

ing. They are excellent swimmers, and have no hesitation in entering water; nevertheless, annually, great numbers are drowned, but this generally occurs in spring, when the broken ice is clearing out of the streams. Throughout the western country there are numerous quagmires, and frequently unfortunates get imbedded; it appears, in such cases, that without exerting themselves they submit to their fate. I have formed this conclusion from having, unseen, perceived a bull get into such a scrape. I watched him; inch by inch he kept sinking; still I felt convinced that a protracted, energetic struggle would take him across to *terra firma*, yet no such

effort did he make. Thoroughly believing that he was prepared to resign his earthly career, I advanced to have a closer survey of the finale. The unfortunate did not see me till within a few yards; but when he did, his habitual fear of man predominated over all other feelings.

Again and again he plunged heavily forward; dread of my proximity had given him strength and resolution, for, after a few minutes, his feet got on soundings, from which the margin was gained, and the brute was once more free. I think this apathy to death, in certain forms, is common to the majority of the inferior animals."



LUCKY AUSTRALIANS.

ONE of two brothers, owning 80,000 acres of land in Victoria, at a dinner and ball given to 800 of his friends and neighbours, thus referred to his own career in returning thanks for his health having been

drunk by those assembled:—

"He could assure his guests that he had been no loafer, but a hard-working man, in his early career in the colony. When he first came to Victoria he had endured many hardships, and, in travelling with his sheep in search of a run, he slept out many a night with his saddle for a pillow, the wide-spreading branches of a gum-tree for his covering, and the canopy of heaven for his roof. When he left home to go to Australia, he promised his father and mother that he would be back to them again in five years, and he redeemed his promise so far, that he was back to them in the sixth year. He only stayed at home a short time, when he returned to Australia again, and coming to Victoria, which was then only a province of New South

Wales, he took up a run at a place then known as the Deep Creek, but now called Clunes. He afterwards took up some country at Mount William, the farthest limit settlement had then reached, and he was happy to inform them that the gentleman who was his overseer then was one of the guests that night, and was also his equal in social station. To be a pioneer in those times, was, he could assure them, no child's play; and now that fortune had smiled upon him, and that his economy and determination to succeed in life had been crowned with success far beyond his expectations then, he was thankful for his success, inasmuch as it gave him the means of assisting to promote the interests of the country that had done so much for him, and which he loved so dearly."

Successful men of this stamp are to be met with in the whole of the Australian colonies; and many of their biographies, if written, would exemplify the romance of real life in a very striking manner, and would be found to be full of dramatic incident. This has been more

particularly the case with respect to gold-mining, of which a couple of instances may suffice. In the early days of the Dunolly goldfields, two working miners, named Oates and Deeson, after experiencing many vicissitudes of fortune, found themselves, in the vernacular of their class, "dead-broke." Their credit was exhausted at the neighbouring store, and one of them was actually in want of bread.

In sheer desperation they began digging for gold in a very unpromising locality. It seemed a very hopeless task, but the two men worked on steadily, standing close to one another. Deeson plied his pick in some hard bricklike clay, around the roots of an old tree, breaking up fresh earth and tearing away the grass from the surface of the ground. He aimed a blow at the clear space between two branches of the root; and the pick, instead of sinking into the ground, rebounded, as if it had struck upon quartz or granite. "Confound it!" he exclaimed, "I've broken my pick. I wish I had broken it over some nugget."

A minute afterwards he called out to Oates, and told him to "come and see what this was." It was a mass of gold cropping several inches out of the ground, like a boulder on a hill! As each successive portion of the nugget was disclosed to view the men were lost in amazement at its enormous size. It was over a foot in length, and nearly the same in breadth. The weight was so great that it was difficult for the two men to move it. However, by dint of great exertion, they succeeded in carrying it down the hill to Deeson's cottage, where they commenced to inspect their wonderful treasure. It was completely covered with black earth, and so tarnished in colour that an inexperienced person might have supposed it to be merely a mass of auriferous earth or stone. But its weight at once dispelled all doubt on that point, for it was more than twice as heavy as a piece of iron the same size.

Great was the rejoicing among Deeson's family. The wife piled up a huge fire, and Deeson placed the nugget on top, while the rest of the family stood around watching the operation of reducing the mass to the semblance of gold. All through the Friday night Deeson sat up before the fire, burning the quartz, which adhered to the nugget, and picking off all the dirt and débris. This was so rich, that, on being washed in the puddling machine, it yielded ten pounds' weight of gold. Meanwhile Oates had procured a dray to convey the nugget to town, and on the Saturday morning the two men set off for Dunolly. They carried their treasure to the London Chartered Bank, where it was weighed, and found to turn the scale at 2,268 ounces, or nearly two hundredweight, and the sum of 10,000 pounds was placed to their credit in that institution.

Among the pioneers of the once celebrated Woods Point gold-field, situated high up among the mountain ranges, about a hundred miles due east of Melbourne, were two brothers, named Colin and Duncan M'Dougal, who applied themselves, with singularly primitive crushing appliances, to the work of quartz-mining. With these they were enabled to satisfy themselves that some of the rich quartz of the district was capable of yielding as much as 44 ounces to the ton.

The prospect of receiving £150 for every ton that they crushed, filled their minds with ideas of immense wealth to come, and they were determined not to lose it for want of energy.

One of the M'Dougals was dispatched to Melbourne, to order the necessary machinery, and to direct the making of it; for this crushing machine was to be unique of its kind. The battery was to have eight stampers, and, for convenience of carrying, no single piece was to exceed 200 lbs. in weight. All the iron-work was cast in small portions, and new patterns had to be made for each piece.

Meanwhile the other three men were working hard at alluvial digging, in order to gain enough of money to pay for the machine, as it was being constructed. They also cut a very long mill-race along the mountain sides to supply the water-wheel; for the motive power was to be obtained entirely from the mountain streams, and steam-engines were out of the question.

When the machinery, in pieces, was brought to the town of Jamieson, about twenty miles to the north of Woods Point, an unexpected difficulty arose. No "packers" would undertake to convey it over the ranges. They said it would be absurd to expect that horses, with a load of two hundredweight each, could keep their footing on the sides of these mountains. The four diggers were therefore obliged to procure horses and to convey the machinery themselves. This work alone occupied them over three months; it was fully a year, from the commencement, before they had the machine erected, and yet the whole weight did not exceed three tons.

Having thus surmounted every obstacle, they gave to their reef the name of the "Morning Star;" and very soon it justified the name, for the brilliancy of its

results for a year or two quite eclipsed all the other gold mines of the colony. The little clumsy machine, with wooden shanks to the stampers, with a wooden fly-wheel, and driven by an old-fashioned water engine, turned out more gold than the large steam-driven batteries of Ballarat and Sandhurst.

At first the M'Dougals kept these splendid results a great secret. A wild and lawless population had followed their footsteps up the mountains; and in such a place there could be no protection but in secrecy. The partners therefore carefully concealed their good fortune from every one, and hid all their gold in secluded places, among the thick scrub.

At night time, they stole out from the settlement, and, taking the gold with them, they made their way by moonlight over the ranges, to a little hut, that was erected beyond the roughest country. Here a horse was kept in readiness to convey one of them, with his precious cargo, on to Jamieson.

Up to the end of 1866, the produce of the claim of M'Dougal and Company amounted to over £164,000, and several adjoining claims had also yielded extraordinary returns.

THE STORY OF THE PARACHUTE.



SHORT narration of the origin of the parachute may be interesting to our readers.

The parachute commonly in use is nothing more or less than a huge umbrella, presenting a surface of sufficient dimensions to experience from the air a resistance equal to the weight of descent, in moving through the fluid at a velocity not exceeding that of the shock which a person can sustain without danger or injury. Consequently, in the East, where

the umbrella has been from the earliest ages in familiar use, it appears to have been occasionally employed by vaulters, to enable them to jump safely from great heights. Father Loubère, in his curious account of Siam, relates that a person famous in that country for his dexterity, used to divert the king and court by the extraordinary leaps he took, having two umbrellas, with long slender handles, fastened to his girdle.

Blanchard was the first person who constructed a parachute to act as a safety-guard to the aëronaut in case of