

Foreword

Gary Morgan - La Trobe

Lecture, presented July 5, 2008

(Prepared over the period late July 2008 to August 15, 2008)

Since presenting my Victoria Day Council 2008 La Trobe Lecture in Queen's Hall, Parliament House of Victoria, many people have sent me corrections, suggestions and additions; in particular Stewart McArthur, Barry Jones, and Ian Morrison.

In addition Pauline Underwood and I have sourced numerous additional books, papers and other documents. They are listed as further references at the end of this **Foreword**.



Governor Charles La Trobe. c 1851
(Roy Morgan Research Centre Collection)

I expect those who study my La Trobe Lecture to advise me what aspects they disagree with and how they could better explain the points I have covered.

I do not claim to be an expert in Victorian history, or English history or any history. However, my main conclusion is Victoria and Australia 'came of age' during the gold miners' 'diggers' confrontation with the new Victorian Government and Governor Charles La Trobe and Governor Sir Charles Hotham. The dispute began in earnest in mid-1853 with the formation of the anti-Gold Licence Association established by G E Thomson, Dr Jones and 'Captain' Edward Brown – the precursor to the Eureka Stockade, December 1, 1854. The Eureka trials 'bonded' Victorians with a common cause and opened the way for a vibrant Victorian Colony.

My paper focused on three areas: **Women**, the **Media** and **People from Other Countries** who have helped make Melbourne and Victoria from 1851 to today. I did not cover in detail the economic and social history covering the District of Port Phillip or New South Wales from 1834 until Victoria was founded on July 1, 1851. For this reason, some significant historical Australian and British events were not covered in sufficient detail, in particular events leading up to the December 4, 1851 Eureka uprising.

My friend and critical paper advisor, Stewart McArthur, summarised my **La Trobe Lecture** in the following way:

Influence of UK Laws and Customs on 1851 Victoria

Gary Morgan's La Trobe Lecture sets out the early political debates in the UK covering Slaves, War (Wellington, Napoleon), the 1829 Catholic Relief Act, the 1832 Reform Act, the 1934 Work House Act, and the 1850 Secular Education Bill followed by the 1870 Elementary Education Act.

In the Colonies' early formative years (up to 1829) all Colonies were dependent on UK House of Commons legislations and debates. All UK Colonies were subjected to the direction of the Home Office in London.

From as early as the mid 18th Century different dissenting religious/political groups (Irish Catholics, Presbyterians, Quakers, etc) left the UK on religious/political grounds.

The 1934 Work House Act ('poor houses' legislation) forced those without housing to work for lodgings - indeed a further incentive to immigrate to Australia and other places.

Culture and Attitudes

While there were many who emigrated to Victoria for religious freedom (anti-Catholic and anti-Church of England) there were also a large number of improvised farmers seeking 'economic salvation' in the new Australian 'Felix' hoping to generate huge wealth growing wool and grain (1840 to 1851).

And then came the 1851 Victorian 'gold rush' – with huge numbers of single men impacting on a rural society structure for two or three generations – without an equal number of women.

Women

Women in the 18th and 19th Century UK played major roles in the suffrage vote debate and a more subtle influence on anti-slavery activities, along with their commitment to the family and the importance of education to their children.

The role of women in Victoria from its inception in 1851 as compared to the role of women in Victoria in 2008 is very different.

While not discussed in the Gary Morgan's La Trobe Lecture women finally achieved equal status with the 1977 introduction of the Australian Equal Opportunity Acts of both State and Federal Parliaments. The Acts attempted to incorporate in 'Law' women's position in society by either merit (a difficult concept) or by numerical numbers within Corporations or Government Departments.

Despite the 'Law', there are however still some stark comparisons and areas where 'women' have yet to break through the 'glass ceiling' according to some commentators and Gary Morgan.

Media

From 1851 the 'printed' Media (newspapers, journals, letters, public documents and other publications) quickly became Victoria's agenda setting voice and depositor of public record – with many diverse publications publishing unrestricted content – it was the activists' communications medium for political exchange of ideas and debates.

Adam Lindsay Gordon, Marcus Clarke, Henry Kendall, George Walstab, Joseph Winter and other prominent political advocates argued a number of propositions in the journals of the day.

In about 1900 the advent of radio (Morse code, international telegraph) opened up a whole new world of communication.

And it is worth noting that in about 1920 the telephone introduction, crude though it was, had a huge impact in rural Australia allowing rural contact with the 'outside world' and of course their neighbours.

In the 1930s public radio joined newspapers and journals as the vehicle for public debate and information dissemination.

Public debate changed forever in 1934 when Australia moved to a more sophisticated radio system with the ABC and then again in 1956 with the advent of black and white television starting with the coverage of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.

Today some people believe politics and cultural attitudes have become dependent on the television black box. However newspapers with the Internet have reinvented the 'printed' media enabling the public record of newspapers being part of an instant sophisticated exchange of information between individuals and institutions all over the world.

Roy Morgan Research is a 20th Century information provider capable of measuring the population's attitude to political issues, commercial products and most public social issues.

Stewart McArthur, Meningoort, Victoria

New South Wales Governor Sir Richard Bourke, 1831-1837

From 1831 the Governor of New South Wales (until he resigned in January 1837) was Whig 'liberal' Governor Sir Richard Bourke (1777-1855). Apart from naming Melbourne, Bourke's contribution to New South Wales and the District of Port Phillip was significant and should not be overlooked. In addition his involvement in the British Colonies from 1826 had far reaching consequences both in Australia and elsewhere.

Margaret Kiddle in her book *Men of Yesterday* described Governor Bourke as "noblest Governor of them all, worried because he knew 'much evil' must follow 'without the guidance and control of authority'. He (Bourke) thought it would be

‘desirable to impose reasonable conditions on Mr Batman and his associates’, to consider the capital expended by them, and so to recognise the occupation of Port Phillip”.



Sir Richard Bourke, (1777 – 1855)
(By unknown artist, after Richard Read jnr, courtesy
of State Library of New South Wales)



Governor Burke's daughter, c 1830
(The Roy Morgan Research Centre Collection.)

On June 15, 1825 Richard Bourke was appointed Major-General on the staff at Malta, but a "political storm blew up" in Britain through complaints from the Cape of Good Hope about the arbitrary rule of the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, who was given leave to return home to answer the charges against him. The Government hastily decided to divide Cape Colony and create a separate Government in the Eastern District as recommended by a Commission of Inquiry at the Cape. On July 4, 1825 Bourke was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern District, on the understanding that he should be Acting Governor of the whole Colony in Somerset's absence. As an avowed Whig '*Liberal*', he was a surprising choice for a Tory Government, but his tact and ability had favourably impressed [Wilmot Horton](#) at the Colonial Office. Bourke arrived at Cape Town in February 1826, and took office as Acting Governor on March 5 when Somerset left.

A major cause of friction between British settlers and the Colonial Government was control of the **press**. Bourke was drawn into this struggle in March 1827 when he was instructed by the Colonial Office to withdraw the licence of the Colony's only independent English-language newspaper which had been criticising Somerset. In reporting that he had done so, Bourke suggested that, when the Courts became independent of the Colonial Government, the **press** should be controlled **not** by the licences issued or withdrawn at the Governor's discretion, but by the due processes of the law. This suggestion was adopted in 1829 (Duke of Wellington was UK Prime Minister) when the independence of the Colony's **press** was virtually secured by statute - **this major legislation had long and far reaching consequences in establishing a free press in all British Colonies.**

In 1831 New South Wales' total population was about 51,000 of whom about 21,000 were convicts. In 1837 there were 32,000 convicts however the population had increased to 97,000 helped by the assisted 'Bounty' immigration system proposed by Bourke in 1835 and controlled and organised from the Colony. In November 1836 the District of Port Phillip's European population was 324, by 1839 the District's population numbered 5,822 and by 1840 10,291 - a significant increase partly assisted by 'Bounty' immigrants (the scheme was abandoned in 1841).

Independence of the Colony's press played an important part in the District of Port Phillips' move to separation from when first proposed in June 1840 - more than eleven years before happening. Over this period (June 1840 - July 1, 1851) there were numerous publications (newspaper, journals, diaries, letters, government papers, etc) which in different ways fully reported and debated the social and economic issues regarding separation.

Below is **The Melbourne Morning Herald - Boon of Separation, November 19, 1850**

<http://www.roymorgan.com/resources/pdf/papers/20080711.pdf>

The Melbourne Morning Herald.
AND GENERAL DAILY ADVERTISER.

Vol. XX. MELBOURNE, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1850. No. 1013.

COMMEMORATION(*)
OF THE
BOON OF THE SEPARATION OF THE PROVINCE OF VICTORIA
FROM THE
COLONY OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

Melbourne, the Fifteenth of November, 1850. Printed in the line of the Procession to open the PRINCE'S BRIDGE.

The Act for the better regulation of the Australian Colonies, which constituted Victoria into a free Province, passed the Imperial Parliament on the First of August, 1850, of which information reached this Colony, by way of Adelaide, on the 11th of November, 1850.

In this cause the Press has been ever active, and has nobly performed the duty entrusted thereto. Justice has at length triumphed! Victoria is freed from the clog of the Elder Colony of New South Wales! Her people rejoice as one man. The *Parsons*, and all employed on the diffusion of the printed page: all engaged on the all-powerful PRESS, join heart and soul in the People's Joy.

This Colony was founded August 31st, 1835, on which day the first house was commenced for Mr. John Pascoe Fawcner. On the 1st of June, 1836, the first Public Meeting of the Inhabitants took place, and James Simpson, Esq., was elected unanimously as Ruler of the People.

In September, 1836, Captain Lonsdale and a small force of Military, with Officers and Workmen, arrived from Sydney, to govern and order the new Colony.

On Monday, 1st January, 1838, the first Newspaper was issued—a written sheet, published to the extent of 32 Nos. weekly, by Mr. John Pascoe Fawcner. The first Paper was printed on the 5th of March, 1839, and was entitled "The Melbourne Advertiser." It is now "The Melbourne Daily News and Port Phillip Patriot," edited by the Proprietor, George D'Arley Bourziquot, Esq. It commenced a foolscap sheet, once a week, was enlarged to a full sheet of double demy, and was first published daily, commencing on the 15th May, 1845, by John Pascoe Fawcner.

"The Port Phillip Gazette" was first published early in October, 1838, by Messrs. Strode and Arden, bi-weekly. It is now a bi-weekly Journal, edited and published by Thomas M-Combie, Esq.

"The Melbourne Morning Herald" was commenced, and is still carried on by George Cavenagh, Esq. First published in January, 1839, twice a week. It has been a daily Paper since Jan. 1849.

"The Melbourne Argus" commenced on 1st June, 1846, and ceased 12th September, 1848.

"The Argus" commenced 15th September, 1848, and as a daily Paper 18th June, 1849. Present Proprietors, Messrs. Wilson and Johnston.

"The Times," published by Ryland John Howard, was commenced September 1842, and was discontinued 1844.

"The Standard," bi-weekly Journal, was commenced by G. D. Bourziquot, Esq., in 1844, and amalgamated with the "Port Phillip Patriot" Oct. 1, 1845.

"The Courier" was published by Mr. S. Goode on 6th January, 1843, and discontinued in April, 1844.

"The Advertiser" was commenced by Mr. S. Goode in December, 1847, and discontinued in March, 1848.

"The Geelong Advertiser" was commenced at Geelong, November, 1840, by J. P. Fawcner. Edited and Published by Messrs Harrison and Watkins. Began as a weekly paper, and is now the property of Mr. J. Harrison, and published daily.

"The Victoria Colonist," formerly "The Corio Chronicle," is published for Dr. Thomson, at Geelong, bi-weekly; and "The Omnibus," by Mr. Combe, is also issued at Geelong, making three Newspapers issued in that town.

The District of Portland Bay boasts its two Papers bi-weekly, viz., "The Portland Guardian," and "The Portland Herald."

Belfast also has its "Gazette," published by Mr Osborne.

Melbourne also produces sundry other publications—

"The Church of England Messenger," originated by Dr. Perry, Bishop of Melbourne, January, 1850.

Ham's "Illustrated Australian Magazine," commenced August, 1850. Monthly.

"The Australasian," Published by Mr Pullar, a quarterly reprint. October, 1850.

"The Presbyterian Magazine," issued by Mr Ramsay, monthly.

"The Temperance Advocate," issued weekly by Mr. Finlayson.

"The Melbourne Family Journal," commenced by Mr. Hayden, and carried on by Mr Craig.

"The Christian Citizen," published by Mr Goode, monthly.

"Victoria Weekly Price Current and Circular," published by Mr W. L. Lees.

Thus Victoria can boast of the Press, and the people can exult in the noble patronage they afford to

THE PRESS.

Which has rendered Britain the Arbitress of the World, and has also wrought wonders in Victoria. This Press and the People have achieved that consummation so devoutly to be wished, viz., SEPARATION:—Total Separation from New South Wales. 'Tis to the Press that this city is indebted for the information diffused by Three Daily, One Tri-weekly, Three Weekly, Four Monthly, and One Quarterly Journal; and the City of Geelong circulates the pabulum of knowledge by means of One Daily and Two Weekly Newspapers. Portland Bay and Belfast have also the benefit of the information circulated by means of Three Journals. The PRESS is Omnipotent! Its diffusion is not only wide, but universal; its voice penetrates the deepest recesses of the forest; crosses the widest plains, the highest mountains, and the most rapid streams. Not a hut in the wilderness but feels the powerful influence of that Lever of Freedom—THE PRESS.

The first Meeting to demand Separation was held in Melbourne, June, 1840. The feat was forwarded by Non-Election, July, 1848, and finally accomplished August 1, 1850.

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!

VICTORIA SEPARATION ODE.

All hail! thou Glorious Press! When first thy mighty frame was rear'd, Truth rose, in radiant light enshair'd, The Nations to address. Then Tyrants trembled in dismay, And Reason held her sovereign sway, Supported by the PRESS!	And fair Religion's healing hand Shed peace and love o'er every land, Our grateful hearts confess Whilst science all her varied stores From clime to clime benignly pours, Assisted by the PRESS!	Time-honored now, O PRESS! Thy power to quell the oppressor's pride, And draw corruption's veil aside, Our grateful hearts confess! This day shall joy each voice attune To greet dear Freedom's welcome boon, Enforced by the PRESS!
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(*) This paper was, we believe, written by Mr. Fawcner, the only contribution to it from the *Herald* Office being the types in which it was printed, and the verses at the foot. We do not agree with Mr. Fawcner in thinking that Separation has been "forwarded by Non-Election!" the very reverse we believe to be the fact.—Ed.M.M.H.

“Men of Yesterday” and “Strangers in a Foreign Land”

Margaret Kiddle’s *‘Men of Yesterday’* (1961) and the recent publication by Maggie MacKellar, *‘Strangers in a Foreign Land’* (2008) cover in considerable detail the life in the District of Port Phillip from 1835 to 1851. The District’s economy was mainly agricultural with ‘squattings’ farmers claiming leasehold properties controlled under ‘Government’ by a small military force instructed from Sydney.

District of Port Phillip ‘squatters’ were often dissatisfied with the cumbersome ‘Sydney’ decision making processing and held strong local feelings that the District was hindered by oppressive rules and delays.

Both books (which I hadn’t seen before presenting my paper on July 5) contribute to the understanding of the pastoral District of Port Phillip before the ‘gold rush’, and also give some insights into the circumstances in Europe up to and during this period.

According to Maggie MacKellar by 1840 the Western District population consisted of three groups of settlers. (In 1840 the Western District supported 242 sheep runs compared to the next ‘richest’ district with 44 sheep runs!):

“The Vandiemonians pushed out from around Geelong, Melbourne and Portland to occupy the country further inland. Second were the overlanders, who drove their cattle and sheep from Sydney following Mitchell’s path to meet with the first illegal ‘squatters’. As they travelled they established stations on the way. Third came the men with money and the assisted immigrants from England, Scotland and Ireland, who either landed in Port Phillip or tried their luck driving stock overland from Sydney.”

Black’s Journal sets out his early impression of the Colony of New South Wales with the reader left with little doubt that Black settled on Port Phillip as the site of his pastoral empire in part because he thought it a "Scotch settlement", not yet riddled with the ‘vice and greed’ that he saw in Sydney.

The early ‘squatters’, about half Scottish, had a culture very different than elsewhere in the District of Port Phillip and the rest of NSW - and soon became extremely wealthy!

(My La Trobe Lecture did not cover in detail the Aboriginal peoples’ problems in the District of Port Phillip. On Page 60 I refer to Daniel Bunce’s *‘Language of the Aborigines’* published by Slater, Williams, & Hodgson. I suggest the Aboriginal problems in the District of Port Phillip are covered in a future La Trobe Lecture, 1856.)

At the same time Melbourne was led by a small core of educated leaders such as John Pascoe Fawcner (journalist), Redmond Barry (lawyer and barrister), Bishop Charles Perry, Rev James Forbes, Ebenezer Syme (printer and publisher) and others who were responsible for establishing a culture in Victoria involving open debate and a desire for better education which in most instances persists today and is still the envy of the other Australian States.

Much more needs to be presented on why such significant differences existed from the time of the early District of Port Phillip settlement through to the 'land boom' and subsequent 'bust' in the 1890s.

In my paper, with examples, I pointed from the 1850s, Melbourne in particular, became the home of the "serious, radical and provocative" media. (*The Bulletin*, published in Sydney, did not begin until January 31, 1880.)

From 1852 the newly-established Victorian Government and Governor La Trobe (then Governor Charles Hotham) received plenty of criticism from Melbourne's "serious, radical and provocative" media.

While there were many early Melbourne printers and publishers the 'gold diggers' cause began in earnest on October 28, 1853 when *Heath & Co.* (Hough and Williams) began [*The Diggers Advocate*](#), Then on February 24, 1854 George Black with support from John Pascoe Fawkner and H R Nicholls an Editor began [*The Gold Digger's Advocate and Commercial Advertiser*](#).

There were other publishers such as *Slater, Williams, & Hodgson* (1854) who strongly criticised 'Bounty Immigration' and Aboriginal rights; *Ebenezer Syme and The Age* (1854) who campaigned strongly for 'gold miners' rights before and during the Eureka trial; *W. H. Williams* (1856) who published *John Bateman's Journals* and the first works of Marcus Clarke; *A. H. Massina & Co.* (1859) who published most of *Adam Lindsay Gordon's* many works and commissioned and published "*His Natural Life*" by Marcus Clarke; and finally *Marcus Clarke* (1868) himself.



No. 2.—Vol. I.]

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1853.

[Price 6d.]

THE DIGGERS AND THE LEASE.

We have expressed our opinion before to the diggers that the license question was not the only grievance they would be required to fight against, and every day proves more and more the truth of that opinion. No sooner is the license question settled than a greater evil arises—namely, the leasing out of the gold fields to private companies. This is a question of great moment to the mining community, and determined steps should at once be taken, or the digger will find himself at the mercy of a few wealthy companies, who will be not only ready but willing to buy the very earth from under his feet; and, for aught the Government and the squatters will care, the digger may go and do the best he can for himself in bushing it.

We have kept our eyes and ears open since we have been in town, and we know that the diggers, in the eyes of the "fat and greasy citizens of Melbourne," are but "a class of men up the country who get their living by digging for gold and opposing the Government"—and that is all. And they talk of the gold fields as they would talk of a fat calf, a thing only to buy and sell to the highest bidder, and straightway they sit down and map it out. But they must be made to understand that the prosperity and safety of this colony depends upon the social and political condition of the mining community.

We extract the following letter from our friend and best supporter, the "Herald." In speaking of the "mineral leases at the gold fields," the writer says:—

"From the letters of our own correspondents, and those of private diggers, we gather that some degree of excitement prevails at the gold fields on account of a supposition that certain blocks of land, now in the occupation of digger parties, are to be leased to one or more gold-mining companies. We are extremely anxious to receive further information upon this subject. It is at Fryer's Creek that the chief encroachment upon the diggers' rights is said to be contemplated. We are told that there a square mile of country has been, or is about to be, leased to a company, whose operations will necessitate the expulsion of a large number of diggers now actively engaged in their ordinary occupations.

"Such a proceeding as the one here described would be so flagrant a breach of law, to say nothing of justice, that we feel in considerable doubt as to how the truth lies. One day we receive a communication, informing us that the company to whom land is to be leased, so far from interfering with existing interests, will, by draining their own land, drain divers adjacent gulches, too, and enable hundreds of diggers to operate where they cannot get now, and will not turn off a single party, for the simple reason that the land proposed to be occupied contains no parties to turn off. The next day letters reach us, purporting to be written by people who, having experimented last season upon the Fryer's Creek flats, and having been driven off by the rain, have now returned, and been waiting for weeks until the weather should permit them to go to work upon their old holes, and who find their prospects suddenly thwarted by a monopoly granted to a company upon the specious pretence that the lands they seek to occupy have been worked out and abandoned. If we find ourselves so embarrassed between contradictory statements, we can well suppose that the Government—so much less likely to be well and impartially informed—so much more exposed to party influences, and to be misled by biased persons—may be completely at fault, and without the slightest desire to injure the diggers may, from wrong information, be guilty of an irreparable blunder. Wherefore, we are extremely anxious that the parties interested may, in a pacific but unmistakable man-

ner, let the world know how matters stand,—may inform us whether it is proposed to grant a lease of land that has, or of land that has not been abandoned. Upon this the whole affair turns. To grant a lease of land that the diggers have worked and abandoned, would be an act as just and beneficial as it would be unjust and injurious to turn diggers off the ground for the sake of promoting the interests of a company.

"We do not doubt that, in many respects, it would be an important economy of labour if our gold-fields were to be worked in an organized and methodical manner, rather than as the fancies, ignorance, or caprice of a thousand different persons may dictate. But in practically regulating the affairs of the world, the laws of distribution are even more important than the laws of production. It is better that a thousand men should make in a week a thousand ounces of gold, and should so divide the treasure that the wants of each person should be supplied, than that a few should have the opportunity of squandering a larger amount. For these reasons, and because we would rather that our Colony should reap the benefits of the gold-fields than that these should go to swell the profits of absentee capitalists, we do not care to enquire too closely whether the present system of working the gold-fields is or is not the most remunerative of all possible modes. We would rather that the diggers should scramble on as they now do, wasting their labour often, indulging in false hopes perpetually, but always working with zeal and hearty good-will that would shame our hired road makers and other public wielders of the pick and shovel,—we would rather that the digger should work harder and make less, but have the privilege of doing as he thinks fit with the produce of his own labour, than that this last should be exacted to raise a much larger portion for a set of unknown shareholders in some public company.

The laws regulating the production of the wealth of nations are doubtless of the highest importance; but those that regulate the distribution, we repeat, are yet more important; and for this reason we feel that it is unnecessary to show at length why, so long as individual diggers are prepared to work a tract of land, it would be in the highest degree dangerous and impolitic to grant a lease of that land to a company.

"The law has recognized this; and it is, therefore, all the less necessary to dwell upon it; but for reasons we have already stated—because the Government is doubtless likely to be perplexed by contradictory statements, that leave less interested people in doubt—we would earnestly recommend the diggers to take all opportunities of asserting the truth, and letting it be known whether the proposed leases of mineral lands at Fryer's Creek will, or will not, interfere with the digging interest,—will, or will not, be in contradiction to the spirit of the present law."

NEWS OF THE DIGGINGS.

Bendigo.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Bendigo, November 7th, 1853.

Your paper arrived here in good time on Saturday. The smallness of the number, however, prevented a great many from obtaining copies that were eager to have done so. The heading has been universally admired, and not so much disappointment expressed as regards the size as I anticipated. The public intelligence, manifestly, is not so much as your excess about square inches won't do long, for we have not all of us forgotten the three yards of song that was to be laid for a penny at home.

I do not mean anything invidious, but you must give it to us in length and breadth, and we must judge of the quality ourselves. Of course I write now as one of the public, your Special Reporter rendering it unnecessary for me to trouble the public any longer with my discursive remarks upon men and manners and things in general.

The news of this week seemed very strong of nothing but murder. There has been the body of a man found in the Elk Creek, his skull showing decided symptoms of foul play. There was a report circulated that a trooper had been shot dead by a bushranger, the object of the second being to obtain the poor fellow's horse, but it turns out not to be quite so bad as reported. The man was shot, but is likely to recover, although in a very precarious state. I have not heard whether the ruffian has been taken yet, but I fear not, a thing but his coat being identified.

The body of a still-born child was found behind Captain Martin's store, and some other was found about it until the medical man gave in his report.

There is to be another paper on the Bendigo by-sheriff, the precise time is not yet known; but the prospect is held to hold a good morrow's consolation upon you very soon after—but that is your business not mine.

I shall be glad when you have got your devil in the court taking notes, for it will not be before it is wanted, some of the proceedings being characterized by anything but dignity or even decency.

The yield of gold up here presents no fresh feature. All I think, are doing something, and Commissioners' Plat is rising in favour, while other places have still their admirers.

Mount Malaga has fallen into disrepute the last few days, and a good many are returning here to their old grounds, mentally resolving not to be again tempted, which, of course, they'll keep till the next opportunity offers an inducement for them to break it.

EAGLE HAWK GULLY, 29th Oct.—Little is doing in this quarter, and as the water gets scarce many are on the move. The new diggings at Mount Malaga are occupying some attention, although very unbusinesslike accounts have been received from thence to-day and yesterday. Some are doing well at the Sydney flat, and the population there is slightly on the increase. A few "rabbits" in other parts, such as the Devonshire and New Zealand gullies, have taken place, but with little more than individual success.—Mr. Wilson's store and large stock of goods, sold on Wednesday and Thursday by Messrs. Macfarlane and Co., realized fair prices.—The Wesleyan community, with the section which always characterizes less than today, have built a very neat and capacious Chapel, of canvas, on a substantial frame, at the head of Eagle hawk; when Divine Service is performed, morning and afternoon, every Sunday I believe it is intended to open a school in connexion with the chapel.

Several robberies have taken place about here lately, and amongst others a butcher in New Zealand gully was robbed of some money and a gun. Suspicions fell upon a man named Lancaster, who was apprehended and discharged. On obtaining his release he returned to his work; but the butcher not being satisfied, as it would appear, yesterday went to his (Lancaster's) tent, looked at him, and finding him out, went to where he was working and seeing him there, walked home, loaded a double-barrelled gun, returned to the gully, and deliberately fired on Lancaster, lodging the shot in the bone of his leg; he was then aiming the second shot at the unfortunate man's breast, but was happily prevented by the bystanders, who at the moment of the offence his escape before the police arrived on the ground, and I have not yet heard of his apprehension.

The Police have not been round this district yet for some time; when they come, however, I believe they will find few, if any, unprovided with the requisite document. The first number of your paper is impatiently awaited about here.

Forest Creek.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Forest Creek, November 7th, 1853.

I have but little to communicate of great interest this week. Alas! for the good old times of Alexandrian celebrity, when gold was measured by the pannikin, and poundweight filled the mouths of men, in place of the ounce and pennyweight of those degenerate times. There was something intriguing even in the scratch of a pen that disclosed the names of some lucky dog who had groped his way into the realms of Plutus, and turned out the long-hidden treasure. Yes; now the romance of the thing has in a great measure departed, leaving behind it only the success that waits upon untiring energy and unflagging labour. You will think from my strain that I am in the doldrums, but so much thing, although I admit that my first last "shicers" have not at all improved my temper. Well, but I'm not all the world, you'll say, and what are others doing? Well, I'll tell you. They are working up the old ground, right manfully, where the water will admit of it; and occasionally some adventures might grow on some new spot, and a rush of course in the consequence. But when a dividend is declared on the estate, the assets are generally nil, or next to it. But mind, I don't say the place is bankrupt, for I believe that the miner will turn up something yet. Barter's Creek looks promising, and there are a good many out prospecting towards the Loddon, where there is every prospect, as far as outward appearances go. The Loddon reminds me of Fryer's Creek. Could you put a fellow up to the way of doing this square mile business? I got into a row the other day about a square foot; but then I have no friends at court, so it is no use telling me that.

There is to be a cattle pound here, and who do you think is to be the keeper? Why, a lawyer. So now, you see, the parliament will be holder of the stocks (not), as well as Master of the Halls.

We had a meeting at the Chapel on Tuesday last, upon the baneful effects of liquor. The speakers appeared fully at home on the subject; old acquaintances, I don't say the place is bankrupt, for I believe that the miner will turn up something yet. Barter's Creek looks promising, and there are a good many out prospecting towards the Loddon, where there is every prospect, as far as outward appearances go. The Loddon reminds me of Fryer's Creek. Could you put a fellow up to the way of doing this square mile business? I got into a row the other day about a square foot; but then I have no friends at court, so it is no use telling me that.

Don't be long before you send me some copies of your paper for circulation. Mine gets worn out before it's half done with count about my text.

Ballarat.

(From our own Correspondent.)

We are joggling along pretty quietly here at present. There seems to be a good feeling existing between the authorities and the diggers. An occasional skirmish takes place about a claim but after each party has "said his say," and the commissioner decides, they generally retire, the winner pleased—the loser grumbling until he commences another hoped-for-price, which is not long in being put into operation.—The price of fresh meat here is astonishingly high: mutton, hindquarters 6s. 6d., and 9s., forequarters 6s. 6d. to 7s.; least 2d. per pound, and expected to rise. The butchers not unfrequently have to give 3d. per lb. for beef, and as high as 5s. and 5s. for sheep; which, when you consider their size and quality, is not a profitable speculation.

Some few days since a report was prevalent that a woman had been murdered at Evelyn, by her husband, that he had cut her head off, and thrown it into a "shicer." People went so far as to search the debris of old fires in hopes of ascertaining some clue to the murder, but when a great commotion had taken place and they had actually succeeded in finding some old and charred bones, and were about dispatching a courier for Dr. Carr, the last sheep returned, and a hearty laugh concluded the race of the diggers in search of a wife.

To the astonishment of every one the men who fell down the hundred feet hole has recovered, and is now as sound as ever, with the exception of being a little lame. A ramour has run like wild-fire this evening that a 300lb. nugget has been taken out of a claim near Sinclair's store. I will not vouch for the accuracy of it, not having had time as yet to enquire into the particulars.—New lines are opening up here every day. The diggers are doing well in New Chums Gully, in sixty feet sinking; and the sailors' Gully, still giving handsome yields to the fortunate digger.

Great dissatisfaction has been expressed in all quarters here at the Squatters resolution not to vote for Mr. Fawcett's motion for assessment on stock. The diggers are perfectly willing to pay a fair share of the taxes, but such conduct as I have mentioned, coupled with the fact of several men having taken spirit out of land, that they intended to place a high duty upon, has elicited nothing but a feeling of universal contempt and disgust. When men in their position descend to such backdoor ways of making money, which almost amounts to swindling, how can a high moral tone be expected to pervade the general mass of the community.

Mr. Jones' Circus, in Prince Regent's Gully, continues to amuse the diggers, and is patronized liberally, and not undeserving, for a kinder or more obliging little fellow never broke the world's bread.

The Melbourne Nugget is veritably a "black diamond," of the very first water, on horseback; he is "a gem," leaving no competitor.—The weather still continues fine, but as yet we have nothing that you may call summer weather.

During the week accounts have reached Melbourne from the Colon of the discovery of a workable gold-field in that locality, but as yet this depends on the assertion of a single individual, and who refuses to divulge the precise place, although in doing so he would be entitled to a reward of £300, subscribed for that purpose by the inhabitants of the Colon. Therefore, where there has been in this matter so many groundless reports, the affair at best must be considered very doubtful. It is said to be on the coast side of the Colon, and in a quarter which has often been reckoned as a likely gold region.

ANOTHER BUSHRANGING MURDER.—Two mounted troopers arrived express from Bendigo at a late hour on Friday night (Nov. 4), to give information to the police in Melbourne of a most cold-blooded murder. At an early hour on Friday morning a trooper was riding near Bendigo, when some bushranger, who wanted his horse, deliberately shot the trooper as he was riding along. The shot took effect, and the trooper is dead. Of course the murderer took the horse, and immediately rode off. Unfortunately there is no other description of the ruffian, except that he was a light drab coat. He is said to have been followed and traced along the road to very near the Lady of the Lake, and appeared to be the making towards Melbourne.

AMERICA IN LESS THAN FOUR DAYS.—We are enabled to announce that by a safe and much improved construction of vessels, it will be perfectly practicable to accomplish the voyage between the United States and the United Kingdom in considerably less than four days; in fact, in about three and a half, the ports connecting the old and the new worlds being Halifax and Quebec. This is no speculative statement. It is grounded on experiments which have already been made to test the sailing capabilities of vessels constructed on the new principle. With the aid of a marine telegraph, which is about to be laid down between Halifax and Guelph, and the passage of vessels in three days and half across the Atlantic, America and Great Britain will virtually become one colonial country; inhabitant and governed by the same race.—Morning Advertiser.

In October 28, 1853 the first miner's 'voice' was [The Digger's Advocate](#), above is the November 10, 1853 issue, (National Library of Australia) and below letters to the Editor after the first issue.

<http://www.roymorgan.com/resources/pdf/papers/20080712.pdf> (printed and

published by former Melbourne Morning Herald people - Hough, Heath and Williams) In addition to campaigning for 'miner's rights' they campaigned on "denouncing the racist sentiments of the Bendigo diggers" calling on diggers to welcome the Chinese.

THE DIGGERS' ADVOCATE, THURSDAY, NOV. 10, 1853.

Open Council.

(To the Editors of the *Diggers' Advocate*.)

Sirs,—Being a new comer into this colony, you will, perhaps, allow me to make a few suggestions to you. You, who have been here some time, are hardly in a position to understand the requirements of a "new chum." Nothing surprised me so much, upon my first arrival in Melbourne, as the orderly appearance of the streets. The idea prevalent in England when I left was, that it was necessary, before entering Melbourne, to charge several pistols to the muzzle, and to carry a bowie-knife ground up to a very fine edge. I am happy to say that I find quite a different state of affairs. The climate does not appear to induce a love for man-shooting; nor, as far as I have yet experienced, is there anything in the water consumed by the inhabitants of Melbourne which is likely to produce a desire to cut my neighbour's throat.

Having landed with the intention of proceeding to "the diggings," my first step was to inquire for some *reliable* source of information. By accident I heard of the "*Diggers' Advocate*;" but I am sorry to say, that what appears to me ought to have been a principal feature in your paper was entirely neglected—I mean information to new comers. I saw a great deal about Bendigo and Forest Creek, and some mysterious allusions to "second bottoms." The paper was evidently written for "old hands." I sought in vain for some indication of the route to the diggings, and for some notion of the expense of the journey. Do you not think, sir, that you would be conferring a great benefit upon those unfortunates who are landed on the wharf amidst bales of luggage, if you were to give a few plain straight-forward directions as to the manner of proceeding to the diggings, and the necessities for the journey? Trusting you will take this suggestion into consideration, I remain yours truly,

H. R. NICHOLLS.

[The suggestions made by our new friend shall receive our attention; and next week we hope to be in a position to furnish every necessary information to new comers respecting the gold-fields, the best mode of getting there, and what to do when they have reached the "land of tents." We thank our correspondent for the suggestion, and shall feel obliged by any one pointing out what they may think we have forgotten.—EDS. D. A.]

(To the Editors of the *Diggers' Advocate*.)

7th White Hill, Bendigo,
Sunday, 7th November.

Gentlemen,—I have just got hold of the first number of the "*Diggers' Advocate*," and though it is but "small, it is great." It is great, because it is the advocate of a community, who up to this moment was without a voice in this Colony, and a political existence. Your paper gives us both, and we already feel ourselves freer and more independent. Only a few days ago we had no means of bringing our grievances before the authorities, or advocating our rights before the Government. Now, we have all these advantages, and that too by the exertions of yourselves; as a digger I feel grateful, and trust that all my fellow workers will do their best for the paper, and think the best work they can do, will be the supporting of the "*Diggers' Advocate*." Some are sorry it is not larger, but they seem to forget the only way to make it what they would wish it to be, is to put their shoulder to the wheel, for the greatest city in the world was once a village. In conclusion, I, with many of my mates, wish you every success, and what we can do to push your paper we will.

AN OLD FRIEND AND DIGGER.

(To the Editors of the *Diggers' Advocate*.)

Sir,—And so you have appeared at last, to use the expression of a very eminent man, "in this super-eminent infinite reality of which all phenomena are but the glooms and echoes." And you are actually at the starting post among your brother bloods to run the race of literature on the golden soil of Australia. I fancy you must have a heavy dash of the old Peter Finn blood, to carry you successfully through the dirt and mire of Colonial journalism. Be that as it may, I congratulate you on your pluck; do not start, my gentle editors, at the vulgarity of that term, it is strictly Johnsonian, and I am but a dirty gold-digger, a boweller of the earth, a groper among the dark things of to-day and by-gone ages; think you it is of wisdom, nay, say rather of filthy lucre. Well, I wish you every success, and that I feel you will have at Ballarat.

I am, gentlemen,

ET TU BRUTE,
A Converted Follower.

"DIGGERS' ADVOCATE" Office,
Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

The Editors of the "*DIGGERS' ADVOCATE*" respectfully direct your attention to the following regulations, which they have adopted for the management of their Paper, more especially the Advertising department.

Firstly. All Advertisements will be classified, and printed under separate heads, according to the nature of the business advertised.

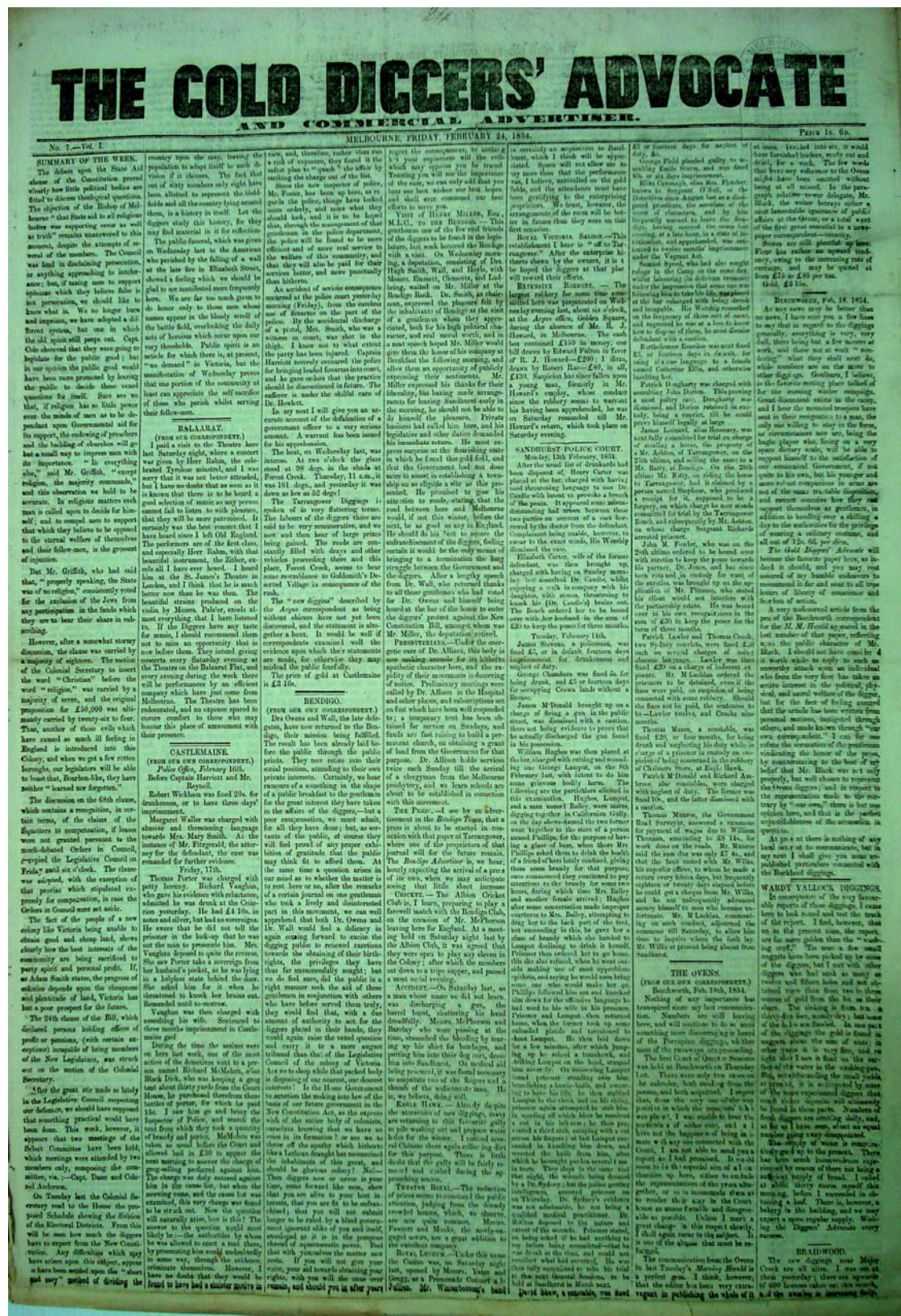
Secondly. The Advertiser can choose his own form of advertisement. Illustrations, and large lined type will be charged for according to the space occupied in the column.

Thirdly. For the first and second lines, sixpence each, and threepence per line afterwards. Payment will not be required before the day of publication.

Fourthly. Advertisements to be at the office not later than 6 p.m. on Tuesday.

Fifthly. A discount of 20 per cent. allowed on advertisements continued for a month, and 30 per cent. on those continued for a quarter.

Gentlemen who have stores in town, and business with the gold mines, will find the "*DIGGERS' ADVOCATE*" a valuable advertising medium, it being the only newspaper devoted entirely to the social and commercial interests of the digging community. Besides which, it possesses advantages which no other paper has at command, namely, a weekly circulation on all the gold mines of Australia. The Proprietors are able to inform their friends, with much satisfaction, that so soon as the necessary arrangements shall have been completed, the "*Diggers' Advocate*" will be second to none as a commercial and political organ.



The Gold Digger's Advocate and Commercial Advertiser.

First published February 24, 1854 by George Black in conjunction with John Pascoe Fawcner and with H R Nicholls an editor and contributor. A remarkable newspaper covering in detail Victoria's problems associated with the Victorian 'gold rush'.

(State Library of Victoria)

<http://www.roymorgan.com/resources/pdf/papers/20080713.pdf>.

publications such as *The Age* and *The Bulletin* supporting their causes. Their political supporters were people such as Alfred Deakin (Federal Member for Ballaarat)!

In a period of approximately 35 years Victoria's capital, Melbourne, was transformed from a rural society (initially with many 'squatters' having a strong desire to return to their homeland) into one of the great industrial cities of the world, with the expansion of the time only equalled by Paris and New York.

Melbourne during this period constructed many spectacular buildings – Government House (over 4 years from 1872), the Exhibition Building, Parliament House, many grand city buildings (Old Treasury Building, The Customs House, ANZ Banking Chamber (corner Queen and Collins), The Block Arcade, The Australian Club, Windsor Hotel, etc plus thousands of grand suburban and country residential homes which were serviced by an extensive railway network both state-wide to rural Victoria and throughout suburban Melbourne. There is little doubt that by the 1880s **Marvellous Melbourne** and its surrounds had become one of the great cities of the world with the world's tallest building on the corner of Elizabeth St and Flinders Lane.

In a short time period I have studied many important books, documents and references. George Dick Meudell's *The Pleasant Career of A Spendthrift* published in 1929 and his subsequent *The Pleasant Career of A Spendthrift and His Later Reflections* (1935) helped me better understand many Victorian 'personalities' covering more than 40 years. (Ian Morrison lent me his copy of *The Pleasant Career of A Spendthrift* - I was lucky he had the book as last year he had offered it to a prominent Melbourne Library who preferred not to have the book on their shelves!). The following Press Reviews give an accurate summary of its contents. George Meudell was one of Australia's most colourful personalities – irrespective of whether readers agree or not with the accuracy of Meudell's writings - when reading the book readers need to be aware that for 40 years Meudell was a regular contributor to *The Bulletin*. (See Appendix Four).

THE PLEASANT CAREER OF A SPENDTHRIFT

BY
GEORGE MEUDELL

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.
BROADWAY HOUSE: 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

*Printed in Great Britain by
The Bowering Press, Plymouth*

For fifteen times during the last forty years, and his peregrinations have brought him into contact with all kinds and conditions of men and women in the higher and middle strata of society. In this book he gives his impressions in a

Press Reviews of *The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift* by George Meudell, 1929. The book covers a lot about the period before and after the 1890s 'land bust'

Gary Morgan, August 19, 2008

Press Reviews of
**"THE PLEASANT CAREER OF
A SPENDTHRIFT"**

By
GEORGE MEUDELL
in 1930

"Financial Times," London.—"Thoroughly entertaining and informative."

Melbourne "Age."—"A racy account of a varied and an active life, historically interesting and entertaining."

"Saturday Review," London.—"Mr. Meudell rambles in his book as widely and as rapidly as he seems to have travelled over land and sea."

"Manchester Daily Dispatch."—"Book full of racy stories about gold, diamond and silver mining."

"Sunday Times," London.—"A rolling stone who has travelled on over 400 steamships and seen 450 cities."

"Manchester Evening Chronicle."—"A whole series of racy reminiscences, told in an original and sparkling style."

"Birmingham Post,"—"A book about that wonderful land, Australia."

"Sydney Sun."—"A book of most unconventional reminiscences, concerning the land boom and bank crisis of 1893."

"Financial World," London.—"The author has been well to the fore in the great Australian mining, banking, and land booms."

"Yorkshire Post."—"Has travelled 400,000 miles in 40 countries, and has been a banker, a stockbroker, and a mining agent."

"Sunday Times," London.—"The author boasts that Australia is the best country, and the Australians the best people in the world, pure bred, and of one race—the British."

"Daily Telegraph," London.—"A collection of dogmatic statements, but their cardinal virtue cannot be denied."

"Daily Truth," Broken Hill.—"Gleaning of 40 years of world travel and an infinite range of mementoes."

"The Harbour," Sydney.—"Travels have been world's.
A capital book for holiday reading."

APPENDIX FOUR: (Prepared by Gary Morgan, August 2008)

The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift (1929)

<http://www.roymorgan.com/resources/pdf/papers/20080805.pdf>

BY

GEORGE MEUDELL

‘My way of joking’, Meudell wrote, ‘is to tell the truth’.

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.

Broadway house: 68-74 Carter Lane, E.C.

*Printed in Great Britain by
The Bowering Press, Plymouth*

MEUDELL, GEORGE DICK (1860-1936), was one of Australia’s most colourful personalities.

Meudell chose to tell the truth (through his ‘eyes’) about the Victorian 1880s ‘land boom’ in his autobiography, *The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift*, its **publication in 1929 caused a sensation**. On the instruction of Robertson & Mullen’s Chairman J. M. Gillespie, a land-boomer, Robertson & Mullen’s withdrew the book, and other booksellers were warned of possible legal consequences of stocking it.

For a time Meudell sold his book privately and in 1935 published an “expurgated version”, *The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift and His Later Reflections*. This later book looks at many people (Theodore Fink, Sidney Myer, Marcus Clarke etc) in a significantly better ‘light’.

In 1935 Meudell covers Theodore Fink’s “remarkable career” (Pages 231 - 240) states he was “a friend” (Page 260). In 1929 Meudell claimed: “(Sidney Myer) has crippled all his big rivals in the city and smothered dozens of small shops in the suburbs.” However, by 1935 Sidney Myer was the “...brightest commercial genius who has ever built a first-class business out of almost nothing.” (Pages 227 – 229)

Meudell was a stockbroker, company promoter and accountant, and for 40 years a regular contributor to *The Bulletin*. “No paper in the Empire has done more to mould the thought and guide the policy and politics of a great continent destined to house a great nation, than the Sydney ‘*Bulletin*’ founded by Jack F. Archibald, an Australian to the backbone and spinal marrow.” (Page 257, *Bulletin*’s Editor, Jules Francois Archibald was known from Meudell’s early Warrnambool days.)

In 1929 Meudell (Page 263 & 264) had little time for “popular Australia fetishe” Marcus Clarke “no literary merits nor any right to live”, Adam Lindsay Gordon “second-rate poetry” and many other successful Victorian people and institutions - the

Eureka Stockade riot “was a comic opera rebellion ...ought to be banned and forgotten”! *The Melbourne Herald* “a shockingly inferior yellow paper” (Pages 272), “wallowing in the mire of mere incompetence” and “was obscure...not an attraction” (Page 218 & 219).



Bank of Victoria, Boardroom Table, Cedar.
Attributed to Thwaites, c.1880
(The Roy Morgan Research Centre Collection)

Many of Meudell’s 1929 thoughts on *The Melbourne Herald* are not surprising as he believed his long time friend John F. Archibald as “...next to David Syme of ‘The Age’ the greatest publicist in Australia” (Page 236).

Others at the time described *The Bulletin* magazine as “viciously racist”, which is understandable when you read Meudell’s comment on Page 237; “At my suggestion Archibald used as the ‘*Bulletin*’ motto, ‘Australia for the Australians,’ and when a ‘White Australia’ became a living question he changed it to the meaningless phrase, ‘Australia for the White Man’. Immigration is a needless curse to Australia and some day we may have to give battle to stop it.”

Nineteenth century ‘truthful’ reporting of the day was too often ‘sledging’ those who were successful – today it is more subtle!

George Meudell was born on January 29, 1860 at Sandhurst (Bendigo), Victoria, son of William Meudell and his wife Elizabeth Strachan, née Taylor. Educated at Warrnambool Grammar School and Sandhurst High School, he matriculated aged 14. A childhood accident which left him blind in one eye frustrated his intention of reading for the Bar so he joined the Sandhurst branch of the Bank of Victoria, where his father, a university-educated Scot, was manager.

George Meudell's father, William Meudell (1831-1911) had migrated to Victoria in 1852 and joined the Bank of Victoria in 1854. In 1881 he was appointed by Henry ('Money') Miller general manager in Melbourne and in 1889-91 was manager in London – prior to the Bank of Victoria being forced to close. It is understandable why Meudell in *The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift*, is 'kind' to Henry Miller while not to others, "The only man with whom I used to discuss seriously the absurd chopping and changing of city and suburban land allotments was my father who protested to his directors of the Bank of Victoria against loans to the champion land boomers like B. J. Fink, G.W. Taylor, Thomas Bent and W.L. Baillieu. Old 'Money' Miller, unfortunately for the Bank of Victoria, was in his dotage and off the Board or it would never have collapsed." (Pages 32 & 33).

Contracting tuberculosis in 1907, Meudell defied doctors' predictions of imminent death to travel the world looking at oilfields and return to an unsuccessful nineteen-year attempt to launch an Australian oil industry. This was one of many abortive schemes: it was preceded by enthusiasm for brown coal and hydro-electricity, and followed by an interest in oil-shale.

Gary Morgan, August 15, 2008

In 1935 George Meudell published his "expurgated version"

**THE PLEASANT CAREER OF A SPENTHRIFT
and His LATER REFLECTIONS (1935)**

on

1. SIDNEY MYER Pages 227 - 229
2. THE LATE L. K. S. MACKINNON Page 229
3. THE HON. THEODORE FINK Pages 231 - 240
4. THE BULLETIN Page 259
5. THE "MELBOURNE REVIEW", NEWSPAPERS,
MELBOURNE NEWSPAPERS Pages 260 - 263
6. MELBOURNE "ARGUS" AND "ORIEL" COLUMN Pages 266 - 267

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