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Queda su hermano el Doctor JUAN S. GREENE encargado de atender todos aquellos que se dignen ocuparle.

Calla Andes 193.
Junio 16 de 1888.
144 J.18-28

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LONDON JOTTINGS.

May 19.—Wonders will never cease so long as the world goes round. Here is Mr. Cunningham, Graham, supported by Dr. Tanner, worrying the Home Secretary in order to get a pension for the family of a constable injured while on duty. Saul is indeed among the prophets.

General Boulanger's barber has been interviewed. This gentleman appears to make a very good thing out of the General's hair, which he is now prepared to supply in any quantities, and on the most reasonable terms to the admirers of the Man of Destiny. It seems that the General's hair sells better than his book—if we may believe M. Blowitz.

Suggestions for the nicknaming of the various exhibitions are beginning to pour in. It is pretty well decided that the «short title» of the Anglo-Danish is to be the «Daneries»; but the Italian and the forthcoming Irish shows still want christening. «Virtute duce» is in favour of «Macaroneries» for the one, and «Pad-deries» for the other. The latter may pass, but the former is far too long.

The finest ship in the British navy: H.M.S. Ready.

It will be news to many people to hear that we have prisons which are built of marble. However, there must be at least one, for the Daily News remarks in an article upon Benton, «The gates of the prison closed over him; but they opened their ponderous and marble jaws again, and let him out.» Then the convict might have sung, «I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls;» and his dream would have been a reality.

In spite of the just ridicule into which prize fighting has recently been brought by that *miter gloriosus* J. L. Sullivan, his rivals, and his admirers, in an article upon Benton, «The gates of the prison closed over him; but they opened their ponderous and marble jaws again, and let him out.» Then the convict might have sung, «I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls;» and his dream would have been a reality.

—Was Mr. Stevens, the agent of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, wise in refusing to accept a bucket full of coppers, value 2s, in payment of a certain person's tithe? It is true that coppers are only legal tender up to 1s., but a bucket full in the hand is worth a good many shillings in the bush, and so Mr. Stevens may feel.

The class of emigrants meet acceptable in New Zealand just now are stoats and weasels. It came out incidentally in a case heard at the Woolwich Police-court yesterday that there is an agent in Lincolnshire who has sent out twelve cargoes of these animals, numbering 4,000 in all, the object in view being the destruction of the rabbits, which Mr. Pasture would get rid of more expeditiously by exporting the cholera. It is only to be hoped that when the rabbits have been eaten up their exterminators may not prove to be a yet greater plague to the colonists.

—When will the French journalists learn to spell our English names—ever famous names—with some approach to accuracy? Here is a special reporter of the *Gaulois* giving an account of the Blacilva charge from the lips of Marshal MacMahon, and he actually reports the Marshal to have called Lord Cardigan «General Cardinal» all through. If the Marshal reads the *Gaulois* he will be justly irate.

—Who shall say that there is no prospect of further novelty in Shakespeare criticism? We are now promised a volume on «Hamlet, in which the writer will (so the advertisement says) identify the character of the «melancholy» tones with that of a noble lord, the contemporary and friend of Shakespeare. On the face of it, there is nothing improbable in the theory, which will deserve attention. Probably Shakespeare knew more than one person cursed with the peculiar temperament of Hamlet.

SUNDAY IN THE «BACK-BLOCKS.»

It is not easy to convey a correct impression of Sunday in those remote regions of the Australian bush known as the «back-blocks.» In the democracy of the bush the day seems to have been degraded almost to the level of its working brethren, though as yet not quite. The distinction between Sunday and the other days of the week may be slight, and rest on a wholly secular basis; but there is still a distinction. On a station the seventh day may rarely be one of complete rest, but it still more rarely brings with it hard work—at least, to the rank and file in the men's hut, who stoutly maintain their *dieu non*. For instance, should a sheep-muster be found necessary in a certain paddock, it will probably be undertaken by the «boss» himself and his lieutenants—the overseer, storekeeper, and «Colonial experience» gentleman. Aid from the men may be volunteered, as a favour, but there is no insisting upon it as a claim. On the other hand, boundary-riders camped on the runs agree to perform their rounds and look after their sheep as rigorously on Sunday as on other days.

In at the homestead (unless one of the musters I have mentioned be decreed) Sunday is stamped by certain unmistakable signs of leisurely inactivity. Breakfast, to begin with, is at half-past eight instead of at the usual hour, which is, at latest seven; then an idle morning is spent in the verandah, smoking, and reading the last batch of town papers just to hand with the weekly mail bag; and in the afternoon there is lawn tennis for those who can brave the heat. Siestas, also, are taken as a matter of course; but there is one feature of a back-block Sunday which, when not conspicuously absent, must be regarded as exceptional—which, to quote Captain Cuttle, «when found, make a note of;» and that is, religious observance of the day. Church-going is, of course

out of the question, for there is, possibly no place of worship within 100 miles, and few squatters, care to turn their homestead parlour into one, or personally aspire to the rôle of amateur lay reader. Indeed, only the most important bush townships are equipped with a church, so that it will be readily believed that a back-block benefice is no sinecure. With a parish as wide as Yorkshire, it is impossible for more than a tithe of the parishioners to come to church. The pastor, therefore, must go to his parishioners; and he does so generally on horseback. His visitations, if not enthusiastically welcomed, are at least taken in good part; he is hospitably treated; and his service is attended by all hands, and perhaps even voted a break in the monotony of station life. Then the parson mounts his horse, and rides on to the next homestead, and until he returns the observance of Sunday is purely secular.

This, at any rate, is the case at nine stations out of ten in the back-blocks. I have known squatters, however, who held—and probably still hold—a religious service in their homesteads every Sunday. It is strange to see the shaggy bushman seated at the head of the long table, with the lamp light falling full on his bronzed, lined features, and throwing into prominent relief the brown hands, holding the prayer-book close beneath the shade; and to hear the well-known words read in plain, gruff, matter-of-fact tones, withal half-shyly. The squatter's wife (it goes without saying that this kind of squatter is a married man) plays the hymns on the piano. Close beside her sit the children, and the overseer, storekeeper, and «Colonial experience» or, as he is more often called, the «backeroo»; while round the room are ranged the station hands. The attitudes of these last would seem to indicate attention: legs encased in scrupulously spotless moccasins are meekly extended, and huge pairs of hands lie quietly clasped upon them; and whether they listen or whether they do not, there is an expression of quiet respect on the rough faces, which at other times might be looked for in vain. I have in my mind a squatter who held such a service regularly every Sunday evening, and who even contrived to make the institution popular, chiefly I think, owing to the common sense he showed in two particulars: in the first place the duration of the service never exceeded an hour; in the second there was only one shift of posture all through—that is to say, hymns, exhortations, lessons, and psalms were gone through while seated, the final portion of the service alone involving bended knees. «What good does it do them?» one asks, as the men troop out along the verandah. Who can tell? If you walked back to the hut with the men, you would probably become convinced that it did them no good whatever; for the chances are you would not only fail to remark the smallest moderation in the old full-flavoured epithets, but that you would hear those epithets applied freely to the late service. And yet if but one serious thought has been raised during this quiet hour—one fair memory momentarily revived—can it be said that «no good» has been done? The bushman's creed is one of bold indifference—an indifference too scornful to embody defiance: duty to his neighbour he recognises and performs in proportion to his own natural generosity (and he is often enough generous to a fault); but with the other duty he has nothing to do. It is a creed after all not wholly despicable—better, I take it, than the lukewarmness of professedly religious persons, in that it entails no hypocrisy. Such as it is, however, Lindsay Gordon has interpreted it fairly and simply in the penultimate stanza of his «Sick Stockriders»:

«I had my share of pastime, and I've done my share of toil;
And life is short—the longest life a span.
I care not now to tarry, for the corn or for the oil,
Or the wine that maketh glad the heart of man;
For gold and money, and gifts misspent, and resolutions vain,
'Tis somewhat late to trouble. This I know—
I should live the same life over if I had to live again;
And the chances are, I go where most men go.»

Before I left the back-blocks, there was a rumour that the Salvation Army was about to make an attempt to reach them—to «reach» the hearts of bushmen I suppose was meant. I remember seeing in the *Melbourne War Cry* an illustration entitled, I think, «How we intend to reach the bush,» which depicted two persons, got up «regardless» in an old mixture of Army uniform and bushmen's «logs.» I don't know whether the attempt was persevered in, or even made. I fancy the delegate soldiers would find the average men's hut in the back-blocks warmer quarters than even their past experience could recall. But there can be little doubt that another step taken in a similar direction, and at about the same period, will lead to great results. I refer to the appointment of a bishop to a geographically enormous newly-created diocese of inland pastoral country. I am loth to swell the already long list of anecdotes relating to Colonial prelates—for who has not heard the yarn of the Sydney bishop who thrashed a bullock-driver for ill-treating his team, or that of another bishop who was forced by experiment to own to another «bullocky» that it was impossible to send along the team without hard swearing! But two anecdotes of the back-block bishop's first year of ministry I find irresistible. At a certain station where the bishop was to hold a service, and where a small tribe of blacks were the *genii loci*, the latter were persuaded by the «boss» to attend the ceremony. As a collection was to close the service, sixpenny pieces were given the blacks to contribute, along with the necessary injunctions. Alas! Susie, one of the «gins», when once in possession of the piece of unaccustomed precious metal, formed other and sinister projects as to its application, and when the plate was handed to her steadily refused to part with the coin. «No, no!» she loudly explained, «me keep 'um, long 'um big drink soon as yabber-yabber done!» The second yarn is of another texture, and was spun me by an acquaintance of the bishop's, whose words I will now quote: «I was walking with the bishop near the river at —, when we came across a fellow lying drunk in the blazing sun. The bishop walked up

to him and I was anxious to see what line his reverence would take; I half anticipated a gentle rousing, a remonstrance, and a volley of pretty, bushy talk and I was glad to be disappointed. What the bishop did was to pick up a three-penny stone, place it under the man's head, and arrange the man's hat so that the sun should not strike upon his head or neck. Then he rejoined me, and walked on without a word. A dozen temperance lectures would not have appealed so strongly to the up-country Australian, who delighted to tell this story, as that one simple act. A Christianity that is capable, not of this much, but of this little, is the only kind to carry real weight in the back-blocks.

AUCTIONS

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146 J19-21

J. M.

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Francisco A. Michel.

Montevideo, Abril 9 de 1888.

Daniel Muñoz,
Secretario

Agencia Inglesa de Seguros de N. Goddard

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