blame”.

“UNBRIBABLE AND UNDEFEATABLE” HALL

Hall has been aptly described as “the unbribable and undefeatable opponent of Darling’s high-handedness”. He had resisted the temporarily enforced stamp duty much more vigorously and successfully than Wentworth and Wardell. He ceased publication of the Monitor in its ordinary form and brought it out as a magazine of 48 pages octavo. As a magazine the Monitor did not fall legally under the operation of the new Act. On the other hand, the Australian decided to pay the stamp duty and accept the curtailment of its freedom. When the Chief Justice’s decision was made known, the Monitor resumed publication as a newspaper in its original format.

Hall assailed with vitriolic pen many prominent persons in the community from the Governor downwards. He made a scathing attack on Hannibal Macarthur for the flogging of a convict at Macarthur’s farm, and Judge Barron Field* was also a target for his pen. Judge Field had been given a pension which Smith Hall wittily condemned as “poetic injustice (the judge was a versifier of sorts) for an official who levied court suitors . . . which he had no more right to levy than the highwayman to levy money on the highway”.

Hall was singled out as the target for Darling’s vindictiveness. His criticism of Governor Darling led to a libel action which was withdrawn, and to another libel action which cost him £300.

LOCKED OUT OF HIS CHURCH PEW

On 29 September 1828, he was prosecuted for criminal libel against Archdeacon T. H. Scott,† who had locked Hall

* Barron Field (1786-1846) was the second son of Henry Field, surgeon and apothecary, a direct descendant of Oliver Cromwell. In a lengthy biography of him in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, C. H. Currey states that Field opposed trial by jury and a legislative assembly for New South Wales. “He shared the views of the root and branch exclusives . . . and for this and other reasons receded in the regard of Macquarie, who in 1821 included him in his list of “the factious and dissatisfied in New South Wales”.

† Thomas Hobbes Scott (1783-1860), Church of England clergyman. In 1819, when his brother-in-law, J. T. Bigge, was appointed commissioner to investigate the affairs of New South Wales, Scott was appointed his secretary. On his return to England he was consulted at the Colonial Office and submitted plans for chaplains and schools in the colony. The British Government reconstituted the ecclesiastical affairs of the colony by creating, under letters patent, an archdeaconry of New South Wales in the diocese of Calcutta. On 2 October 1824
and his family out of his pew in the Church of St. James. Hall forced the lock and opened the door to admit his family, and he was prosecuted for trespassing. He severely castigated the ecclesiastical administration of Scott, and it was on this article that he was successfully prosecuted for criminal libel. He was found guilty and had to enter into recognisances to appear for judgment when called upon.

In October 1828 a Government notice was published announcing that the unoccupied lands adjacent to any land grant would be leased to the grantee on his application until such lands were required by the Government for other purposes. Hall applied for permission to lease 5,000 acres adjacent to his grant, but the application was refused by the Colonial Secretary, McLeay, under orders from Darling. Thereupon, Hall asked the reasons for the refusal, and was informed by McLeay that it was because "he was the editor of the Monitor, the columns of which paper bear ample testimony to your endeavours to disturb the tranquillity of the colony, and to demoralise the community, by treating with disrespect and contempt the Clergy and the Established Church, with reference to the instance of your recent con-

"UNMEASURED AND UNJUSTIFIABLE ATTACKS"

Hall vainly sought to obtain from the Court a rule nisi calling on McLeay, the Colonial Secretary and official mouthpiece of the Governor, to show cause why a criminal information should not issue against him for his refusal to rent the land. He then appealed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in a letter dated 17 November 1828. In a despatch dated 6 November 1829, Sir George Murray supported Governor Darling's action "in refusing the gifts of the Colonial Government to a person convicted before the Supreme Court of a libel", which was expressly declared by the judgment of that Court to have been "indecent, scandalous, and emanating from personal motives, more especially since I observe that his paper has continued, not less than after his conviction than before it, to be the channel of the most

Scott accepted appointment as archdeacon of New South Wales with authority in the dependencies of New South Wales, including Van Diemen's Land, at a salary of £2,000 with allowances. He took rank and precedence next to the lieutenant-governor, and was an ex-officio member of the Legislative Council. Ross Border, in a biography of Scott in the Australian Dictionary of Biography says that Scott was a Tory and unpopular with the progressives of the colony. He was a friend and admirer of John Macarthur. Scott was persistently abused by the Australian and E. S. Hall's Monitor. He was criticised as a supporter of Darling, for holding shares in the Australian Agricultural Company, for opposing the establishment of a theatre, and for receiving so large a salary. Scott expressed his anger with Hall by locking his pew in St. James' Church against him. Hall forced the lock, whereupon Scott had the pew decked over. On one occasion Hall and his family sat on the steps at the altar rail.
unmeasured and unjustifiable attacks on the characters, both private and public, of numerous and respectable persons”.

On 8 January 1829, Hall was called upon to receive judgment from Mr. Justice Dowling for his conviction in the previous September for the criminal libel on Archdeacon Scott. On 15 April 1829 Hall was again found guilty of a criminal libel on F. C. Crotty, the commandant at Port Macquarie. On 29 June 1829 Hall was again called upon to receive judgment on these two convictions. For his libel on Scott, he was sentenced to imprisonment for twelve months, and for his libel on Crotty to imprisonment for a further term of three months, the sentences to be cumulative.

TWELVE TIMES BEFORE THE COURTS

Twelve times Smith Hall came before the courts. With law books under his arm, he appeared in court in his own defence. The courts were composed of military and naval jurors in the pay of the Government. In all, Smith Hall served sentences totalling more than three and a half years.

Edwin Hayes, editor of the Australian, had been tried on 14 April 1829, and found guilty of seditious libel on Governor Darling, published in January. The libel was contained in one of three articles which criticised the papers in the case of Sudds and Thompson, as laid on the table of the House of Commons, and alleged that Darling had illegally commuted the punishment of the two soldiers. Hayes was sentenced to imprisonment for six months, and was ordered to pay a fine of £100, and to find recognisances for his good behaviour for three years, himself in £500 and two in £250 each.

In defence of his actions Darling asserted that the Press was “extremely dangerous because of the peculiar position of the community; the papers were totally regardless of decorum”. Deploiring their effect upon the convict population, he told the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London that the conduct of the Monitor “has from the first been seditious and inflammatory in the highest degree”. Hall was still in gaol in 1830 when Darling released him in honour of the accession of William IV. This was Darling’s only magnanimous act in his six years’ term.

Notwithstanding their confinement in gaol, the editors of the Monitor and the Australian were still able to continue their editorial work. While imprisoned in the George Street Gaol, Hall continued to write his editorials, observing: “I wrote as freely as if I were in London instead of Sydney”. While he was a prisoner, George Street continued to witness the unusual spectacle of a newspaper editor being marched
out of the gaol at the foot of Essex Street (Gallows Hill) in the custody of the gaoler in order to make appearances at court. So far from acknowledging this act of clemency, Hall continued his attacks on Darling's administration, and on 1 October 1831 it must have been with considerable personal satisfaction that he announced that Governor Darling was to be relieved of his commission.

**HALL RESPONSIBLE FOR DARLING'S RECALL**

Darling was probably justified in ascribing to Hall his removal from the office of governor. Hall’s assertion that Darling’s recall was a personal victory for him was supported by Joseph Hume,† a member of the British House of Commons, one of the most powerful, and at the same time, one of the most practical of reformers in a reforming age. Hume quoted extensively in the House of Commons, the charges Hall had made against Darling. Nevertheless, the Colonial Office denied that “any observations contained in an intemperate newspaper” had had any influence on the British Government’s decision to remove Darling from his post.

By letter dated 1 March 1829, forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Wentworth impeached Governor Darling in a long and exhaustive series of charges against his administration. The impeachment aroused the supporters of Darling to prepare an address signed by more than 100 landed proprietors and merchants. This was presented to Darling on 5 July 1829.

**“LICENTIOUS PUBLIC WRITERS”**

The Address expressed the deep regret with which the signatories had observed “every measure of Your Excellency grossly vituperated by licentious public writers in a manner calculated to inflame the minds of the lower orders of the community against Your Excellency's administration, and to produce discontent and insubordination among the prisoners of the Crown for no other purpose than to promote the interested views of such writers”. The reforms introduced by Governor Darling in the public departments were ap-

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† Joseph Hume, politician (1777-1855), who had studied medicine in Edinburgh, and had been an assistant surgeon in the service of the East India Company, returned to England in 1808, his fortune made. He became imbued with the political philosophy of James Mill and Jeremy Bentham, and was elected to Parliament, as member for Weymouth, Aberdeen, Middlesex, Kilkenny, and Montrose successively, this last from 1842 to his death. “He had an uncompromising honesty, an instinctive hatred of abuses, an innate love of liberty, and an unflinching will to extend its benefits to others”. Amongst the schemes and reforms he advocated were: the establishment of savings banks; the abolition of flogging in the army; the abolition of naval impressment, and of imprisonment for debt.
proved; the acts of the administration were commended as “judicious and imperative”, and the Address also denied “that the political opinions promulgated by the opposition journals were those of the more intelligent classes of the community, or that these publications form any criterion by which the justness of Your Excellency’s measures can be appreciated”.

Acknowledging the Address, Darling stated: “The Press has undoubtedly indulged itself to a most licentious and criminal extent in its endeavours to degrade the Government and excite public discontent”. He further described the impeachment by Wentworth as “a gross and absurd compound of base and incredible calumnies”.

The Address and the Reply were published in the issue of the Gazette, dated 7 July 1829. In a leading article, the editor, the Rev. Ralph Mansfield, praised the authors of the Address and denounced the editors of the Australian and the Monitor. As the impeachment was then sub judice, Wentworth knew that Mansfield’s criticism was contrary to English law. As Darling was exempt from prosecution within his own Government, Wentworth took action against Mansfield, and on 30 September 1829, a rule nisi for a criminal information against Mansfield was granted on the motion of Wardell, and was made absolute on 19 December. On 3 June 1830, Mansfield was tried and found guilty, and on 30 September, 1830, he was sentenced to pay a fine of £10 and to be imprisoned until the fine was paid. Judge Stephen found that although the libel, which was a personal attack on Wentworth, originated from high authority, this did not authorise Mansfield to publish it. Darling induced the Executive Council to pay Mansfield’s fine and costs.

**DARLING’S BILL DISALLOWED**

Darling’s drastic Bill to restrain the publication of libellous matter in the Press, which provided for heavy fines on conviction, and for banishment for persons twice convicted of blasphemous or seditious libel, was disallowed by the Colonial Office in a despatch dated 6 January 1831. Viscount Goderich, who had succeeded Sir George Murray, instructed Darling to “enforce the existing law firmly but without harshness”. The banishment clauses were repealed in September 1831. Before that date, Darling had been recalled. Major-General Richard Bourke had been appointed his successor in April 1831. Wellington’s Tory Government had fallen, ending a long rule in Britain by the Tories. Howick, the new Under Secretary for State, administered a rebuke to Darling for attempting to suppress free discussion instead of
allaying discontent by using the power of the law “solely for public objects and on public grounds”.

The Australian Dictionary of Biography, in its biography of Darling (Volume I, 1788-1850, pp. 282 et seq) says that Darling was an able administrator, and it was an unkind fate that pitch-forked him into the governorship of New South Wales at a time when the penal settlement was rapidly becoming a free colony, and when the British Government itself was undergoing change. “As an ultra-conservative his heart was with the old establishment; he had little sympathy with popular reform and less with its restless symptoms. As an old soldier he carried out his orders with zest, but he saw public life as a battlefield . . . Darling himself could win respect, but not friends, for his manner was dull, forbidding and humourless; one perceptive observer thought that he mistook formality for dignity.

“Certainly he warmed to praise, but criticism, except from his superiors, convinced him of his rectitude and in is own eyes justified vindictive and often petty reprisals, especially in his despatches to London. ‘General popularity’, he wrote sententiously, ‘is not always the companion of integrity . . . it would have been impossible to satisfy many of the colonists without an abandonment of every principle of justice and duty’. In this negative strain, he could boast in his last report to the Colonial Office that the ‘King’s authority has been duly upheld’.”

DARLING’S DEPARTURE CELEBRATED

Darling served his six years’ term as Governor and departed for England on the Hooghly on 22 October 1831 with his wife and children. Wentworth staged a celebration party at Vaucluse, his estate overlooking the harbour, and it was a riotous affair. The Australian reported: “Upward of 4,000 persons assembled at Vaucluse to partake of Mr. Wentworth’s hospitality and to evince joy at the approaching departure. The scene of the fete was on the lawn in front of Mr. Wentworth’s villa, which was thrown open for the reception of all respectable visitants, while a marquee filled with piles of loaves and casks of Cooper’s gin and Wright’s strong beer, was pitched a short way off. On an immense spit, a bullock was roasted entire. Twelve sheep were also roasted in succession; and 4,000 loaves completed the enormous banquet. By 7 p.m. two immense bonfires were lighted on the highest hill . . . Rustic sports, speeches, etc., etc., whiled away the night, and morning dawed before the hospitable mansion was quitted by all its guests”.
The virulent abuse to which Darling was subjected even pursued him to a session of the Turf Club over which he was presiding. A toast to “The Exports of the Colony” was followed by the additional words, “May Governor Darling Be the First of Them”, and the band, appropriately enough, played “Over the Hills and Far Away”.

**BATTLE FOR PRESS FREEDOM WON**

The battle for the freedom of the press had been won; in fact, Wentworth’s prosecution of the *Gazette* for a libel on himself was a decisive factor in Darling’s recall. Wentworth’s second great victory was the passing of Acts in 1830 allowing trial by jury. Hall of the *Monitor* swiftly retaliated against his enemies. In the first case to be tried by a jury of 12 citizens, he won a verdict when the Solicitor-General sued for £4,000 for evasion of newspaper stamp duties. He was successful in four out of five actions, and was awarded damages for wrongful conviction. He was able to turn the tables on his old enemy, Archdeacon Scott, who had ejected him from his pew at St. James’s Church. A jury awarded Hall £25 damages. Finally, he won a full free pardon in November 1830.

Smith Hall had fought for his principles and had triumphed. He had seen the vindication of justice, the establishment of a free press, and the recall of Darling. He stayed with the *Monitor* until 1838. Then he transferred to the *Australian*, and finally joined the staff of Henry Parkes’s *Empire*. Like the *Sydney Gazette*, the *Monitor*, which took the title of *Sydney Monitor* from 16 August 1828 was killed by a depression. Its last issue appeared on 29 December 1841.

In 1842 Smith Hall applied for the post of town clerk in Sydney, but he was not successful. His strong claims for public recognition of his services were never recognised. Instead of ranking high in the public mind and being linked with Wentworth as a great champion of democratic government and free speech, he is only remembered, if at all, as one of the Australian journalists who courageously fought the fight for Press freedom in Australia in the early years of our nationhood.

**WILLIAM WILKES, SECOND EDITOR OF THE BRISBANE COURIER**

In my paper, *A Century of Brisbane Journalism*, given to the Society in December 1951, Vol. IV, No. 4, I mentioned that one of the early editors of the *Brisbane Courier* was
William Wilkes, who became the second editor of the Moreton Bay Courier, as it was first called. He had been a reporter on the staff for a time during the period when Arthur Sydney Lyon, partner of printer James Swan, was editor. When Lyon quarrelled with Swan over the Courier's policy of pro-Separation, anti-transportation, and anti-squatter, Lyon left the Courier to become editor in July 1850 of the Moreton Bay Free Press which was anti-Separationist, pro-transportationist, and the mouthpiece of the squatter interest. Before joining the Courier Wilkes, a former convict, and an ardent anti-transportationist and Separationist, had been employed by James Canning Pearce,† owner of Helidon station, who had arrived in Moreton Bay from Sydney in 1842. Pearce had occupied Helidon station in 1845, and sold it to H. Turner in 1849. Wilkes became editor of the Courier, and remained in that post for nearly ten years.

Before coming to the Courier, Wilkes had been employed by a Queen Street storekeeper, D. S. LeBreton. Wilkes was the son of a captain in the service of the East India Company and had arrived in Sydney from England in 1834, when he was aged about 39. He had arrived in Moreton Bay as a member of Surveyor J. C. Burnett’s† party which surveyed the head of the Clarence River in 1841-42 and for more than twelve months acted as overseer. Upon the completion of the survey, Wilkes decided to stay in the Moreton Bay district.

**CLEVER JOURNALIST AND SATIRIST**

Wilkes was a clever journalist and also was a capable writer of satirical verse; from its earliest days he had been a contributor to the Courier. While he was employed by Pearce, Wilkes wrote in mock heroic style a long satirical

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† James Canning Pearce was the pioneer of steam navigation in the Brisbane River. In the 40's and 50's of last century no fewer than eight steamers plied between Brisbane and Ipswich. The first of them was the Experiment, which was purchased by Pearce and began a service between Brisbane and Ipswich in 1846, the Experiment arriving in Brisbane on 16 June of that year. The Experiment had been engaged in the Parramatta River trade. The Experiment weighed 37 tons and was 80 feet long; she was unique in that her propulsion, when she first began the service on the Parramatta, was supplied by four horses working a capstan which was connected to the paddle-wheels. In her best moments the Experiment was able to cover the distance to Parramatta in three and a half hours, but it was impossible to keep the horses moving, so that after a couple of months the vessel was removed from the run. In 1835 she was equipped with an engine and carried cargo and passengers for another five years.

† In 1847 Surveyor Burnett discovered the Burnett River, 270 miles in length, which rises on the western slope of the Burnett Range, flowing south-westerly and then easterly and north-easterly to its outlet at Burnett Heads in Hervey Bay. Dredging has made the river navigable to the city of Bundaberg, about ten miles from its mouth. The Burnett drains an area of 13,000 square miles. Gayndah, an old-established pastoral town, 90 miles from Maryborough, is also on the Burnett. The Queensland lung-fish, the Ceratodus, was discovered in the Burnett in 1870.
poem under the pen-name of James Arrowsmith, entitled *The Raid of the Aborigines*. Henry Stuart Russell, the pioneer Queensland pastoralist, describes in his memoirs how Wilkes wrote an amusing "poem after the style of Virgil and Homer" upon the derring-do of "the Quatre Bras of Commissioners, police, commissioned officers and privates" in their war with the aborigines of the Darling Downs in the early 1840's, when the sturdy, resolute figure of John ("Tinker, Never-to-be-Beaten") Campbell, one-time hawker of tin pots and pans around the cobbled streets of sprawling Sydney-town in 1835, and later tavern-keeper on the Macintyre River, elbowed his way into the dress circle of the pure merino squatters of the Darling Downs, taking up Westbrook in 1841. In one of the opening skirmishes of this war, "Tinker" Campbell and his companion Hicks were waylaid in the scrub at the foot of the Toowoomba Range and escaped death only by desperately spurring their horses. Pearce's shepherds at Helidon were killed and their sheep cooked. Drays from Clifton station were stopped by barricades and the loads destroyed or wantonly scattered. McConnel's men were killed and his sheep taken.

Russell said: "These outrages were enough to electrify the promptitude of both commissioners (Simpson and Rolleston) who, having at once saluted forth with mounted police and squatters' posse, were supplemented by Lieut. Johnson and ten rank and file of Her Majesty's 99th Regiment.*"

Their task in scouring the scrubs was just about as easy as looking for a needle in a stack of hay.

**THE RAID OF THE ABORIGINES**

Referring to Wilkes' famous poem, Russell said that it bore "the names of the dear old fellows of the time, a distinct harking back to the squattting circle in which he used to sit. *The Raid of the Aborigines* by Wilkes was, for a time, the wealth of wit in our wilderness*. Some of these stanzas are worth quoting for their historic interest and for the contemporary picture they present:

Great tidings of war have come down from the west,  
For the waddy is raised and the spear's in the rest;  
And the tribes of the Severn have poured down the Gap,  
And they've vowed to have "bullock" whatever may hap.

* The 99th (Lanarkshire) Regiment arrived in Australia in 1842 and served till 1856.
Oh, ’twas glorious to see those free sons of the soil,  
Unfetter’d by garments, uninjured by toil,  
Streaming down to the valley—as shining and black  
As Newcastle coals shooting out of a sack.

Each warrior was greased from the heel to the head;  
Each lubra was charcoal’d—each limb streaked with red;  
And plain might you see that each snake-eating elf  
Was inclined to think no table beer of himself.

They’d a forest of spears that would turn a man pale,  
Like a chevaux-de-frise on the wall of a gaol;  
And they bore in each girdle the swift boomerang,  
And a toothpick, the lugs of the white man to bang.

DOWN THE LOCKYER IN BATTLE ARRAY

In vivid cantos Wilkes described the war song and the corroboree, and the march of the tribes down the Lockyer in battle array.

They paused for a short time near Helidon Hill  
With savoury possum their “binjies” to fill;  
And the sweet flying fox and the delicate grub  
They’d gorg’d till each paunch was as round as a tub;  
Then they rolled in the ashes, like kittens at play,  
Or like overfed hogs on a hot summer’s day.

Soon the war cry was “budgery bullock”, the wise chieftain remarking that—  
“... though, as you know, when a shepherd we kill  
The jackeroos all smoke their pipes and sit still;  
Yet they’ll turn out like madmen and boldly give battle  
If they think we’ve been spearing their sheep or their cattle”.

With gusto, Wilkes described in page after page of satiric stanza, the punitive expedition against the marauding tribes,  
“down Lockyer’s pleasant vale when every squire and gallant knight with bosom burning for the fight, assembled in the dale”.

THE HOTSPUR OF THE NORTH

“Lord” Piercy was the Hotspur of the North, and behind him rode, in sanguine mail, the burly lord of Irvingdale,  
whose rifle ne’er was known to fail. Then there was pretty Billy Ure, his mammy’s pride and joy; and eager, thirsting  
for the fray, came Ludovic-le-Balafre, the captain’s darling boy. Next Randolph Pittson came in view, with frosty air
his nose was blue; but Isaac‡ from the Downs, had got a blister on his heel, and thought the same a good excuse his share of danger to refuse, and home again to steal.

How the squatter knights came upon the enemy camp and "Justice Fairit," attempted to make the aborigines disgorge their plundered mutton by reading to them the "trusty and well-beloved" commission he held from the Governor; and how the victory trophies of a sanguinary contest were one speir and a raw bullock's hide, one dog, who lay dead with a ball in his side, an old tomahawk, a black gin's pipe, and a few other odds and ends, is described with many satiric references to various members of a gallant cavalcade.

CHAMPION OF SEPARATION

Wilkes also wrote much satirical verse under the pen-name of Cordwainer. Wilkes wrote the leaders in the Courier. The great champion of Separation, he presented an extremely able case through the leading columns of the Courier. While in Brisbane he was honorary secretary to the Separation Movement Committee. He was also a member of the School of Arts Committee and Secretary of the Brisbane Hospital.

In the late 1850's when the Crimean War was being fought, the Russian bogey dominated the thoughts of colonial politicians and colonists in general, and Brisbane, like the Australian capitals of Sydney and Melbourne, was constantly subjected to false alarms of Russian cruisers in the Bay and imminent bombardment. Much the same thing was happening in the large Southern cities. One day, a thunderous clamour exactly like the sound of gunfire was heard in the city, coming from across the river from the direction of Kangaroo Point, and one fearful citizen started the alarm that the Russians were in the Bay, or river, or somewhere too close for the safety of the people of Brisbane, and there was a condition closely resembling panic in the bars of the Queen Street hotels, but as time went on and nothing happened, it was learnt that the supposed cannon fire had been nothing more than the booming noise of a large boiler being rolled over and installed at Douglas's soap factory at Kangaroo Point.

‡ Hughes and Isaac, among the first-comers on the Darling Downs, settled at Gowrie.

* John Ferrett, of Wollann, Condamine, Justice of the Peace, or Magistrate of the Territory, as J.P.'s were then known.
TALENT FOR HUMOROUS SATIRE

This comedy provided a heaven-sent opportunity for Wilkes to employ his talent for humorous satire in the stately columns of the *Courier*:

“To arms, to arms!” became the cry,
But cautious fogies said “Not I”.

“To legs, to legs”, let each one vie,
With each to scale the ranges high,
And peaceful speculators fly,
And all their corner lots forego!

Where ever true to his wash he gave
Terror dispelling, Douglas came.
At Kangaroo Point, where soap is made
“Among strains both loud and brave
’Twas rolled along by men I paid
And as it rolled, Bong! Bong! it ga’ed,
Which I suppose has suffered to alarm each blade,
And frightened each man, boy, wife and maid”.

Wilkes described himself as The Windmill Reporter.

SPEARHEAD FOR SEPARATION

Wilkes was one of the great protagonists and, in fact, the spearhead for the agitation for Separation—a fact attested by William Coote in his *History of Queensland* (Chapter X, pp. 175-176) where he testified to “the knowledge of the subject and the care with which Wilkes, for some years, and at a critical period, editor of the *Courier*, prepared the case for Separation. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, in particular, repeatedly attacked the movement for Separation, attempting to show the utter unfitness of what was then known as ‘the Moreton Bay district’, and censuring in strong terms the apathy of its people, instancing in most sarcastic terms their inability to work together in the promotion of even a steam-boat company”. “They are forced to rely upon a Sydney company”, declared the *Herald*, “to furnish them with steam-boats, and upon Sydney merchants to undertake their whole external commerce . . .”

On another occasion, the *Herald* leader writer, lashing himself into a fury of indignation, declared: “Parliament has even gone so far as to devise a form of government for this colony in embryo, and no doubt it would have performed the same kind office for Pinchgut Island, had Lord John Russell made the request”.

To all these attacks powerful replies were made by the *Courier* in its leading articles, and these were undoubtedly from Wilkes's pen. Coote records: "I never had the pleasure of what may be called a personal acquaintance with that very clever writer; but it is equally a gratification and a duty to me to pay this tribute to the care, caution, and accuracy with which Mr. Wilkes during some years led the contest for Separation." The opponents of the Separation movement prophesied that it would bring disaster to Queensland, but Wilkes laughed at these prophets of ill omen.

**CONTRIBUTOR FROM SYDNEY**

Wilkes had, however, left for Sydney before Separation was achieved in 1859. He is believed to have been one of the editors of the Sydney newspaper *Empire*. The *Empire* had been founded in December 1850 by Henry Parkes. Parkes used its columns to advocate his principles of Liberalism, and the *Empire* also had a literary flavour, but Parkes was obliged to cease publication in 1858. In May 1859 the *Empire* was revived under new ownership and management, and Wilkes apparently was editor for a time. From Sydney he contributed for some years a regular weekly column entitled *News and Notes by a Sydney Man*. In 1854 he returned to Brisbane on a short visit, and was presented with a cup of 100 sovereigns from the citizens of Brisbane in testimony of their high regard for him. Some idea of Wilkes's style can be obtained from his *News and Notes* article published in the *Courier* of 7 March 1865 which he devoted to Captain James Waddell of the Confederate cruiser *Shenandoah*, one of the Southern Confederacy's most successful commerce raiders during the War Between the States (1861-1865). On the afternoon of 25 February 1865, the *Shenandoah*, flying the red and white ensign with the St. George Cross and Stars of the Southern Confederacy, steamed into Port Phillip and anchored near the pier at Port Melbourne. The *Shenandoah* stayed for three weeks in Victorian waters, and caused international friction between Britain and the United States, which had been locked in a death grapple for nearly four years with the Confederated States of America. At the conclusion of the War Between the States, Britain had to pay more than £800,000 in compensation to the United States for having allowed the *Shenandoah*, a belligerent ship, to recruit Australian citizens as members of its crew in a neutral British port.
THE STRANGE AFFAIR OF THE SHENANDOAH

The Affair of the Shenandoah constitutes one of the most remarkable incidents in Australian colonial history. During the period the raider was in port a series of dramatic episodes, relieved by elements of comic opera, alternately alarmed and entertained the citizens of Melbourne with a daily fare of excitement and suspense. Waddell had put into Port Phillip seeking repairs and fresh provisions, and also hoped to obtain recruits for his undermanned ship. During her 13 months' cruise in the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Arctic Oceans she sank no fewer than 37 ships, mostly whalers, and took more than 1,000 prisoners.

Wilkes, in his article, said: "I had been shown by an American friend in Sydney a photograph of Captain Waddell which he had just received. The Confederate officer has by no means a prepossessing appearance—a dour, scowling look, no whiskers, a heavy hanging moustache on the upper lip, falling over the mouth; dull, sly, cruel eyes; cheeks rather flabby, and a swelling or puffing of the flesh under the eyes . . . Such is the result of my glance at the photograph of the gallant captain, and if you add a suit of loose-fitting tweed, the picture will be complete. It is somewhat different from that of Thomas Ingoldsby's Jack Tar, over whose description, as two of my friends may remember, we made merry discussion one Sunday evening in a slab-built cottage on the Breakfast Creek Road. To judge from the photograph Captain Waddell must be the personal antithesis of Ingoldsby's† tar—

Square built and broad shouldered, good humoured and gay;
With his collar and countenance open as day—
The latter—'twas mark'd with smallpox, by the way—
Had a sort of expression goodwill to bespeak;
He'd a smile in his eye and a quid in his cheek!

ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE SHENANDOAH

"Not so the Confederate captain—though as to quids he might have had enough if he had got hold of the James

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† Thomas Ingoldsby (1788-1845) was the pseudonym of Richard Harris Barham, author of the Ingoldsby Legends, a series of inimitable burlesque metrical tales, which were published in Bentley's Miscellany in 1837. They were first collected into a volume in 1840, and the third series was published in 1847 with a brief memoir of the author by his son. An English adaptation of the old French contes, the Ingoldsby Legends became popular from their droll humour, fine irony, varied and whimsical rhymes, and quaint and out of the way learning. Barham was a frequent contributor to the Edinburgh Review and Literary Gazette.
But this is not the only good thing he has missed, as an extract from a Melbourne newspaper received yesterday will show: ‘The closeness of the watch maintained by the police over the Shenandoah, especially after her leaving the slip, prevented an attempt resolved on by a number of Federal sympathisers to capture her and carry her off to California. The scheme was the subject of correspondence between them in various parts of the colony, and of private meetings in Melbourne; boats were engaged to convey 50 armed men to her sides in the night, and all risks, short of actual collision with the colonial authorities, were to be encountered after effecting the objective. Money to any extent was forthcoming to aid the scheme which, but for the care exercised by the authorities arising out of suspicions engendered by the discovery of stowaways, would probably have been put into execution’. This information comes to

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* The James Montgomery, an American ship from Boston, was signalled as being off Cape Otway, with a cargo for Melbourne of lumber from Boston, 80,000 lb. of tobacco and 7000 cases of kerosene, and the Brisbane Courier of 11 March 1865 said there was considerable excitement in Collins Street where it was believed that the Shenandoah had made her first capture in Australian waters. However, the alarm was unfounded, the James Montgomery arriving safely in port without having encountered the raider, which had left Williamstown on the morning of 18 February.
me from a trustworthy source, and I believe it to be authentic”.

In actual fact, an attempt was made by Northern sympathisers to blow up the Shenandoah with a barrel of gunpowder placed against the ship's side. The fuse, however, failed to ignite.

"LIKE THE OLD DAYS OF DRAKE AND RALEIGH"

The Shenandoah was originally the Clyde-built China steam clipper Sea King, known to be one of the fastest ships of her class afloat. The Sea King in 1864 had been employed by the British Government to transport troops to New Zealand, and made one of the shortest runs out to Auckland on record. She was remarkably fast both under steam and canvas, and was described in the Australian Press as “a good thirteen-knot boat”. The Brisbane Courier published a history of the career of the Shenandoah up to the time of her arrival in Melbourne, which the Courier described as reading “like the old days of Drake and Raleigh on the Spanish Main”.

Wilkes’s portrait of Captain Waddell as a villainous pirate was certainly grossly exaggerated and overdrawn. It does not do justice to a skilful, courageous and resolute commander, and is far from the portrait presented of him by the American Dictionary of Biography. Undoubtedly, Wilkes was guilty of a piece of flamboyant journalese in this connection, for obviously he had no knowledge of Waddell’s career, background and personality. Waddell had had a notable career in the United States Navy. After active service afloat in the Navy, during which he was favourably mentioned in U.S. naval records for “courage in action” during an epidemic of yellow fever in Central America in 1857; he was, until July 1859, teaching navigation at the American Naval Academy at Annapolis. During this period, one of his students described him as “a handsome, well-proportioned man, slightly over 6 ft. tall, and weighing about 200 lb.—a splendid specimen of manhood, of noble bearing, gracious, courtly, and radiant with kindness”.

WADDELL’S NAVAL CAREER IN CONFEDERATE NAVY

When Waddell returned from duty in the Orient in 1862 he resigned and his name was struck from the rolls of the United States Navy. On 18 January 1862, he secretly entered the Confederacy by way of Baltimore, where he was commissioned a lieutenant in the Confederate States Navy
on 27 March 1862. He fought with the Confederate Navy against Admiral Farragut’s fleet at the capture of New Orleans where, on 5 August 1864, Farragut won the Battle of Mobile Bay, destroying Confederate gunboats and the powerful ironclad ram *Tennessee*. A month later, Waddell served with the Drewry’s Bluff batteries in the repulse of the James River Flotilla on General McClellan’s Peninsula campaign. The Confederate batteries at Drewry’s Bluff, commanding the narrows on the James River, seven miles upstream from Richmond, capital of the Confederacy, were one of the defence keypoints of the Southern capital. On 15 May 1862, in support of General McClellan’s advance on Richmond, which ended in disastrous retreat, Federal gunboats attempted to pass the fortifications at Drewry’s Bluff. “To the delight and scarcely less to the surprise of the Confederates, the obstructions proved impassable. Guns of the batteries bore down almost on the decks of the warships which, in the narrow river, could not manoeuvre with any ease or speed. After three hours and 20 minutes of mauling from the heavy ordnance on the Bluff, the Federals were glad to drop downstream out of range”. (*Lee’s Lieutenants*, Vol. 1, pp. 210-211; *Official Records of the Confederate and Union Armies*, p. 636).

General McClellan’s troops pushed to within four miles of Richmond, and Jefferson Davis, the Confederate President and his Cabinet were busy packing their portmanteaux for a hasty evacuation. McClellan won every action of the Seven Days’ Battle and retreated after every one of them. Douglas Southall Freeman (*Lee’s Lieutenants*) describes the appallingly bad staff work, blunders, and delays of the Confederate commanders at Malvern Hill, where McClellan’s perfectly served batteries lined the crest, and repeated bayonet charges of Confederate regiments were mowed down by canister shell—“It was not war, it was mass murder!” The Confederates were exhausted, disorganised, and beaten to a frazzle, yet in the night, McClellan, to the dismayed rage of Kearny and other divisional commanders, retreated to the shelter of his gunboats on the James River, destroying miles of railroad trains laden with munitions and supplies, and leaving in his wake thousands of abandoned rifles and other equipment.

**CAREER OF THE RAIDER SHENANDOAH**

Similar battery duty at Charleston until March 1863 ended Waddell’s service within the Confederacy. He went
to Paris for duty aboard a ship acquired by James D. Bulloch. On 19 October 1864, near Funchal, Madeira, he took command of the new fast Indiaman, *Sea King* and transformed her into the Confederate raider *Shenandoah*, under orders to concentrate upon the untouched New England whaling fleets in the Pacific. Several prizes were burned before he reached Melbourne on 25 January 1865. A defective propeller shaft and bearing demanded that the *Shenandoah* be dry-docked. The events that occurred as a result of the *Shenandoah*’s visit and the diplomatic turmoil caused have been told earlier. After a general overhauling of the ship and legal difficulties over the recruiting of Australians from Melbourne, the ship left Melbourne on 18 February 1865.

In answering the charges made against him, Captain WaddeU made good use of the international law he had read while teaching at the Naval Academy at Annapolis. Forty-two welcome stowaways appeared on deck after the *Shenandoah* had cleared Port Phillip Bay. Captain Waddell, always short-handed, also obtained American recruits from the crews of nearly all his prizes—even from those that carried newspapers telling of General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, a village in Virginia, 20 miles east of Lynchburg, on 9 April 1865, of the remnant of his Army of Northern Virginia, reduced to 28,231 men, to General Ulysses Grant. For weeks they had been living on parched corn. Nevertheless, Waddell continued to capture and destroy Federal shipping. He took four whalers at Ascension Island on 1 April, one in the Sea of Okhotsk in May, and more than a month after Appomattox, the Bering Sea in a week 21 to 28 June, afforded 24 or 25.

**WADDELL CARRIES ON**

A newspaper aboard one of the first Bering Sea prizes told of Lee’s defeat, but it also carried President Jefferson Davis’ Danville proclamation, declaring that the war would be continued with renewed vigour. Seamen from the captured prizes continued to enlist in the Confederate Navy, and Waddell continued his search for ships. No additional sails were sighted until 2 August, when the *Shenandoah* fell in with the British merchantman *Barracouta*, a thousand miles west of Acapulco, Mexico, and 136 miles from San Francisco. She reported the complete collapse of the Confederacy. In such circumstances, the *Shenandoah* had no standing in maritime law to protect her against the claim of William Henry Seward, the American Secretary of State, that such Confederate ships were *pirates*. The dangers of landing in the nearest port of
the U.S.A. were obvious. Captain Waddell disregarded all advice to beach his ship and let each man shift for himself or seek the nearest British colonial port.

With fine courage and magnificent seamanship, he laid a course for England by way of Cape Horn. On 6 November 1865, flying the only Confederate flag that ever went around the world, the Shenandoah stood in to Liverpool—some 17,000 miles—without "speaking" a ship. The "piratical" officers remained in England until after amnesty was offered by the United States to naval officers who served with the Confederacy.

In 1875 Waddell became a captain for the Pacific Mail Company. Two years later, he wrecked the San Francisco on an uncharted reef, but no passengers were lost. He died at Annapolis while commanding the Maryland State Flotilla for policing the oyster beds.

WILKES AND CHARLES HARPUR

In the Courier for 19 March 1865, Wilkes wrote in his Sydney News and Notes column an interesting note tinctured with Attic salt on Charles Harpur, the Australian poet* who had sent to the Sydney Herald a paraphrase of the famous Night Scene Before Troy in Homer's Iliad. Harpur, he said, had attempted to improve upon Tennyson's magnificent version of the Iliad VIII, 542-61 which Tennyson had entitled Specimen of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse†. Sydney Punch thus parodied the effusion.

* Charles Harpur (1813-1868) has been described by Douglas Sladen as "the grey forefather of Australian poets". Harpur contributed to the Empire newspaper, then conducted by Henry Parkes, who became five times Premier of New South Wales. The poet Kendall was an ardent admirer of Harpur. In "Leaves from Australian Forests" (1869) Kendall paid tribute to Harpur—

† So Hector said, and sea-like roar'd his host:
Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke
And each beside his chariot bound his own:
And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep
In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine
And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd
Their firewood, and the winds from oft the plain
Of wonder out of West and East,
And shapes and hues of Art divine!
All of beauty, all of use,
That one fair planet can produce.
Brought from under every star, blown from over every main
And mist, as life is mixt with pain,
The works of peace with works of war
Is the god so far away?
Far, how far no tongue can say:
Let us dream our dream today.
O ye, the wise who think, the wise who reign,
From growing commerce loose her latest chain.
The bush references have the authentic outback Australian touch:

Yoke-galled and sore, the bullocks forthwith from their long pole are loosened,
And wander away for a feed from the drays that are stuck in the mud-hole;
Fat bacon and chops from the bag are brought in inviting abundance;
Damper and rum for the drivers who meanwhile have chopped with their axe
A whole lot of logs and have lighted their great blazing camp fires with matches,
And invited the wandering bard to share in their savoury supper;
As when a large round cheese hangeth up in a sweet smelling dairy,
And around it all in a row a quantity of little cheesecreets.
See the great big tin billy, how it hisses all hot by the fireside,
With the pannikins ranged around, that formerly held the nimbler,
Till one by one they are filled with a dubious looking liquid.
While the bacon and fat chops fry with a dropping of grease and gravy.
And the signs of supper draw near and the heart of the poet rejoices.

The *Courier* stated in its obituary tribute to Wilkes, in its issue of 16 May 1873: “Being what is called ‘good company’, he was much sought after, and was a general favourite, but the table had its pains as well as pleasures”—which would suggest that Wilkes was fond of the bottle. “A man of ability, kind-hearted and liberal in sentiment, his temperament ill fitted him to withstand the strain put upon him in his social surroundings. On other points he has left footprints in Queensland that may be followed.”

This may be an appropriate point while the bacon and chops are frying at which to conclude this paper. Perhaps at some future date, the subject may be covered further, and references made to other colourful personalities in the world of Australian journalism.

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And let the fair white-winged peacemaker fly
To happy havens under all the sky,
And mix the seasons and the golden hours,
Till each man find his own in all men’s good.
And all men work in noble brotherhood.
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed towers,
And ruling by obeying nature’s powers,
And gathering all the fruits of earth and crowned with all her flowers.
APPENDICES

GEORGE HOWE AND HIS SONS

In 1811, George Howe, who described his first seven years of press work as “grinding poverty”—he augmented his meagre income by various devices, including conducting an evening school for the teaching of mathematics, writing and grammar, and also becoming a professional debt collector—improved his fortunes in 1811. Governor Macquarie, surprised to find that Howe received no allowance as Government Printer, obtained for him a salary of £60 a year. Howe formed an irregular alliance with Elizabeth Easton, and between 1803 and 1810 she bore him five children; one of these, George Terry Howe, went to Van Diemen's Land, and on 5 January 1825 founded at Launceston, the *Tasmanian and Port Dalrymple Advertiser*, the first newspaper to be published and printed in Launceston. Only 20 numbers were issued, and the only known complete set is in the possession of the proprietors of the Hobart *Mercury*. Governor Arthur, of Tasmania, arranged for the purchase of Howe's newspaper and plant, and on 25 June 1825 Howe, with a partner, issued the official *Hobart Town Gazette*. Early in 1827 the partnership was dissolved, and Howe recommenced, on 3 March 1827, publication of the *Tasmanian* as a Hobart newspaper. On 23 August of the same year, however, he sold the newspaper and departed with his wife and children for Sydney. George Terry Howe died in Sydney on 6 April 1863.

George Howe, the father, made a considerable improvement in his economic circumstances when in 1812 he married Sarah, the widow of Edward Wills, a well-to-do convict who became a merchant. Of her five existing children, Sarah in 1811 married Dr. William Redfern (1778-1833), the pioneer surgeon, after whom the Sydney suburb of Redfern is named, and Eliza married Major H. C. Antill (1779-1852), soldier and pioneer settler. Horatio Spencer Wills (1811-61) the (posthumous) youngest son of Edward Wills, worked for some time under Robert Howe, son of George Howe, who had inherited the *Gazette* and the George Street premises from his father. But Wills did not like the printing trade and quarrelled with his step-brother-employer. He is reputed to have run away to sea, to have been shipwrecked in the South Seas, and to have lived with natives in the Marquesas, where he was befriended by a native princess, and to have escaped two years later to a Sydney schooner. Brought to court by Robert Howe for absconding from his apprenticeship as a printer, he was defended by William Charles Wentworth, and agreed to return to his master's service. Upon the death of Robert Howe, he became printer and publisher of the *Gazette*. He also edited, published, and printed the *Currency Lad* from 25 August 1832.

The *Currency Lad* was a four-page weekly journal; its motto was “Rise Australia”, but it ceased publication after 18 months, by which time Wills's connection with the *Gazette* had ended. The newspaper derived its title from a term used in the earliest times of settlement in New South Wales. It is thought to have originated between 1810 and 1815, and was used to distinguish the Australian-born youth of the period. In some quarters it and the companion term “Currency Lass” were applied only to the children of the convicts, but in general “Currency” was used to distinguish the native-born as a whole and “Sterling” those born in Britain. According to Peter Cunningham (*Two Years In New South Wales*, 1827), the term was coined by a facetious paymaster of the 73rd Regiment quartered in
Sydney, “the pound currency at that time being inferior to the pound sterling”. Cunningham himself considered “currency lads and lasses” to be a fine, honest and interesting race who did honour to the country of their origin.

CURRENCY LADS AND LASSES

The terms “Currency Lads and Lasses” became very popular in the 1820’s. In January 1825 the Sydney Gazette announced its intention to publish a new journal which would probably be designated the Currency Lad. However, this journal did not appear until August 1832. In October 1826 the Gazette made facetious reference to the terms again when it publicised a prize fight between an Englishman and an Australian. “The intrinsic merit of sterling and currency blood”, said the Currency Lad “was about to be decided—for the honour of Old England on the one hand and fame of Australia’s sons on the other”.

Fights under English prize ring rules were common in Australia at very early dates. Until 1884 all fights were with bare fists, conducted more or less under the English prize-fight rules first formulated by Jack Broughton in 1743. Rounds ended when one or other fighter was knocked down. Contests were generally fought to a finish, and sometimes lasted for as many as 60 rounds and two or three hours. As in Britain, prize-fighting was regarded as illegal in Australia, although there were no specific laws to that effect. In 1884 as a consequence of a death in a Sydney prize-fight, bare-fist fighting was officially banned.

In the 1820’s and 1830’s, “The Currency Lads” was a popular toast, “The Currency Lass” was a favourite tune, and frequent references were made to the terms in birth-notices printed in the newspapers. In 1826, a ship named The Currency Lass was launched on the Hawkesbury River; in 1832 a coach known as The Currency Lad began to run from Sydney to Windsor. In the same period there were cricket clubs in Sydney known respectively as “The Currency Lads” and “The Sterlings”.

Ludwig Leichhardt, the German explorer, declared in 1843 that one could always distinguish the Australian born girl (“currency”) from an English immigrant girl (“sterling”) because when offered potatoes and pumpkin, the native girl would always choose pumpkins, whereas the English girl would take potatoes. The pumpkins tasted good, were big and floury, and kept for a long time, whereas most other vegetables perished through heat.

The terms were falling into disuse about the middle of the century, and they are now merely historic relics. But Sydney still possesses a hotel which carries the proud sign, “The Currency Lass”.

Horatio Wills is famous in Australian—and Queensland—pastoral history. He took up stations in Gundagai, New South Wales, and in the Grampians Range country, and at Belle Vue, near Geelong, Victoria. Late in 1860 he left on his last trek, with a large party of servants and station hands, to Cullin-la-Ringo station, in Central Queensland, on the Dawson River. The long overland journey took ten months, and a fortnight after arrival (17 October 1861) Wills and eighteen members of his party were massacred by the aborigines. Wills’s widow, who had not gone to Queensland, endowed a cottage in the Old Colonists’ Home in memory of her husband. She died near Geelong in 1907, in her 91st year.
THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF EARLY SYDNEY EDITORS

An editor’s life in Sydney during the 1830’s might well appear to us—living in this modern technological age, when the turning of a knob on a cabinet with a framed glass in front, will bring to us the mirrored image, by the magic of television, of actual scenes of dramatic and historic events on the other side of the world, and also bring right into our lounge room the plays, dramas, comedies, and romances that were formerly only to be seen on the stage or on the motion picture theatre screen—as a stodgy, uneventful sort of existence. There were no cables, no telegrams, no telephones, no regular post; all matter was set by hand; steam-driven presses were new and tricky contraptions, deeply suspect by the experienced printer journeyman and apprentice—although the Chinese, many centuries ahead of European knowledge, technical skill, and mechanics, had printing processes as early as the 9th and 10th centuries; the basic method and technique used in block printing until the comparatively recent process of offset printing, was originally adopted by Foong Taou in the 10th century. Printing from movable types was probably practised in China as early as the 12th or 13th century; Korean books printed from movable clay or wooden types in 1317 are in existence today. There is no truth in the baseless tradition that Marco Polo, the greatest of mediaeval travellers, brought the knowledge of block-printing to China when he visited the court of the Great Khan of Cathy, Kublai, in 1275 A.D. Kublai was then either at Cambaluc (Peking) or his summer residence at Shangtu (Coleridge’s Xanadu).

THE EDITORIAL SCOURGE

But nothing could be further from the truth that early Sydney newspaper editors led a bored existence. At least five newspapers contrived a strenuous existence in the Sydney of the 1830’s. Each of them was brimful of red-blooded determination not to let any “reptile contemporary” get away with anything. The editorial scourge was wielded with a powerful arm. “This”, say the editor of the Australian, with reference to a leader in the Gazette, “is too good, even from the pen of a Botany Bay editor, and reminds us of the roaring of the whole menagerie when the elephant rings the bell for cold meat”. Two days later, the Gazette responded briskly to “this blackguard attack on us, we resolved at once to meet the cowardly abuse of a blustering bully, and will set him in his true light before the public ere we have done with him”.

Indeed, the Gazette editor was no mealy-mouthed writer. He went to the theatre one night in November 1836, and appears to have disapproved of the conduct and deportment of certain ladies in the audience. One of them seems to have tried to jump his seat. His remarks on the subject read a trifle severely, even for those days, when he refers in a sub-leader to “this creature of vice who wantonly endeavoured to introduce her polluted carcase into the place selected by the father of a family”. Judging from a subsequent leader, in which he speaks of “We, the fat editor, as Colonel Wilson has been pleased facetiously to call us”, he was a gentleman of buxom build, which would make the attempt to steal his seat all the more annoying.

OCCUPATIONAL RISKS

There was more than a spice of adventure in the editorial life of those days. In 1834 the editor of the Australian received so many
challenges to mortal combat that he announced in a leader, for the information of the last gentleman who had asked for the name of a friend, with whom could be arranged the grisly details of the duelling ground: “The Flying Pieman being now out of town, we cannot accede to this request, since we know of no other sufficiently fleet of foot to escape the murderous irascibility of this fire-eating object of our righteous disapproval”.

(The Flying Pieman was William Francis King (1807-74), nicknamed “The Flying Pieman” because of his remarkable walking feats. He was a well-known street character of early Sydney. King had migrated to New South Wales in 1829. Archdeacon (afterwards Bishop) Broughton obtained for him the post of schoolmaster at Sutton Forest. But King had an urge for more boisterous living than that which could be obtained from work, and made his way to Sydney, where he became a barman at the Hope and Anchor hotel in Sussex Street. He also walked the streets of old Sydney as an itinerant pieman, although his chief source of income was an allowance from his father. King’s sobriquet was acquired by a remarkable series of walking feats that he performed, one of the first being a walk of 1,634 miles in five weeks and four days undertaken just for his own satisfaction. On two occasions he beat the coach from Windsor to Sydney (34 miles) by several minutes. He walked from Sydney to Parramatta (15 miles) and back twice a day for six consecutive days, and on three consecutive days from St. John’s Church at Parramatta to St. Matthew’s at Windsor and back—a distance of 43½ miles; on the first day he took 8 hours, on the second 7½ hours, on the third 7 hours 25 minutes.

Among many other feats, he carried a dog weighing 70lb. from Campbelltown to Sydney (33 miles) between 12.30 a.m. and 8.40 a.m.—20 minutes in excess of the wagered time—and a goat weighing 92lb. from Talbot’s Inn on Brickfield Hill to Andrew Nash’s Woolpack Inn at Parramatta in seven hours.

King was almost legendary for his fleetness of foot. He always wore a tophat with coloured streamers, and carried a staff to which ribbons were attached. He died in the Liverpool Asylum for old men on 12 August 1874).

AN EDITOR HORSEWHIPPED

A couple of years later, the editor of the Colonist proceeded for £1300 damages from a man, who considering himself libelled by a poem entitled “The Family Man” had horsewhipped him in George Street. The jury assessed the damages at £5. Shortly before, a shipping agent was bound over to keep the peace for threatening to horsewhip the Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang, who controlled the same Colonist. “Verily”, commented the Gazette, “our Sydney magnates are running all stark mad”.

The editorial flail fell impartially on all classes—or, at any rate, on those individuals who were not supporters of the newspaper and what it stood for. A gentleman named Brenan, who combined with another responsible office that of Coroner, was scathingly described by the Sydney Herald (later the Sydney Morning Herald), as “that comfortable, easy-talking pluralist, drawing two or three salaries beside the candle ends and cheese parings of his pluralities”. The cause for this rather caustic criticism lay in the fact that he had been late for a coronial inquiry on a lady resident of Castlereagh Street who, after borrowing threepence from a lady friend to get a glass of rum, had fallen down a well. Colonel Wilson, Chief
Police Magistrate of Sydney, was another who was not regarded with editorial favour, and was thus admonished in a Gazette subleader in October 1836: “We have told Colonel Wilson over and over again that it is not becoming in a police magistrate to be constantly writing in the public prints”. Colonel Wilson had been contributing to the Australian. “We have heard him laughed at all over the town for it. Think of those things, Colonel Wilson, and regulate your conduct accordingly”.

It would not have been surprising if the gallant Colonel had, like other Sydney magnates, “run all stark mad” to the nearest horsewhip shop. But the pursuit of editors with intent to commit aggravated assault, probably served elderly irascible gentlemen of that day much as golf serves their great-great grandsons as an interesting outdoor sport, combining a certain amount of exercise with unlimited accumulation of material for assertive reminiscence.

NO JOB FOR A WEAKLING

But “the eagle eye of an incorruptible Press” (such, at least is the way one Sydney editor phrased it) did not neglect any stratum of the social life of Sydney. In 1836 the Gazette referred with warm approval to the appointment of Constable Elkum as Beadle of the Market Place, as having “been attended with beneficial results, as respectable females need not fear to have their ears shocked by the foul language of a parcel of drunken ruffians who used to consider it fine amusement to annoy them while they were engaged in purchasing such fruits, vegetables, etc., as they required”. A year later, the editor, who had apparently been keeping an eye on the place, remarked sadly: “Out of 26 females we passed in the Sydney Market Place on Tuesday, 18 were disfigured by their eyes being blackened, and most of the remainder were otherwise damaged about the face”. Lest readers of the Gazette might conclude that these phenomena were due to any misplaced zeal on the part of Constable Elkum in carrying out his beadling duties, the editor added: “What a sign of the extent of conjugal affection in New South Wales!”

A TILT AT MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

The Gazette was strong on municipal reform. When a pedestrian slipped in a rut in King Street on Christmas Day 1836, and “was so severely injured that he will in all probability be a cripple for life”, the editor inquires with thunderous emphasis: “When do the proper authorities propose repairing this thoroughfare?” Again he returns to the charge: “The constables are asleep as usual; goats in dozens are permitted to roam the streets”. The Herald, too, had its troubles with straying animals. When “we” (the editor) took a heavy toss over a cow which had selected the front step of the Herald office as a suitable place for slumber, all the thunders of Jove were unloosed. The Monitor did not pass unscathed. They were also troubled by the ubiquitous Sydney goats. But whether those omnivorous wanderers ate the editor’s best hat, or merely camped in the office, is not clear in the vituperative storm which resulted.

FACETIOUS REPORTING

The facetious style of court reporting affected by the Herald and other early Sydney newspapers was a reflection of an age in which society was divided into classes; when assigned servants constituted the majority of employees except for skilled tradesmen. The follow-
ing extracts from the Sydney Herald issues of 1832 throw a light on the attitude of masters to servants:

Tuesday, January 3: John Garrit, assigned to a settler at Brisbane Water, was charged with insolence; but it appearing that the district constable in that neighbourhood had taken upon himself the liberty of confining him for several days upon bread and water, the Bench dismissed the case.

Wednesday, January 4: William McLoughlin was charged by his master with excessive insolence. On being desired to make a Welsh rarebit, he exclaimed: "You're a d——d pretty fellow, ain't you? I'll see you genteely d——d first!" for which he was ordered to receive 50 lashes.

An assigned servant to Mr. Prout, who had been entrusted to bring 6 cwt. of potatoes to Sydney, but thought proper to appropriate half of them to his own use, was sent six months to an iron gang.

Mary Palmer, guilty of telling lies, to the injury of her mistress's good name, was sent to the factory for three months.

Sydney Herald, 23 January, 1832: James Pyne, for inhaling the sea breeze on the South Head Road for the last nine weeks, instead of the smoke in his master's kitchen, was sentenced to receive 75 lashes—50 on that day, and 25 on the following Tuesday.

Charles White was charged by his master with refusing to put a coating of Warren's rich Japan on his "understandings"—with striking his master twice on the temples—and with threatening, should his master get him punished for these acts of disobedience and assault, that he would shorten his days. The Bench ordered him to receive 50 lashes.

EARLY DAY REPORTERS

There must have been some bright reporters on the Sydney newspapers in those early days. One can easily imagine them, crowned by furry curly-brimmed belltoppers, tailed coats, and nankeen trousers strapped under the insteps, hurrying back to the office to write up the brighter details of the inquest held at the Cat and Mutton public-house in Kent Street; over a pot of beer at the old Dog and Duck on Brickfield Hill, interviewing the Flying Pieman on his latest pedestrian exploit: or racing down to Bradley's Head in watermen's skiffs for the latest English news only three months old, from the incoming packet.

There was a smart shipping reporter on the Gazette in 1836. In the issue of April 16, he describes the somewhat untoward ending of a voyage which, from the forecastle viewpoint, must have been almost ideal:

"Captain Croft, of the Benncoolen, on arriving in this port, to his no small astonishment, found that a most awful deficiency had taken place in the bottled ale; spirits and liquors of various descriptions had disappeared, and the cherry brandy had been played the devil with; in fact, about one-fifth of the liquids had disappeared, and the crew being always drunk, the captain gave ten of them into custody".

When the Sir David Ogleby reached Sydney with her forecastle full of Maoris, the Gazette reporter scooped the story. Whilst bay whaling in New Zealand waters, the original crew had been heard to say that they would think no more of heaving the captain overboard than taking a glass of grog. That wily and resourceful master mariner had thereupon, very prudently, bribed a native chief to hold them ashore, and to provide a new crew from his own
people, who served conveniently as hostages for the mutineers, as did the mutineers for them.

MRS. FRASER AND THE "STIRLING CASTLE"

Murders and massacres were frequent stories for the shipping roundsmen of early Sydney. Mrs. Eliza Fraser, freshly returned from captivity amongst the Moreton Bay savages after the wreck of the *Stirling Castle*, was interviewed in October 1836. In the same month, the *Gazette* reporter interviewed the mate of the *Isabella*, just in from Torres Strait, via Timor, with the survivors of the shipwrecked barque *Charles Eaton*, bound from Sydney to Singapore, which ran on to the Great Barrier Reef near the islands in August 1834.

Today, Lane Cove is a highly respectable suburb of Sydney, but in March 1837 it was described in the *Gazette* as "the abode of murderers, cattle thieves, bushrangers, burglars, the resort of villains, and the largest and most secure receptacle of stolen goods in the Colony". A dangerous bushranging gang, consisting of a French convict and two Jamaican negroes, infested North Shore and committed a number of outrages. When recording the capture of the Frenchman the reporter expressed keen appreciation of the fact that "the rope will soon be the supporting vehicle for his last French capers".

A WARNING TO LIARS

That the general roundsman kept an eye on the moral needs of the community may be realised from the following startling warning to liars: "Awful Visitation: The female servant of Mrs. Clewitt, of Pitt Street, had been absent from home, and on her return showed signs of drink. On being accused she denied it, calling on God to strike her dead if she had tasted anything that day. Leaving her mistress, she shortly fell down—a corpse!"

On the police court rounds, the *Gazette* lad fairly got into his stride, as witness the following examples:

"John Sennett, with a face resembling a pancake fried ugly, was handed to the Bar, and pulling up his leeboards until they settled under his listeners, accused the charley (police constable) of having purloined him. Two hours in the stocks".

"Isabella Thomas, a dashing looking commodity with a catskin boa, was charged with being emphatically drunk and, whilst thus inspired, astonishing the passers-by with a string of ideas that were not quite the thing . . . After an attempt to raise the wind on the catskin she tripped to the stocks as though leading a country dance".

"PEELED A CONSTABLE LIKE AN ONION"

"Benjamin Lewis was charged with peeling a constable like an onion and endeavouring to spit him with his own staff that he might resemble a turkey, as he said, fit for a Christmas dinner. He had to pay 20/- for this frolic".

"Susan Mack, just the kind of girl to lend a hand to demolish a steak and a dozen . . . was put in the stocks for singing a song derogatory to Governor Bourke".

"A lady who, of a warm evening in January, 1837, had required the services of six constables and a wheelbarrow to lodge her in the lockup, pleaded next day that her husband had thrown her out of bed and the fall had 'made her brain all mystified'".

The public hangman was charged about the same time with being on premises for an unlawful purpose, but, despite the evident original
intention of the magistrate to commit him, he was discharged with a caution, principally because his professional services were urgently required on the following morning.

EXCELLENT TYPOGRAPHY

The typography of most of the early newspapers of more than a century ago is a thing of beauty and a joy to read. There were no linotypes or similar type-setting machines in those days, when printers set all type by hand, although these old-time craftsmen were surprisingly fast in this manual assembling of type. There were, of course, no banner headlines, nor any of the balanced layouts of today's modern newspapers, but errors were rare, the make-up, even with comparatively small hand-set headlines, was artistic, and the whole product one of sound, conscientious craftsmanship. At first sight, it is difficult to understand how such a standard was maintained by the compositor of that day, but enlightenment comes from reading what he set. The dreadful secret is revealed to the outraged feelings of members of present day typographical unions by such paragraphs as this, from the Sydney Gazette of 7 January 1837: "Robert Popple, compositor, assigned to this office, was found guilty of absconding and being drunk in the streets, and was condemned to receive a corporal punishment of 50 lashes. The fellow had been on the spree for the last week keeping up Christmas".

Today, accustomed to the fluent raciness of news stories and the attractive dress in which each day's news is "dished up" we can smile at the stilted diction and the over-use of the editorial "we" in the early Press of Australia. But it is clear that, what with the indignant magnates "running all stark mad", after the editors, with their horsewhips, and the lash and treadmill always available for urging erring compositors along the path of rectitude, Sydney journalism in any capacity during the middle 1830's was no occupation for a weakling or a sluggard!