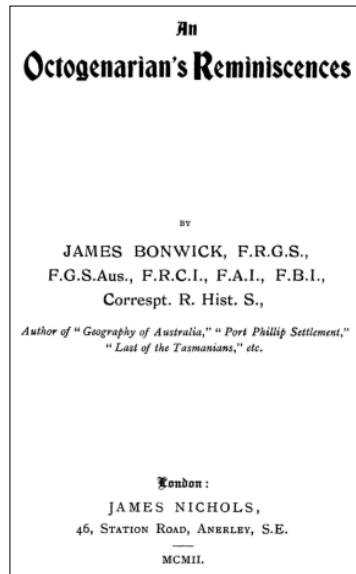


An Octogenarian's Reminiscences

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An
Octogenarian's Reminiscences

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An Octogenarian's Reminiscences.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD BORO' ROAD BOYS' SCHOOL.

ACCORDING to Mr. Crossley's account, while the first School of Joseph Lancaster's was in Kent Street, Borough, Southwark, 1798, at his father's workshop, though removed for a short time to Belvidere Place,—the second one, taken in 1801, upon the sale of the other room, was a sort of shed, erected to hold but 100 lads. This was in Newington Causeway, opposite Brandon Row. The children had to pass over a wide ditch, upon a plank, to reach Lancaster's School.

At the *Royal Free School*, the boys met in something like a barn, or warehouse, in St. James's Street, Southwark, about 1805. Lancaster fenced back the land, in St. George's Fields, to Martin Street and Union Street. The latter, through Dr. Rendle's influence with local authorities, had its name changed some years since to *Lancaster Street*.

The New Building—the one I first knew—was

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CHAPTER VI.

TASMANIA.

FROM ENGLAND TO TASMANIA.

SOON after our marriage, I received a Circular from the Committee of the British and Foreign School Society, asking, with authority from the British Government, for Volunteers among those belonging to the Society, to take charge of Government Schools in Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania.

This unexpected offer excited our enthusiasm and our longing for travel. It was hard to learn about a country so long before a *Guide Book* institution existed. Mr. Dunn, the Secretary, however, assured us the Penal Settlement was beautiful and healthy.

But the fearful distance, the separation from friends, and the instruction of convicts' children were serious *contrast* to fancied charms. Yet the wife and I were young and adventurous, and we made the application. Out of thirty couples, six were accepted. An examination at Downing Street

CHAPTER VII.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1849—1852.

HOW I CAME TO ADELAIDE.

The *Bad Times* that had desolated Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, came at last to Van Diemen's Land. While I was hesitating as to duty, a letter came from a Tasmanian friend, setting forth the change in Adelaide through the copper mining, and urging me to come over.

So thither I went, and commenced a School amidst a lot of old friends in a new place. Success followed energy, and my dear wife and little ones came across, unhappily in the hot season of mosquitoes, so unlike the months of verdure, fruit and health, which came to them later on. Australians have ever been praised for the readiness to help the stricken ones, and raise the fallen into the saddle again.

As misfortune had at one time driven many folks of South Australia into fresh homes at Hobart and Launceston, so, on the returning tide of prosperity, the Adelaide men found new homes for Tasmanians. Thus was it in my younger days, when, with smaller population and more rapid changes, storms came hastily, and sunshine soon followed showers.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE IN VICTORIA.

INTRODUCTION.

When I returned with renewed health from the out-of-door life at the Diggings, I was urged by my good friend, Mr. Connebee, then a Melbourne Bookseller, to write the *Life of a Gold Digger*, and subsequently, under the counsel of Mr. Westgarth and Mr. Wilson, of the "Argus," to start the *Gold Diggers' Magazine*. The latter undertaking was beyond my strength, from the chaotic state of Society, my deficiency of business capacity, and the want of trustworthy agencies.

Friends then suggested *Land Agency* as fitted to my active, energetic habits. A clever but unscrupulous assistant robbed me to a serious extent, and I was led into the folly of land speculation myself. I was ultimately conducted back to School life in Victoria at Boroondara.

Being, from my school books, well acquainted with leading educationalists in Melbourne, I was offered the position first of Sub-Inspector, and then Inspector of Schools, under the Denominational School Board of Victoria.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

SYDNEY HARBOUR.

Every time I have entered it, I have had the usual enthusiasm of visitants. It opens, not like Port Phillip Bay, into the sudden view of a great expanse of water some forty miles across, but, like a lady conscious of her attractive graces, while jealously guarding them from too public a display, Sydney Harbour, with its rocky portal, and multiform leafy coves, gently allures one into sweet recesses of delight, unfolding a succession of fairy-like scenes of native wildness, till you are brought suddenly in view of a handsome city, and a charming bay of business and joy.

I have seen it from the lively wharf, from the wood-crowned heights, from Lady Macquerie's chair in the Public Gardens, from Hyde Park Villas, and across from the dear North Shore, at morning, noon and night, and have been spellbound by it. Most of all, and best of all, when crowded with pleasure boats, bearing cargoes of youth and beauty, whose joyous merriment and echoing strains of song resounded from rocky glens or laughing waters.

Yet there have been times when, looking upon it,

great impression upon spectators. The young Queen, in the beauty and brightness of youth, alone in the State Carriage, on her way to the Abbey, affected me much, as I remember; but her return, with her glowing face of love and triumph, as she looked upon her noble and handsome husband and bowed to the people, excited the Londoners with the wildest and most sympathetic enthusiasm.

Of course we had the Horse Guards in all their attractiveness, but both the occasions seemed to be a genuine manifestation of popular and grateful gladness, and no outburst of Sovereign pride and glory.

After fifty, and even sixty years, when I saw the later processions, I had had more experience of life, as well as adding more years, and found myself regarding other times. True, I saw far greater crowds; but I heard more notes of self-applause than simple loyalty to a venerable lady. Mentally casting a glance at the other two incidents of her career, I regretted the military pomp, rather than exhibits of real progress of civilization in her reign, put forth as chief evidence of national glory and advancement.

WORK AS AN ARCHIVIST.

After my return from the last trip to the Antipodes, about 1884, and when I had finished a short series of lectures upon Queensland, I was much impressed about the necessity of Colonial Governments undertaking the gathering of materials for their own

individual Country's History. Having written so much about Colonial History, from materials rudely gathered in Australia, I saw the opportunity of doing greater things through the more extended means afforded by the state Record Office of London, in Chancery Lane.

In that glorious pile of buildings, the Record Office, I found well cared for and fairly catalogued, a vast amount of correspondence between our own rulers, and with people not only of our own race, but with those of various foreign nations. The Colonial portion was rich, relating to transactions from the earliest emigration, forced or voluntary, to the old British Settlements of America, the West Indies, and, also, West and South Africa.

Australia, however, would more than engage one man's search in that immense repository, covering the earliest periods, and relating to State, domestic, military, civil, mercantile and exploration affairs.

At first, I was engaged upon the records pertaining to the most recent of the Australias,—Queensland, through the good offices of the Agent-General,—a most pleasing story of progression. But by the veto of the Colonial Office, I was limited to 1860, the year only after the Moreton Bay District of New South Wales became the independent Colony of Queensland.

I was disappointed in the hope that Victoria would concern itself in gathering up the precious spoils of the Record Office, but the Librarian of the Melbourne Public Library cared, he said, more for a collection

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- enter the MINIMUM number of characters needed to bring up the search results required
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- use the "Match whole word" option to eliminate unnecessary items in your results list, e.g. to eliminate all the blacksmiths and tinsmiths etc when you only want the name Smith
- use the "Match case" option when you want to eliminate all the occupations "smith" if you only want the name "Smith"
- Don't just search for names. Search the book for other names, places and subjects of interest:
 - look for others of the same name
 - look for others who lived in the same place or street
 - who was the postmaster or police officer in the town?
 - how often and at what time did the coach arrive in town?
 - what churches were there and what time were services held?
 - what other activities were there in the community?
 - look for others who had the same occupation or other interests

All of this and more may be available in a seemingly mundane book such as a directory. Learn much of the background of life at the time, even if your ancestor is not listed there.