Toby's Gun
and other selected stories from
James Tobias Ryan's REMINISENCES OF AUSTRALIA (1788-1894)
Edited and Introduced by Marcus Punch
Toby's Gun
and other selected stories from

James Tobias Ryan's
REMINISCENCES
OF AUSTRALIA
(1788-1894)

Edited and Introduced
by
Marcus Punch
Contents

Introduction by Marcus Punch

Original Title Page

Original Dedication

Original Preface by James Tobias Ryan

Table of Contents

Reminiscences of Australia

Chronology of the Life of James Tobias Ryan

Original Table of Contents

Index
James Tobias Ryan, or “Uncle” Toby Ryan, as the older members of my family knew him, was an elusive ancestor who had brought fame and distinction to his family during the 1800s. A grand-child of First Fleet convicts, he rose to membership of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in the late 1800s. He had owned both a Sydney pub and a famous racehorse. Then, in 1894, he had published his memoirs titled *Reminiscences of Australia*. In these terms he was described to me and little else was known about him by the family.

Toby Ryan was born on the 4th January 1818 to John Michael Tobin Ryan and Mary Rope at Castlereagh, New South Wales. He was raised in the Nepean area. His mother’s parents were First Fleet convicts Anthony Rope (H.M.S. Alexander) and Elizabeth Pulley (H.M.S. Friendship). His mother’s eldest brother, his uncle Robert Rope, is claimed by Toby in his book to be first white male child born on Australian soil - nine months and ten days after the arrival of the First Fleet. If there is such a thing as Australian royalty, Toby Ryan is it.

It seems that very few copies of *Reminiscences of Australia* have survived to this day, including the single, original autographed copy that was part of Toby’s estate.

*Reminiscences of Australia* begins with Toby's account of his birth at Castlereagh and his boyhood in the Nepean district where he forged a strong relationship with his parents and siblings. He became proficient in a number of pursuits, found

---

1 Toby Ryan was my great-great-great-great grandfather’s half-brother.
2 There has long been contention as to who the first white Australian-born children were. See Chapter 1 for further details.
young love and attained minor celebrity in the district with his shooting and fishing exploits.

Following a drunken fight with police at a party in Penrith in 1835, at the age of seventeen, his fortunes changed abruptly. Toby was forced to flee his home, his family and his true love Jane for the frontier country of the Hunter Valley.

Toby initially travelled to Newcastle and Maitland, but eventually found work in and around the many stations that had been established in the Singleton area. He worked there for three years until news came that the policemen he had crossed were either dead or otherwise indisposed.

And so began Toby’s marvellous adult life in Australia…

Toby Ryan lived from 1818 to 1899, an extraordinary period of change in Australia – from a struggling thirty-year-old far-flung British colony reliant upon small-scale agriculture and convict labour, to the eve of Federation, an industrialised nation with established cities connected to each other and to the outside world by telegraph.

Reminiscences of Australia is not just a chronology of the life of Toby Ryan, it is the story of the every-day people involved in the founding of our nation. Throughout his book are telling observations of his time: his abhorrence at the systematic displacement and killing of aboriginals; what it was like to be held up by a bushranger; the peculiarities of the politicians, convicts, emancipists and free-settlers of his time; the successes and disasters of various explorers; the cruelties of a colonial serial killer; the genesis of our national vice - gambling; the luck of the Chinese on the goldfields; his part in the drafting of our constitution; even a day at the bush picnic races.

As I read the book I became compelled to read more. Toby’s heart-felt observations and frank commentary have provided us with a first-hand account of the conditions, events and every-day people of his time. It struck me that Toby’s stories were in
need of being retold, yet it was clear that not many copies of his book had survived.

On January 4th 2018, two hundred years will have passed since Toby Ryan’s birth. In honour of him and all of the people of his time, I want to start the re-telling of Toby Ryan’s Reminiscences of Australia, with this edited collection of my favourite stories from his book.

Working from the original 1894 edition, I have re-arranged the chapters by theme\(^4\) and modernised the spelling, punctuation and grammar, corrected errors as I found them and added footnotes and graphical material where necessary to explain and add further context to the text.

**Marcus Punch**

*6th November, 2017*

---

\(^4\) The original table of contents from the 1894 edition is provided at the end of this book.
REMINISCENCES
OF
AUSTRALIA.

BY
JAMES T. RYAN,

UNDER THE COGNOMEN OF "TOBY."

Containing 70 years of his own knowledge, and
35 years of his ancestors.

PRICE 15s. 6d.

GEORGE ROBERTSON AND COMPANY,
SYDNEY, MELBOURNE, ADELAIDE, BRISBANE AND LONDON.
DEDICATION

TO THE HONOURABLE SIR JOHN LACKEY,
K.C.M.G.,

PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF
NEW SOUTH WALES.

THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR
AS A SMALL TOKEN OF MUCH ESTEEM,
AND IN

REMEMBRANCE OF MANY PLEASING EPISODES
OF THE PAST.
PREFACE

Very few words will suffice as a preface to a book so unpretentious in character as the one now submitted to the reader. In his prospectus of the work the writer simply undertook to afford, in a "homely style", befitting both his subject and himself, an unvarnished account of such events of interest as had come within the scope of his own observation, and for the accuracy of which he was in a position to vouch.

Chronological order in the narration of events has not been strictly adhered to; nor, considering the nature of this work, would such appear to be desirable. Where, however, accuracy in this respect has been called for, or regarded as of value (as in the case of the outbreak of the gold fever and some other events) dates are given upon which reliance may be placed.

"Of many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh"; but the scope of these "Reminiscences" will be entirely misapprehended if the reader looks for literary elegance where none is either intended or attempted, or expects the "dignity of history" where only something very much more modest in character is intended.

In some few instances opinions have been expressed and statements made which might appear unduly pronounced; but it is respectfully submitted that some of the utterances of such a veteran statesman and advanced thinker as the late Wm. Chas Wentworth would, if published today, be greeted
with anything but the applause with which they were first listened to.

It might perhaps be incidentally added that the original intention was to circumscribe the circulation of the "Reminiscences" to the immediate friends of the writer, but at the suggestion of many, in whose judgement he places much confidence, they are now afforded a wider scope in the hope that they may meet with the approbation of a generous and indulgent public.

*December 29th, 1894.* JAMES T. RYAN.
Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Early Days Part 1 ................................................. 1
First Fleeters ............................................................................. 1
Toby's Gun ................................................................................ 7
Toby's Trip to the Hunter .......................................................... 22

Chapter 2 – Early Days Part 2 ............................................. 46
Toby Returns Home .................................................................. 46
Settling Down in Life ............................................................... 62

Chapter 3 – On the Chain and Off ................................. 73
Vinegar Hill Revolt .................................................................. 73
Misery at Lapstone Hill .............................................................. 75
Convict Labour - It's Use and Abuse ...................................... 79
Trip to the Castlereagh River .................................................. 86

Chapter 4 – At The Races .................................................. 90
Sir John’s Loss ......................................................................... 90
The First Killarney Races ......................................................... 93
Gambling .................................................................................. 97
The Old Pilgrims Inn ................................................................. 100
The Gardiner Gang and the Turf ............................................. 104
The Forty Thieves .................................................................... 114

Chapter 5 – The Aboriginals ................................ .......... 118
Massacre in the County of Cumberland .............................. 118
The Aboriginals 1825-1835 ..................................................... 121
Aboriginal Names and Places ........................................... 125
Comparison to the Maoris ........................................... 126

Chapter 6 – Hatches, Matches and Dispatches..... 128
Weddings and Wakes ........................................... 128
Christening of Billy O'Rourke ........................................... 129
Longevity of the Australians ........................................... 130
The Divorce Bill ........................................... 135

Chapter 7 – Ratbags and Rascals .......................... 139
The Celebrated Tom Flowers ........................................... 139
Lynch, the Murderer ........................................... 143
John Minihan, Known as "Scrammy Jack" and the Identities of Bathurst ........................................... 147
A Few of Our Early Statesmen ........................................... 149

Chapter 8 – Towards a Nation ............................... 152
The Turon Goldfields ........................................... 152
The Effect on the Country After the Discovery of Gold.. 159
The Contested Election, 1882 ........................................... 161
The First Constitution ........................................... 165
Cutting the Commission of the Peace ........................................... 169
The Emigration Lecturers, 1870 ........................................... 171

Chapter 9 – Looking Back ............................... 176
Review of New South Wales ........................................... 176
Emu Plains and the Nepean River ........................................... 184
As We Travel Through Life ........................................... 188
Chronology of the Life of James Tobias Ryan...... 191
Original Table of Contents................................ 193
Index..................................................................... 197
Chapter 1 – Early Days Part 1

First Fleeters

My grandmother⁵ and grandfather⁶ arrived with the First Fleet in 1788, their son Robert⁷ being the first white male child born in Australia⁸. He was born at the Soldiers Barracks in Wynyard Square nine months and ten days after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788⁹.

---

⁵ Elizabeth Pulley (1763-1837), a first-fleet convict transported to Australia aboard HMS Friendship (where she spent 72 of the first 93 days of the voyage in chains for misbehaviour, until being transferred to the HMS Prince of Wales at Cape Town).
⁶ Anthony Rope (1763-1843), a first-fleet convict transported to Australia aboard HMS Alexander.
⁷ Robert Rope (1788-1835).
⁸ See the editor’s note over-page.
⁹ Elizabeth Pulley may also have been pregnant during the sea voyage to Australia. Lieutenant Ralph Clark’s log states that on the 3rd July 1787 she was found in the men’s quarters of the ship and that on 3rd October 1787 she informed the ship’s doctor that she was “with child”. If she was pregnant she would have given birth in March or April 1788. There is no record of her giving birth then. Instead, the records show she gave birth to Robert Rope in November 1788, 9 months and 10 days after the arrival of the first fleet. Incidentally, Robert Rope was born exactly 9 months, to the day, after the female convicts were brought ashore at Sydney Cove (6th February 1788) – a day which was described by Peter Taylor in Australia the First Twelve Years as “…an orderly exercise very quickly degenerated into a party of unrestrained bawdiness……the first attempts to explore the bush immediately round the settlement were made with little thought of colonisation”.

1
Editor’s Note:

There has long been contention as to who the first white Australian-born children were. Toby claims that the first white Australian-born male child was his uncle Robert Rope. In Chapter 6 he claims that the first white Australian-born child was a female, Rebecca Oakes.

However, the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages indicates that a newborn William Nash was baptised in the colony of NSW on 25th May 1788, four months after the arrival of the First Fleet. The child’s birth date is not known.

It was also claimed in a letter to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald on 18th January 1939 (see over-page) that a birth register was kept by the First Fleet and that 13 births occurred during the voyage to Australia and a further 2 in the harbour before the female convicts disembarked. The letter also claimed that the first white child born on Australian soil was Elizabeth Bacon who was baptised on 10th February 1788 and that Robert Rope was in fact the twentieth white child born on Australian soil.

It has also been claimed that a child was born to a "Mrs. Whittle" on 25th January 1788 at sea between Botany Bay and Port Jackson. Many other claims have been made.

Alternatively, Seebaer van Nieuwelant, son of Willemtgen and Willem Janszoon, was born on 27th July 1623, south of Dirk Hartog Island, in Western Australia. His parents were aboard the Leijden, commanded by Claes Hermanszoon, which was charting the coast at the time.

It is not my intention to enter into arguments on this topic. It is only a minor historical matter, and hardly an achievement, as there were clearly millions of children born on the Australian continent or in the islands and waters surrounding it prior to any of these children!
There has long been contention as to who the first white Australian-born children were.

Sydney Morning Herald 18th January 1939, page 8 - There has long been contention as to who the first white Australian-born children were.
Afterwards, they went to live in Toongabbie a few miles west of Parramatta, the first settlement formed after arrival. It was there that Governor Phillip gave grants of land of forty acres each and rations for three years with seeds of various kinds and implements for farming and building purposes.

It was there that my mother was born and two other children of the same family. The settlement first grew wheat and maize with success. Gardens sprang up, and fruit of the finest quality and of various kinds was produced in abundance.

In 1817 my father and mother were married and went to reside on the Nepean at "Bird's Eye Corner", near Penrith on a farm rented from a Mr. William Bowman of Richmond.

It was here, on the 4th January 1818, that I was born. The Rope family went afterwards to reside at "Tumbledown Barn" near Windsor and from thence to William Faithfull's estate, South

10 Mary Rope (1791-1872).
11 Elizabeth Rope (1794-pre1806) John Rope (1795-1845).
12 John Michael Tobin Ryan (1796-1853).
13 Prior to her marriage to John Michael Tobin Ryan, Toby’s mother Mary Rope had been in an unwed relationship and had children with Lieutenant Thomas Hobby (who assisted William Cox in building the first road across the Blue Mountains, and for whom “Hobby’s Reach” is named). Hobby had brought a wife with him from England, Ann Hobby, but she was unable to have children. Mary Rope had two children with Hobby, the first of which was Thomas Hobby Jr. who was raised by Thomas and Ann Hobby. The second child was Eleanor who was raised by Mary Rope, but recognised as the daughter of Thomas Hobby in his will. After her relationship with Thomas Hobby ended, Mary had a child named George Rope to an unknown father. Early researchers thought that George was the son of Thomas Hobby, but DNA testing has since shown otherwise.
Creek$^{14}$ between Shane's Park and Dunhaved where the rest of the family were born.

Anthony Rope’s and Elizabeth Pulley’s headstones are located in Castlereagh Anglican Cemetery$^{15}$.

---

$^{14}$ Known as *Jordan Hill* in what is now Llandilo, on the west bank of South Creek. The stretch of land leading to this leasehold was known as *Rope’s Paddock* for many years. The new suburb "Ropes Crossing" has been named after Anthony Rope as it lies near where the family originally farmed at Jordan Hill.

$^{15}$ Elizabeth Pulley died in 1837 and is buried next to her son William and grand-daughter, Eliza Frost, in Castlereagh Cemetery, near Penrith. Anthony Rope died in 1843 at Castlereagh and is also buried at Castlereagh Cemetery. Anthony’s headstone no longer exists, but Elizabeth’s is located in the middle of the cemetery. The *Fellowship of First Fleeters* placed a plaque on Elizabeth's headstone in 1985. A headstone was provided for Anthony in 1994.
Google Maps - showing Ropes Crossing, Llandilo, Shane’s Park and Jordan Springs - the areas where Toby Ryan spent his childhood.
Toby's Gun

I was very fond of shooting. For the want of a gun I commenced with bow and arrow and soon became proficient and could soon shoot small birds at thirty yards. I even practiced twice on the gossoon\textsuperscript{16} for which I got into trouble with my parents.

My grandfather gave me an old Queen Anne's musket, very long and heavy, and the lock minus a hammer, which struck against the pan in the old guns before the percussion was invented.

My brother John (two years younger) and I invented a scheme to make use of the gun. By carrying a forked stick about five feet long and sticking it into the ground, the fork uppermost when elevated or depressed as the case might be, the pan was opened and the powder ignited by John who carried a piece of wattle stick. When well dried it would keep alight all day. This was our mode of operation.

We used coarse blasting powder which was plentiful in the district and much in use in the different quarries. We gathered all the tea chest lead available in the district and melted it down to make slugs. We blazed away at wild duck and curlew (all kinds of game being very plentiful), pigeon and plover in the thousands. Our only difficulty was procuring shot. We got some load from a contractor at Shane's Park who was building for Doctor Harris which served us well for a time. By rubbing the slugs in a worn iron pot to take off the corners we made a good substitute for large shot.

The old Anne's charge was about six drams of powder and four ounces of shot. I have often wondered since that it did not burst her but she was proof against any strain. When ready John

\textsuperscript{16} An unmarried man or a servant boy. Practicing ‘on the gossoon’ refers to Toby practicing his shooting when he had other work he should have been attending to.
would apply the firestick and old Anne could be heard through the district like the thundering of artillery. "There are those patent-shooting boys at work again", people would often say when the roar of old Anne peeled out. They often wondered that nothing happened to either of us through the reckless way in which we went to work; one carrying the gun, the other the fork and the fire sticks. We were often laughed at by those who witnessed the scene of this primitive and antiquated shooting.

On one occasion we went over to Landilow Swamp, a large lagoon opposite Shane's Park where quantities of water lay in wet seasons, surrounded by ti-tree scrub, all favourable to our purpose. After reconnoitring the lagoon we saw an immense quantity of duck and teal. We loaded old Anne with about six drams of powder and four ounces of shot and crawled into a favourable position behind a large gum tree at the edge of the lagoon. It was blown down by a storm the previous evening and broken off at about four feet from the ground with the trunk falling into the lagoon and forming a beautiful decline with some hundreds of teal and wild duck sitting on the trunk and on the limbs below the stump of the tree. The stump acted as a rest and when ready the word was given. The discharge raked the tree of its feathered denizens with great slaughter to the tune of eighteen gathered.

After the discharge, a fine lot of black duck rose up from another part of the lagoon. They were flying about and seemed to drop into the creek opposite the Park. After collecting what we had shot we left them at the stump, reloaded, fed old Anne and started in pursuit of the duck in front of Shane's Park. There is a beautiful stretch of the South Creek about one mile long and eighty to one hundred yards wide with an orchard terraced from the top of the bank to the water's edge very prettily.

Dr. Harris was a cripple or paralysed in his legs and had to be lifted in and out of a small vehicle that was made to wheel him about. On the morning alluded to the Doctor was wheeled down
the garden to shoot parrots and was unobserved by us as we were sneaking down the opposite side of the creek after six black ducks. The game could see the Doctor but not ourselves and were actually swimming towards us. They were within range and having old Anne ready rested on the fence, John was called to let go. Four were shot dead just as they were on the point of rising.

*Shane’s Park – a sketch by Conrad Martens, June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1835.*

The Doctor roared with laughter at what he saw and in doing so turned over his little car. An alarm bell which was attached rang out. "Oh, Johnnie", I exclaimed, "we’ve shot the Doctor!" He was in a parallel line with us at the time. His legs were up
in the air and he was swearing like a trooper. His servant came to his assistance. The man soon hailed us not to go until he came back with the boat. The Doctor, still laughing as he proceeded to the house sent the man over with two canisters of powder and three-quarters of a bag of duck shot.

![Surgeon John Harris (1754-1838) (painted c.1790-1805 by an unknown artist)](image)

While the man collected the ducks John was dispatched to the stump to bring some teal. Eight teal and four ducks were sent back in return for the handsome present received. The bearer related to Mrs. Harris who we were. The shot was a great boon to us but the powder was useless as it would run out of our gun as fast as we put it in. Nothing less than coarse blasting powder was suitable for old Anne. The following morning over came a
message asking whether the expert shooting boy would see Mrs. Harris, which, of course I at once did.

She was a fine, lady-like looking woman and beloved by all her servants. She kept a good deal of company and inquired whether I, if supplied with better implements and ammunition, would get her some game from time to time. "Certainly", it is needless to say was the reply. She gave me one of the Doctor's double-barrelled Manton guns, powder, shot, belt and a flask complete. What a prize!

Wild fowl was very plentiful in the locality and the beautiful Manton gun was very different to old Anne. Two and a quarter drams of powder and one and a quarter of shot were sufficient for her charge. Old Anne could scarcely be overloaded.

I delivered quantities of fish and game every week to my patroness and became a great favourite at the Park, frequently visiting that pleasant spot and the farm at Dunhaved, often to the neglect of my schooling. I used all my spare time in shooting and fishing.

About the time a Miss M___ came to reside at the Park. She was related to Mrs. Harris and a warm attachment sprang up between us which became stronger as time went on. I was doomed for some disappointment as I was shortly to leave for school at Castlereagh as a weekly boarder. The time fixed for the stay was twelve months. I found it hard to quit my sport and friends at the time. The distance from home to school was five miles and I was to go every Monday morning, returning at Friday at four. "Well", I thought, "there would be all Saturday to shoot and Sunday evenings to visit the Park". When the time for leaving for school was nearly at hand I told Mrs. Harris of the change about to take place and also Miss M___ whose Christian name was Jane.

Monday morning came and I was packed off to Castlereagh to serve a year with results hereafter related. The parson,
Reverend Henry Fulton, taught the higher class of young men and Fraser the younger branches. George Wentworth was a pupil there at the time and subsequently married Ann, Fulton's daughter. Fraser married another and John McHendry a third. The Lowes of Brengally were also taught there but I chiefly chummed with those of my own age and of the more humble class. Coates of Bathurst and some others were scholars.

The Reverend Henry Fulton arrived in New South Wales at an early date and was chaplain to Governor Bligh until the arrival of Governor Macquarie in 1810. He then became the first incumbent of Castlereagh and remained there until death which he met at a ripe old age.

He did good service in the district and raised a family of three daughters and two sons and great many of his grand-children and great-grand-children still reside in the district, some of whom are highly respected. To the certain knowledge of myself he married and christened three generations, if not four.

Below the parsonage there was a fine orchard and vegetable garden and in the garden an old Hindu resided who used to catch fish for the parson. He was a snarling, cranky creature and was invariably followed by three little dogs. He generally carried muttocks\textsuperscript{17}, rods and fish lines. He caught fish and sold them for a living. His hut was ingeniously built of cornstalks, about eight by four feet with a little block on one side, about fifteen inches wide, and a small pedestal for his plate and a candle which he lighted only when going to bed. The wicket to his house was made up of tea chests and hinges of leather. If his block, himself, the three dogs and the house had been properly packed, one man could have readily carried the lot.

We boys often tormented the old creature and sometimes he sent us off with threats of his spears. After a while we thought

\textsuperscript{17} The buttocks of a sheep.
to take a rise out of Sambo Rumit, that being his name. At bedtime every night he said his prayers by candle-light. Wearing a red night cap, kneeling on his bed and with great emphasis he would say "When the angel of the Lord come down for Sambo, Sambo ready to go". We could all see him through the cornstalk cabin when lighted up on this occasion. Just before he finished praying we knocked at the door. "Whom dare?", he would say. The reply was, "The angel of the Lord come for Sambo". He would then blow out the candle saying, "Him not home; dead tree week". It was thus we tested Sambo's sincerity.

We had plenty of room to ramble about and now and then to the Nepean, down to Mount Pleasant and round by Single's and Hadley's farms in the long evenings from three to six. Time ran on but my days were getting short and when at last I had to leave I was almost sorry to say good-bye to the lads with whom I never had a quarrel from first to last.

*Nepean Park House – home of the Single family (built 1822, photograph by Penrith Lakes Development Corporation, 2008).*
On returning home from Castlereagh it was only to be expected that I should turn to work on the farm. I made frequent trips to the farming part of the establishment at Dunhaved and soon came to understand everything about a farm and could do it well and took delight in everything pertaining thereto, having to work hard to help keep the younger branches of the family. I did not forget the gun and fishing tackle and occasional visits to Mrs. Harris and Miss Jane at the Park.

There were two assigned servants on the farm besides my father and I. "The Gossoon" and Hunt were their names. "The Gossoon" was so called from being an unmarried Irishman and was one of the most awkward men ever born. Hunt, a Londoner, knew too much. "Gossey", as we called him, knew too little.

I had the management of the farm chiefly. I had two fine plough horses and two of the finest bullocks that were ever yolked and ploughed with them like horses with reins. Their names were "Whitefoot" and "Dragon". The cultivation consisted of about fifty acres cropped with maize, wheat and oats. The regular
work was chiefly performed by the four named, with additional help at harvest time.

I attended market about every three weeks to sell the produce of the farm, while Hunt ploughed in my absence. I found time to see Miss Jane for whom I experienced a growing attachment and would frequently run over to the Park with a brace of birds as an excuse to see her. She seemed prettier in my eyes every day.

Her father died about that time leaving Jane and her sister twelve thousand pounds to receive at twenty-one years of age. Doctor Fullerton and Doctor Harris were the trustees. Jane was the youngest by three years and either girl could get married by consent of the trustees after reaching eighteen years of age. Her mother had been dead some time. Her father, who had been head gardener to Sir Walter Scott in Scotland, came to the country early and became a squatter.

Jane grieved very much for her father and her sister came to the Park for two months to condole with her in their bereavement.

I pursued my labours on the farm most assiduously. The farm was in capital order and the work kept well under. I was a great favourite with my mother, brothers and sisters who looked up to me as head. I bought and sold everything, kept all things together and the two men above referred to did most of the work. We raised plenty of poultry. Mother made the butter and looked after the dairy and by all pulling together we managed to get along. Father did a little ploughing now and then when things were busy.

Sometimes Charles Smith, a butcher of Sydney, would call and take me away for a week to show me where to purchase cattle and on one occasion I stopped with him a fortnight at Clifton, Bungarrabee and Sydney. It was while about with him that I got acquainted with Smith's stud. After I had been away on such
occasions it took some time to straighten things up on my return.

Before Jane's sister left the Park, Jane said one day, "You are always bringing birds to Mrs. Harris. Bring me a live one". The season was in for young birds and the next week I bought her two beautiful Rosellas. Jane's sister took hers away and Jane bought a handsome cage for hers and took great delight in it.

My duck shooting costume consisted of calfskin leggings to the knees, coarse cloth flannel blouse, opossum skin cap and a belt. I kept up my shooting during the time I lived at South Creek.

"The Gossoon", Hunt and I had the farm in fine order. "Gossey" got his liberty and was engaged for twelve months at the rate of one pound per month with rations. Although he was what they called in Ireland a 'muldoon'\(^\text{18}\) he was a good worker at what he understood - thrashing, forking up hay, digging and so on. Hunt could do anything well when he liked but seldom found in himself the humour to do much unless he could see some advantage to be gained by it. On the whole however I got on very well with the material I had to work with, giving privilege to do a few days off now and then for themselves. They worked double afterwards.

The two men not being friendly together occupied different huts and generally separated at work. However they served their time together without getting into trouble and so far did good service to their master. Hunt saved money and got well to do but he poisoned himself in the end for what reason no-one knew.

About this time George Rope came to the South Creek to live with his uncle and to work at his trade of wheelwright. He was three years older than I and a blood relation. It was no wonder

\(^{18}\) A moron.
therefore that I was glad he came to live close by or that we were frequently together.

George was a good shot and a fast runner which suited me well and we spent most of our evenings together. We lived in close proximity to each other and in our travels together in the subsequent three years we got on well, both being good shots, bushmen and trackers. Having learned the noble art of self-defence we were able to hold our own against all comers.

There was an assigned servant to Major Druitt named Sullivan under the suggestive name of "Ginger" who taught many of the young men in the district to use the gloves in the art of self-defence. He was considered one of the best science men in England when there and fought many battles both in the old country and in Australia - the latter under the auspices of George Flowers, Inspector of Constabulary. He was therefore a privileged man and was taken from Australia to America in a fast vessel which lay in Sydney Cove six months waiting for him and when he got to his destination became the champion lightweight in that country.

About this time of the year the farm was well under crop and everything looking prosperous for the last year I was to enjoy in that happy home in which I took so much delight.

It so happened in the spring of 1834 that I had more leisure time than in any other year. George and I travelled often together and sometimes alone up and down the creek near Windsor. The lovely singing birds warbling their beautiful notes, the black duck flapping up here and there, the spurwing plover chirping on the lowlands below, the mimosa sallow and the willow trees bending over the creek in full flower, the fragrances and perfume filling the air were delightful.

Little did I think that all was so soon to end. Harvest being ready, the three of us, Hunt, "Gossy" and I soon cut down twenty acres of splendid wheat and got it housed safely and
twenty acres of oats just ready with the aid of two men from Dunhaved and two from Mrs. Harris. The weather being fine they got it all safely housed two weeks before Christmas Day which was very gratifying to us all. A good crop well saved is the depending point of the poor farmer.

The two men had liberty until Christmas to go and work for others - a privilege given for good behaviour. Nothing was thought of then until Christmas and a happy one it was. Everything went on well and a good supply was provided for the occasion. In the meantime it is needless to say the Park was visited daily. We all spent a very happy Christmas - the last on which I was ever to meet Jane. A cruel fate ordered it otherwise. George and I and four others had promised to be present at a house-warming in Penrith as a house was about to be opened by James Evans called the "Rose Inn" of Penrith. It is well known since as the great coaching house kept so long by the mail contractor John Perry.

We had made up our minds for a spree but we were all boys, the eldest of us being twenty-one years of age.

On the Sunday evening before the Tuesday, the opening day at Penrith, I called over to see Jane, who was in great spirits. "Listen", she said, "to the parrot, he can call 'Jane'". "Come down to the summer house I want to have a talk with you. I have found out the purport of my father's will. He has left us girls six thousand pounds each. The Doctor and the Reverend Doctor Fulton are our guardians and if we marry under twenty-one we must do it with their consent and not before eighteen years of age. I found out this from Mrs. Harris. They have no power to hold it longer than the prescribed time". Now, Jane had been planning a scheme for the future. She said, "The manager of the Gallangan Station died last week and they will be wanting someone to manage the station there. It would be a chance for us. Mrs. Harris thinks wonderfully well of you and she can do as she likes with the Doctor. The matter only waits
broaching and we should not have long to wait; a few years up there might be spent very happily”, she continued. "I hear Burrowa is a lovely country. You may depend on Mrs. Harris. She is so fond of you and often she calls you her game-keeper".

We talked over the pros and cons during the ensuing week. I spoke of the trip to Penrith but she strongly advised me to give up the idea and foreboded some evil would come of it. Ah! Too true it was. We parted reluctantly, soon to meet and relate the sad tale that separation had become inevitable.

The boys met on Tuesday morning by appointment and wended our way to Penrith; Samuel Tollis, I and three others, all taking sufficient money to pay our expenses for the night. It was muster day for ticket of leave men and publican’s licensing day so it bought a large concourse of people to the town. The settlers and their families were present. This was New Year's Day, 1835, a day so memorable to me. We paid for our beds on arrival and then entered into the sports of the day - quoits, running and jumping. In the evening dancing was enjoyed - jigs, reels and such dances as were indulged in by the people of those days, thumping away at top ropes.

There were only then two public houses in the place, the one just licensed and the old "King's Head" next to the courthouse, which was kept by Jack Moses and Joe Levy subsequently of Berrima.

At ten pm the chief constable and his emissaries came around to clear the houses. The people retired in an orderly manner, except us boys. I, though the youngest, was spokesman and stated that having paid for our beds we were desirous of stopping the night, being six miles from home. Before I had finished speaking one of the constables had Tollis by the arm to eject him from the room. Tollis was a fine young fellow of twenty-two and could use his hands and hold his own with any man. The constable struck him with his staff but as soon as he
did so the unfortunate constable fell like skittles from a good player who seldom goes twice. The constables of those days were prisoners only holding temporary liberty by ticket-of-leave and were often the very worst men that could be chosen for the purpose. The men in question were literally knocked out of the room. There was a quantity of river gravel for road-making lying in the street. There were also a number of men outside who had been ejected and were only too glad of an opportunity to avenge them. Under cover of a dark night the police were pelted with stones bang into the courtyard and it was said that the next day they showed the results of severe handling and the marks of the pebbles so neatly handled by the "tips" outside.

The boys thought discretion the better part of valour and soon made tracks for home through the bush. The next day warrants were issued for the arrest of the three known to the police. We got the credit for all that the constables had suffered though we were not responsible for one-fifth of what really took place.

On our arrival home a consultation was held and it was unanimously agreed that we should make our way to some place in the interior for a time until things had blown over. In the meantime we had to keep aloof until the time of departure as at that time the magistrates were armed with powers that enabled them to give three years for such trivial offences without mercy or right of appeal to justice. Such were the days we then had to endure.

Then came the severest trial. How was I to meet Jane and break the ice to her? It was then that I mustered resolution and proceeded to the Park. Jane, in the meantime had heard something about the matter and met me in the summer-house in the garden, our usual place of meeting. She was crying as though her heart would break and caught me by the hand, saying, "How earnestly did I advise you not to go; some presentiment of evil foretold me that trouble awaited you".
I did all in my power to appease her and said we must hope for the best and that it would blow over in a short time. We then parted to meet next evening, as it was necessary that great caution should be observed to evade the constables.

George and I met to make preparations for our departure. Tollis went to stay with a friend some distance away and was to join us on our departure that night week. The next day I went to the Park and found Jane in the place where we had parted in deep agony on the previous evening. Oh, how did I feel after five years of growing love and affection in all that true and simple love where we so often pledged ourselves to join some day in holy matrimony? These thoughts ran through me like wildfire, and, strange to say, never eradicated to the present day.

We met daily until the final departure. At last the day came to part, Tollis came to see us off but could not go with us. He was, however, to follow in a week or two. It was then that I realized the full misery of the position. To think of my mother who was so dear to me, my brothers and sisters and to be unable to do for my mother what I could, and then who was to look after the farm and keep things together as I had done? My state of mind can more readily be imagined than described.

The moon would rise that night about ten o'clock, the time fixed for our departure. I met Jane at seven to spend an hour together. It was in our usual place where we embraced each other and pledged ourselves oftentimes as we had before. Our parting was tender and after many vows we separated with grief to both.

When I reached home I found them ready with a few friends to see us off and talking of what we might do and could do. Mother and the girls were crying bitterly. Here was another grievous parting in one night, but under all the circumstances we bore up manfully and kept up our spirits as well as could be expected. The time came and we tore ourselves away and parted for nearly two years.
**Toby's Trip to the Hunter**

Away we started at eleven o'clock on a beautiful moonlit night. My heart was full of my mother, home and Jane. We travelled through the bush about six miles and reached the Western Road about one mile east of Major Druitt's. We walked onto Parramatta to catch the eight o'clock coach.

After travelling twenty-two miles and carrying thirty pounds each and the little Manton gun by turns we were pretty tired. James and John Dargan ran the coach then from Parramatta to Sydney, one residing in Sydney and the other in Parramatta, each returning to their respective homes after every trip. We reached Sydney about nine o'clock in the morning and took our passage on the William the Fourth, a small steamer that plied between Sydney and Newcastle, paying fifteen shillings each for our passage and miserable accommodation.

*A replica of the William the Fourth steaming on the Hawkesbury River (Photo: Newcastle Herald).*
The passage to Newcastle was very trying to us as landsmen, seasickness being not the least of our troubles during the voyage of fourteen hours. On arrival we pitched our tent on the side of a hill from which coal was being taken for the use of the prisoners and soldiers working at the breakwater at Nobby's Island.

Newcastle was then a penal settlement and contained no house but the Commandants. He lived on the high ground. His name was Purcell, a great tyrant and subsequently known to me in another capacity.

We were determined to stop a day there to rest after our seasickness and the weather was in every way favourable. A great portion of the spot on which Newcastle now stands was then a bay or small arm of the sea. The prisoners that were nearly out of their time and waiting their turn to get away were employed getting shells for lime-making for Sydney.

The men who were working in the bay (about twenty) were almost naked and nearly all showed signs of the lash. In the same bay many blacks were fishing for flat-head which were very plentiful. One old black gin, in hauling up a large fish, lost her balance and turned over - gin, fish and all - to the great merriment of the bystanders who shouted out with great glee. The old gin in the meantime was swearing in her own language like a trooper.

There was an old donkey grazing on the flat which a man caught and endeavoured to lead up the hill but to no purpose. A man at the mines whom I was speaking to remarked that it would be useless to try to lead the donkey in that direction as the Commandant once had it flogged for braying once at his window. It would never face the hill afterwards but once when blindfolded and taken close to where it had been flogged. When the bandage was removed it plunged back and the man who
held him received a severe kick in the stomach. The story produced a hearty laugh from George and I.

The next day we proceeded on our journey to Maitland and camped close to the pretty spot on the Hunter River where Morpeth now stands, about fifteen or eighteen miles from Newcastle.

The Saint Michael, an old ship, was moored ready to receive goods for the country. It proved an object of interest.

We wended our way towards East Maitland along the Green Hills (so called then), the river in view all the time. On the western side, as we proceeded, a beautiful cedar bush came in view covered with a flock of blue pigeons. We got as far as the bridge in the evening and enquired at the first house who lived there. "Mr. Samuel Clift", was the answer. On hearing this I said to George, "I wonder if this is the same Samuel Clift who used to sell cattle to C. Smith? If so, I know him." George went in and enquired and found him to be the same man. He had just come home from the country after taking up a new station called 'Breeser Plains'. He made us welcome and said, "Stop here a day or two and look around, if nothing presents itself in the way of employment, my teams start for the new station on Monday, and you can travel on with them. They have plenty of rations and I will give instructions to that effect." We thanked him and availed ourselves of his kindness, which I never forgot.
We stayed four days in Maitland. Two public houses and a couple of stores were all that could be seen in that locality. Walter Rotten kept one public house and William Clark the other. He was the father of the William Clark who was shot by a bushranger on the Northern Road in 1863 - a fine specimen of an Australian who came from a good old stock. The Honourable John Lackey and I went to see the wretch who shot so good a man, and one universally respected, in his condemned cell in 1863.

There was little to be seen around Maitland but what nature has given. In this respect I must say she was bountifully supplied with a lovely stream running through a large area of some of the finest land under the sun. The river wended to the sea at Newcastle.

The wild duck could be seen in clouds flying about and wild fowl of every description were very numerous.
On the Monday the teams got underway and under the auspices of Mr. Clift, who treated us so well, we left Maitland. The country north was opening up fast. The road was lined with laden bullock teams chiefly carrying for a large storekeeper named Dutton of Singleton. Singleton was then called "Patrick Plains".

The first day we only travelled five miles and the next day we reached Black Creek, half way to Singleton. On our way that day we saw over five hundred kangaroos in one flock pass by as orderly as a regiment of soldiers on the march. The sight was a very pretty one.

That night there were over twenty teams camped together. It was frightful to hear the discourse of the bullock drivers. After some tea several pipes of wine were tapped - some taking as much as a bucketful out of half a pipe. The men got gloriously drunk. That was the first occasion on which I heard the name of Major Moody¹⁹, who received a terrible character. In conversation the men nearly all saying how they would serve him if they had their will.

The hanging of five men for robbing his house was the chief topic of conversation. We left Clift's team and proceeded with John Johnston's from Clydesdale. They were loaded for Dutton, at Singleton. We had to pass by Moody's house on the right and his windmill on the left hand side of the road. The house was on the right and on the eastern side of the river and the road about midway between where the five men were executed a short time before. We had to pass under the limb which

---

¹⁹ James Mudie. Mudie had no claim to the rank of Major. He had been a Lieutenant in the marines and had received free passage to New South Wales to save him from bankruptcy. Mudie later published “The Felony of New South Wales”, an attack on the emancipists and public morality in the colony.
Early Days Part 1

Proceeded from a large gum tree like a yard arm from the main mast of a ship.

This was the place where the men were hanged, under this immense limb, pinioned and placed on a dray on a platform. This raised them sufficiently for a good fall as they were launched into eternity within the view of Moody's house and in close proximity to the mill. Just at the time the men swung off a terrible hurricane burst out with great violence and blew the sails off the mill. It never worked again from that day to this. The mill sails were lying on the ground as we passed by and it was said by all with whom the author conversed that the storm lasted to within an hour of the men being cut down. During its violence the men were wafted to and fro like a swing-swang and were frequently entangled together.

We proceeded on our way and reached Singleton, called after Ben Singleton, one of the first residents there who built a mill on the banks of the Hunter and kept a public house. He was well respected.

We went into his house humping our swags. A lot of young men surrounded us to know from whence we came and we soon found out that three of them who were interrogating us were Australians from Richmond and Windsor. They were born on the same stream with ourselves; Peter Macelpin, blacksmith; A. Baker, wheelwright and Edward Nellon, shoemaker. They made much of us and showed a great friendship which continued throughout our stay in that part of the country.

Baker worked for Johnston on the eastern side of the river, about one mile distant. He wanted a man of his trade and it was George, who was reckoned a fine tradesman, who was at once engaged with Baker at piece work. After spending an hour or thereabouts with our friends we proceeded home to Baker's place at Clydesdale, one mile distant.
Toby’s Gun

and other selected stories from James Tobias Ryan’s Reminiscences of Australia.

If there is such a thing as Australian royalty, James Tobias Ryan is it. Born in 1818, ‘Toby’ Ryan was a grandchild of first fleet convicts whose children were amongst the first white people born on the Australian continent. He rose to become a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly before federation, after evading the police for three years in his youth. He owned a famous racehorse and was licensee of a Sydney pub. Prior to his death in 1895, he wrote his memoirs which he had titled ‘Reminiscences of Australia’.

Reminiscences of Australia tells the story of the founding of our nation through Toby’s telling observations of his time: his abhorrence at the systematic displacement and killing of aboriginals; what it was like to be held up by a bushranger; the peculiarities of the politicians, convicts, emancipists and free-settlers of his time; the successes and disasters of various explorers; the cruelties of a colonial serial killer; the genesis of our national vice - gambling; the luck of the Chinese on the goldfields; his part in the drafting of our constitution; even a day at the bush picnic races.

His style as the simple story-teller, his truthful observations and his frank commentary have provided us with a snapshot of the formative years of our nation.

This book reprises the original edition of Reminiscences of Australia, published in 1894, using modernised text and conventions. Footnotes and graphical material have been inserted where necessary to explain and add further detail and context to the text.