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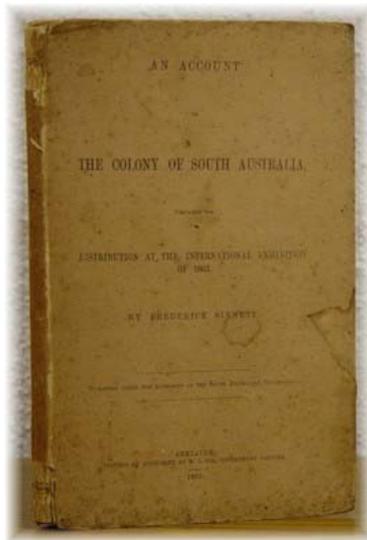
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AN ACCOUNT

OF

THE COLONY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA,

PREPARED FOR

DISTRIBUTION AT THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION
OF 1862.

BY FREDERICK SINNETT.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER I.—HISTORY OF THE COLONY.

EARLY EXPLORATIONS.

ABOUT five and thirty years since, the inhabitants of the only Australian Colony then in existence—New South Wales—began to push out exploring parties with considerable vigour. For a quarter of a century after that penal settlement, better known for many years as Botany Bay, had been established, an event which occurred in 1788, the inhabitants were confined within a very small area bounded by the Blue Mountains—a sharply-ridged chain of hills, running in a northerly and southerly direction, and commencing about fifty miles to the westward of Sydney. But it gradually came to be understood that Australia could be turned to larger uses than to afford, at its south-eastern corner, a little nook on which to establish a great English prison. The great pastoral resources of the country were in course of development, Mr. John McArthur's introduction of the Merino sheep having proved a decided commercial success, and having induced a considerable number of settlers to embark in sheep farming, which has since proved, upon the whole, the most profitable pursuit that has been carried on in Australia. The increase of the flocks rendered an extension of territory occupied for pastoral purposes imperatively necessary. So early as 1813, indeed, Mr. Evans had crossed the Blue Mountains, and in 1816, and 1823, Mr. Oxley, the then Surveyor-General of New South Wales, conducted two expeditions, one in the direction of Bathurst Plains, and the other in the neighborhood of Moreton Bay. Messrs. Hovell and Hume, in 1826, reached the sea-coast of what is now the Colony of Victoria; and the following year, Mr. Allan Cunningham discovered Darling Downs, and subsequently associated his name with fresh discoveries in the direction of Moreton Bay. In 1828-9, Capt. Sturt conducted an expedition along the banks of the Macquarie, and made the important discovery of the River Darling. On his return from this expedition, it was generally believed that the Darling as well as the Lachlan, the Murrumbidgee, and other streams having a westerly course, emptied themselves into an inland sea; and in 1831, Capt. Sturt was again dispatched into the interior, with the view of verifying this hypothesis. He descended the Murrumbidgee to its

if not over, 200 miles; and, instead of 160,000 acres only in cultivation, there cannot be less now than 460,000—a number greater in proportion to the population than obtains in any other portion of Her Majesty's dominions, or indeed, in any other part of the world with which I am acquainted.

It is, moreover, since 1855, that the first telegraph post was erected in this Colony, and yet you already possess 600 miles of telegraphic communication, and nearly 1,000 miles of wire, together with twenty-six stations. It is also since 1855, that the explorations of Mr. Stuart and others have added so much to our geographical knowledge, filling up the large blank spaces which had so long defaced the map of South Australia, and usefully opened up the country to further settlement.

Above all, it is since my arrival here that the great experiment has been tried of entrusting the general mass of the people, through their immediate representatives, with power to control completely the taxation and expenditure of the country, and direct its general legislation. I am bound to say, that although such an experiment must be more or less hazardous anywhere, there is less risk accompanying it in South Australia, owing to the character of the people and the division of property here, than would attend it in almost any other country. I may add, that if I were to select any one reason as the paramount cause of Responsible Government working hitherto with so great a measure of success, I would attribute it to the fair and equitable view which generally prevails as to the mutual and necessary dependence of the various great interests of the Colony one on another. The sentiments avowed on that subject at public meetings and in the debates of Parliament, form not merely a pleasing and healthy contrast with what takes place in other Colonies, but give the best and strongest guarantee that society here will continue united for the advancement of the common weal, and will thereby have the greatest chance of promoting the general prosperity.

CHAPTER II.—CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL CHANGES.

Though it is but a quarter of a century since this Colony was founded, many important changes have occurred in the system of government prevailing here; and I propose, briefly, to give the dates at which, and circumstances under which, these changes were made. Some persons will, perhaps, be inclined to laugh at the notion of politics and ministerial crises and so forth in a little place like this, but it is probable that the disposition to do so will be inversely proportional to the intelligence of the reader. It is easy to talk about “a tempest in a tea-pot,” or to sneer at “parish politics,” but this way of looking at the subject will not bear examination. Petty schemes and petty jealousies it is true are over abundant here, and in so far as they influence our politics, these are, no doubt, contemptible. But that which saves them from being properly classed as “parish politics,” is the kind of

In continuation of the same subject, I will next extract from the *South Australian Register*, the most extensively-circulated newspaper in the Province, the following table, showing the rates of wages obtainable at the present time.

PER ANNUM, WITH BOARD AND LODGING.

Domestic and Dairy Servants—Female.

Barmaids, £26 to £30.	Kitchenmaids, £18 to £21.
Dairy Girls, £23 to £26.	Laundresses, £26 to £30.
General Servants, £22 to £26.	Nurses, £20 to £23.
Good Cooks, £26 to £40.	Nurse-girls, £8 to £16.
Housekeepers, £24 to £31.	Upper Nurses, £23 to £30.
Housemaids, £20 to £26.	Waitresses, £23 to £30.

Domestic and Farm Servants—Male.

Boys about 13 or 14 to tail cattle, £12 to £15.	Hutkeepers (according to distance), £26 to £50.
Bullockdrivers (Men) for stations, £45 to £50.	Married couples, £55 to £70.
Ditto, for the roads, £45 to £60.	Milkmen, £45 to £52.
Ditto, for farms, £45 to £50.	Ploughmen (single), £40 to £52.
Gardeners, £40 to £60.	Shepherds, single (according to distance), £39 to £52.
General Farm Servants, £40 to £52.	

PER WEEK, WITH THE USUAL RATIONS.

Bakers, £1 to £1 18s.	Grooms, 15s. to 25s., and occasional perquisites.
Barmen, 15s. to 20s.	Slaughtermen, £1 5s. to £2.
Bush Carpenters, £1 to £1 5s.	Farm servants, 20s. to 25s.
Butchers, £1 10s. to £2.	Ostlers (with perquisites), 12s. to £1.
Confectioners, £2.	
Cooks (male), 15s to 25s.	

PER SCALE BELOW, WITHOUT RATIONS.

Brickmakers, per 1,000, without burning, 14s.	Stonebreakers, per cubic yard, 2s. 6d. to 5s. 9d.
Fencers, per rod, 3 rails, 2s. 6d. to 3s.	Wire fencing, per rod, 3 to 5 wires, and cross-rail, 1s. 6d. to 2s.
Sawyers, per 100ft., cedar, 11s.	
Ditto, per 100ft., deal, 8s.	

PER DAY, WITHOUT BOARD AND LODGING.

Blacksmiths, 8s. to 10s.	Painters, &c., 8s. to 9s.
Bricklayers, 8s. to 10s.	Plasterers, 8s. to 10s.
Cabinetmakers, 8s. to 10s.	Plumbers, 10s.
Carpenters, 8s. to 10s.	Quarrymen, 7s. to 9s., and piecework.
Carriagemakers, 8s. to 10s.	Saddlers, 7s. to 9s.
Coopers, 7s.	Shoemakers, 7s. to 8s.
Engineers, 9s. to 12s. 6d.	Shoemakers, 7s. to 9s.
Galvanized Ironworkers, 9s. to 10s.	Storemen, 7s. to 8s.
Ironfounders, 13s. to 15s.	Tailors, 8s. to 9s., or 9d. per hour.
Laborers, 6s. to 7s.	Tanners, &c., 8s. to 10s.
Masons, 8s. to 10s.	Watch and Clockmakers, 12s. to 14s.
Millers, 8s. to 12s.	Wheelwrights, 9s. to 10s.
Miners, 5s. to 7s.	

PER WEEK, WITHOUT RATIONS.

Carters, £2 2s.

Farm and Female Servants in great demand.

Having given, in the above tables, a statement of the amount of money earned at various callings during each of the past ten years, as well as the wages now current, it becomes necessary, to enable the reader rightly to estimate the real purchasing power of these sums, that corresponding information should be given as to the prices of provisions now, and during the past.

The Statistics, which have been prepared in the Chief Secretary's office, relative to the prices of food, do not go back so far as do those

well-to-do landowner, and met him running a winning horse at one of our metropolitan race meetings. Out of the same ship load I could mention several others, who would, perhaps, not be obliged to me for a more pointed reference to their "day of small beginnings." The position of the laborer, who remains a laborer, is certainly far better here than in England; but it is on the facilities for social advancement that I should be more inclined to rely, if I wanted to paint the prospects of laboring emigrants in glowing colors.

CHAPTER VI.—THE CITY OF ADELAIDE.

Adelaide stands on an extensive plain, about six miles from the nearest point of the sea-shore, and about five from the hills. The rise from the sea to the hills is so gradual, that King William-street—the central street of South Adelaide—is not more than about seventy feet above high-water mark. A short distance to the eastward of the city, the slope becomes somewhat sharper; and in travelling in that direction for three or four miles, we find that we have risen three or four hundred feet. Soon afterwards the positive slopes of the hills begin, and in many places these are abrupt and even precipitous—but of these hills I speak elsewhere.

The city is divided into North and South Adelaide by the River Torrens—a stream which rises in the Mount Lofty Range, flows across the plains in a westerly direction for fifteen or sixteen miles, and then either loses itself among the "Reedbeds," or forces its way into the Port river, according to the season and the volume of water coming down from the hills. I see by some old Parliamentary Papers, that Mr. John Morphett, writing home to England immediately after the foundation of the Colony, speaks of the site of the capital as having been fixed on either bank of "a pretty stream." Some old colonists even now confirm this view, and say that its appearance has much altered for the worse since those days—that it has worn a deeper channel in the soft soil of the plains—that its yielding earthy banks are more precipitous than they were—that in summer the wide chasm of river bed is more out of proportion, than it used to be, with the slender rivulet that trickles along its centre.

A lively writer from a neighboring Colony said, that in summer time you might dam back the Torrens with an Irishman's hat. But though the insignificant appearance of the stream almost seems to justify the calumny, the actual body of water contained in the Torrens is considerable, though flowing concealed beneath its shingly bed. Until 1860, the City of Adelaide was supplied with water by carts from the Torrens, just below the City Bridge; nor

There are thirty-three miles of made streets in Adelaide, with macadamised roadways, curbed footpaths, water-tables, &c. Water is carried in pipes down all streets, and is now introduced into most houses—an incalculable blessing to the inhabitants, though it has probably been obtained at an unnecessary expenditure of public money. In the matter of gas lights, we are rather behind the age—oil for the street lamps, and camphine and kerosene for the shop windows, being all we have yet attained to. Within a year, however, we may expect the city to be efficiently lighted with gas—the necessary pipes and apparatus having already been ordered from England.

The City Council numbers nine individuals—a Mayor, and two Councillors for each of the four wards; and under the operation of a recent Act, amending the Constitution of the Corporation, it has improved in character. All the members of the Corporation are elected by the ratepayers; and there are two auditors elected in the same manner. The officers are Town Clerk and Assistant, City Surveyor and Overseer of Works, Inspectors of weights and measures, vehicles, slaughterhouses, and markets, and nuisances. There are also a Park Lands Ranger and Conservator of the River, three Rate Collectors, a Gardener, and a Messenger.

CHAPTER VII.—MINES.

Even in the richest mineral countries in all parts of the world mining adventures are to some extent precarious. Practical and scientific knowledge may diminish the risk, but cannot obliterate it; and the occasional prizes drawn in Mother Earth's great lottery are so large, that they lead, as a matter of course, to the investment in many tickets that prove to be blanks. We have not escaped such mistakes. The enormous success of the Burra mines, led to the formation of numerous companies, the very names of which have for the most part been now forgotten, except by those who had the misfortune to be shareholders. Occasionally the ill-luck has been adroitly shifted upon English shareholders; in some instances the mines have been abandoned, never to be worked again; in others, the works are merely in abeyance, and will some day be resumed with great advantage. The departure of our adult male population, which occurred on the discovery of gold in the neighboring colonies, led to the indiscriminate abandonment of all mining operations here, with the exception of those at the Burra and Kapunda, and those connected with the search for precious metals.

Silver and lead mines were among the first to be opened in South Australia; and the working of one or two of these has been resumed with, I understand, satisfactory results.

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