

A PIONEER FARMER, SHIPBUILDER & PREACHER

EDWARD KING

-1815---1908-

By his grandson

Rev. Wesley Stocks

Saunders

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FOREWORD

The Northmen or Norsemen were the sea rovers who came from the north - Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Bolder navigators than even the Phoenicians themselves, they sailed west, south, and even north into the Arctic Ocean to fight for fame and to plunder.

They called themselves 'vikings', a word of Anglo-Frisian origin, not connected with our concept of royalty, but meaning 'camp-men' - men who left their homes for many months of the year.

They ravaged the eastern coasts of England from the 8th to 13th centuries of our era. The vikings are depicted as of great physique, blonde complexion with steel-blue eyes, men who lived by and loved the sea. During the centuries many of them settled in the conquered lands, and our English stock has been greatly strengthened by the Norse strain.

The following pages comprise an attempt to depict the main features of the life of Edward King, who arrived in this country in the early years of the last century, and left his mark upon the land of his adoption.

The writer makes no attempt to connect his name - 'King' - with the word 'viking', but often pictures the man, physically a powerful, well-built blonde with blue eyes, a commanding personality with a natural dignity, a rover who loved the sea, - pacing the poop of one of his vessels as she saucily tossed the spray from her bows, his keen eyes watching the straining canvas, and taking pride in her every movement.

The centuries slip past, and again he sees the same commanding figure upon the deck of a rakish craft with tall figure-head, bellying sail, and bank of rowers. On his head is a helmet with large twin horns protruding, whilst his battle-axe lies handy. His vessel is bounding southward on an enterprise that calls for skill and courage, for chart and compass are as yet unknown.

Some of the data he has gleaned from the Mitchell Library, some from the retentive memory of his mother and her brothers, whilst some is from his own personal remembrance of an affectionate companionship which commenced with his first dawning intelligence, and which continued inseparable for a number of years. He has made no attempt at an exhaustive history, but has selected what appears to him to be the salient features of the life of one of the pioneers who laboured to make this young country worthy of its place within the Commonwealth of Nations.

In grateful remembrance of this boyhood companionship these pages are dedicated

EDWARD KING

Pioneer Farmer, Shipbuilder, Preacher by Wesley Stocks.

Chapter 1

EARLY DAYS

Napoleon had met signal defeat at the hands of the Duke of Wellington in the year 1815 but a few weeks, when there was born in a humble thatched cottage at Beckley, near Rye, Sussex, the subject of this sketch.

His father, John King, born in the year 1797 had married Frances Jewess in 1814. For generations his people had been charcoal burners for the local hop kilns, and as a lad, young Edward assisted his father in this occupation. He had not the advantage of an education as we understand the term today, his father teaching him to read and write mainly from the Bible.

At an early age the spirit of adventure was displayed and he was fond of the gun, which sport led him into an escapade in his early teens, which might very easily have altered the course of his life. Triumphantly returning from hunting, he was caught by the gamekeeper of a neighbouring property with a couple of rabbits. Poaching was a serious offence in those days, and had he been older, most probably would have been transported, and his first glimpse of Australia would have been as a guest of the government on board a convict ship. He was instead, doubtless owing to his youth, sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour in the county gaol. This prison was equipped with a machine for grinding corn known as a 'treadmill', and every day the prisoners had to tramp this mill round and round. During his incarceration, young King must have tramped many weary miles, but on his release he was little the worse for his experience, and his independent spirit in no way accused him of having done anything for which he should be ashamed.

MARRIAGE

Some few years after his birth his people moved to another house in the neighbourhood, and Mr William Gill and his wife Susannah acquired the old thatched home. Here, in 1819 their daughter Harriet was born. Later on the young people who had both seen the light for the first time in the same house, fell in love, and in the year 1835 were married, the bride being then but 16 years old, whilst her young hero was only 20.

Times were bad, and there was much talk among the people of the countryside of emigration to Australia, or 'Down under', as it was popularly referred to. Finally the Gill families, William, now aged 41 and his wife and family, and his younger brother Silas with his wife, decided to try their fortune in the new land.

Silas, who afterwards became a famous evangelist in the land of his adoption, was born in 1807 and had married in 1825. He was a tall and powerful man, and when he was converted under the preaching of the famous Rev. Thomas Collins, the evangelist explained as the young man came forward, 'Here comes a giant for the Lord'.

They embarked on 15th April 1838 on the ship 'Maitland', though, for some reason, the actual sailing date was postponed till the 24th June. Probably taking in cargo in a number of ports caused the delay. The 'Maitland' took 134 days on the trip, and arrived at Port Jackson on 5th November 1838. Here she was quarantined owing to an outbreak of cholera on the voyage, and two weeks later moved to Farm Cove.

THE EMIGRANT

After her people had sold out and embarked, Mrs King, who was then only 20, fretted so much for her mother, that her husband promised that they would take the first ship and follow them out to Australia. Consequently, with their little two year old child, Harriett, they sailed upon the barque 'Lady Nugent' on the 11th June. They naturally thought they were following the ship which her people had sailed, but actually they got away a fortnight before the 'Maitland' eventually sailed.

AN EVENTFUL JOURNEY

They had a long and very trying voyage of 169 days, or 5-1/2 months. Bringing their own supplies of food, and as no fruit or vegetables could be obtained en route, the vessel not touching at any port, the dreaded cholera broke out on board, and little Harriett was among the first victims, and was buried at sea. On the 6th September, when the ship was making her easting, and the weather was very rough, Mrs King gave birth to their second child, Jane, and was herself very ill. The baby didn't have much chance on that ship of sickness, and soon succumbed and was buried at sea as sister had been.

After a prolonged, and for the young emigrants, a sorrowful voyage, the 'Lady Nugent' made Sydney Heads at noon on the 27th November 1838, and as there were no tugs in those days, came in and sailed slowly up the harbour.

All the foreshores of the harbour were densely wooded in those days, and as the vessel sailed on past point after point, the passengers were intrigued by a buzzing chorus which sounded off shore, but whether it came from the trees or from the rocks among which the trees grew they could not determine. The sailors solemnly informed them that the sound was caused by the crabs singing in the rocks! It is a matter of conjecture whether this was what they actually thought, for many things seemed topsy-turvy in this new country, where the trees shed their bark instead of their leaves, or, whether, knowing better, they were indulging in their usual custom of "taking a rise" out of the newcomers. Be that as it may, the emigrants believed them, and it was many months before they discovered that the sound had not come from the rocks but from the trees, for they had been listening to a chorus of cicadas, or as they were locally called "locusts".

When the "Nugent" came to Farm Cove no one was allowed to land, for the vessel was to be quarantened owing to the cholera. It is doubtful if many ships in those days escaped this detention arising from the primitive conditions of travel and the length of time spent at sea.

THAT FIRST NIGHT.

There was little sleep for them that night. For hours they talked of all they had seen since making a land-fall--the first sight of the rugged cliffs, the Heads, the wonderful harbour, the densely wooded foreshores, the little township called "Sydney", the "red-coats", the gangs of convicts, the blackfellows, and the calm water after five and a half months of tempestuous seas. It was all so strange to have the perfect stillness of a summer evening, and a deck to walk upon that was not bucking and slanting beneath their feet.

Their main thought was, of course, of their people. No sign of another ship had they seen since leaving "home" but then the "Maitland" must have come to port many weeks since. Where were their kinsfolk? Had they stayed in Sydney, or had they taken up land somewhere? They would make enquiries as soon as they were free to land. Or had the "Maitland" come to grief, and those whom they had followed out and were themselves responsible for this terrible journey across the world, become victims of the mighty deep, and would never know how their loved ones had followed them?

With these disturbing thoughts they eventually fell asleep, wondering what the new day would bring forth.

MORNING SURPRISE.

The new day brought with it a great surprise. Coming on deck early, they found that another ship had come in during the night and was anchored about three cables' length away. Obviously she also was an emigrant ship, judging by the number of passengers, who, like themselves, were up early to see the land of their adoption. Among the passengers of the new arrival young King saw a well-built man towering over the shoulders of the others; as he gazed, he drew his wife's attention who instantly exclaimed, "Why, that's Uncle Silas!" and added, "They must have been much longer on the voyage than we were". They commenced waving frantically, but naturally there was much waving on both vessels.

THE SHAWL.

Then the young wife bethought herself of her mother's parting gift to the young expectant mother--a beautiful red shawl. Retrieving it hastily from her cabin, she hung it over the side. On the other ship there was soon a commotion among a certain little group of passengers. Never dreaming that the young couple would follow them out, they had only a passing interest in the vessel with its waving complement, and were more concerned watching the goings on ashores.

Presently, her eyes wandering back to the ship, Mrs. Gill recognised the shawl she had given her daughter before leaving England. "Look, William, look Silas, is it possible? That's Harriet's shawl!" "Nonsense," said her husband, "Why harriet is in England." "But, that's her shawl, I declare," returned the now excited mother, "And look! Yes, there's Harriet and Edward waving behind it! Then they must have followed by the first ship and beaten us to port."

From the vigorous waving that followed, it was evident that both groups had recognised each other; but it was weeks before they actually met, for that morning "Lady Nugent" went to the place of quarantine, from which the "Maitland" had that night come after her fortnight's detention.

TERRA FIRMA.

At length the time came for their release, and they were met on landing by their people, who took them to the lodgings they had occupied since leaving the "Maitland."

Silas and his family went to the Cowpastures, now called Camden, where he remained for a number of years, later coming to the Hunter River.

The others heard that good land was available on the Coal River, or Hunter as it was now becoming known, and both families decided to settle there.

Late in December 1838 they embarked upon the "Sophia Jane," the first steamship to come to Australia, and which for some few years had plied between Sydney and Newcastle. Their first view of Newcastle was of an outstanding island in the fairway now called "Nobbys", but then known as "Coal Island." This island was much higher then that it is now, and boats could sail between it and the mainland, though the larger vessels had to pass round it on the northern side. A breakwater had been commenced as early as 1812, but it was half a century before it was completed, heavy seas repeatedly washing away the stones. An early idea had been to remove the island, and gangs of convicts were engaged cutting the top off till it reached its present height, when the work was abandoned. Later a tunnel was driven under the hill with the object of blowing the island up, but this idea was also abandoned. Later the island was used to maroon a certain incorrigible female convict who lived for months in the tunnel.

NEWCASTLE'S "GOOD OLD DAYS"

Up till a few years prior to their arrival, Newcastle was a Penal Settlement, where convicts laboured in primitive coal mines; others burnt the shale into lime at Limeburner's Bay, on the inner side of the Stockton peninsular; still others were engaged in felling the magnificent cedars, which extended from the port for many miles up the river, and sawing them into building material for the settlement at Sydney.

In the old coalmine, situated on the site of the present Bowling Green, the convicts were kept underground during six days of the week. On the afternoon of the 6th day they were brought up to wash their bodies and clothes in the sea, and then marched to the barracks to be locked up till the Monday morning. They were not allowed to rest, however, for on the Sunday morning they were paraded in a yard where a series of triangles had been set up with a large corps of flagellators in attendance. The infamous Commandant, Major Morrisett, would order anything up to 100 lashes for some trifling offence--usually for producing insufficient coal. Each convict was required to produce 2½ tons of coal per day, working in drives only 2 ft 6 ins high.

The convict cedar getters by 1820 worked in gangs as far up the river as seventy miles. A gang of thirty men was compelled to cut 100 logs from 12 to 16 ft long each month. These were rolled to the river bank and made into rafts; on these huts were erected to accommodate the prisoners, and the rafts floated down river to Newcastle.

But the poor wretches who were compelled to work at the lime kilns had the hardest time of all. Flogging was perpetual, and the poor, raw-backed victims of the convict system had to load the barges with heavy sacks of lime that they carried on their lacerated backs through the shallow water to the anchored craft frequently falling under the loads into the salt water. Raw backs, torn and bleeding from recent floggings, to be treated with lime and salt water! No wonder that many preferred to drown in the water where they fell beneath their loads, rather than struggle to land where they would be treated to another lash for wetting the lime!

This system had come to an end in 1823, only 15 years prior to the arrival of our emigrants, but the memory of the system was very clear to the inhabitants, and many were the grim reminders.

Although attempts were made to settle Newcastle, there were less than forty houses in its streets and a total population of 1200 when the "Sophia Jane" brought the party into the harbour. The real destination of the vessel was Morpeth, or "Green Hills," as it was then called, so she proceeded up river.

EARLY SETTLERS

At this time there was no road to Wallis Plains, or Maitland as it is now called, and the "Sophia Jane" was the only means of transit from the port of Newcastle to that town, steaming up river as far as navigation permitted to the township of Morpeth, some four miles from Maitland.

The emigrants left the steamer at Raymond Terrace, at the confluence of the Hunter and its tributary, the Williams, and settled some six miles north of the village on the banks of the latter stream. The place was named "Penitent", a name probably handed down from the grim convict days so lately passed.

FIRST STRUGGLES

The Gills and the Kings settled on adjoining properties, and what a prospect for settlement! Nothing but giant trees and scrub everywhere; the only implements with which to tackle the task were axes and hoes! The countryside had for many months been in the grip of a drought; the river was salt, and the only water available was green, slimy stuff found in waterholes that had not, as yet, dried up, and which had to be boiled before it could be used at all. Flour cost 1/- for a pannikin full, and could only be obtained by walking 6 miles to the flour mill at Raymond Terrace. The only sugar obtainable was a 'black sugar', evidently the first stage of refinery from molasses which the Government rationed formerly to the convicts, and latterly to the blacks.

The settlers first used their axes and felled timber with which they made rough huts to live in; then the bank of the river was scooped out to form an oven in which for years the cooking was done.

The hoe was the next to be used, and having obtained some seed wheat from the mill, they hoed in between the trees and planted their first crop. The rain having in the meantime come, they were rewarded with a splendid crop from the virgin soil which had been turned by these primitive implements. They harvested it with knives, and stood it for drying between the trees, and later laying it out on bags and flailing it, the wind acting as the winnowing agent. Grinding the grain between two stones, they baked their first bread from their own wheat in the river-bank oven.

Later they carried the wheat on their backs to the mill, for as yet, they had no horses or drays. Nor had they money to pay for the grinding, so the miller gave them back half their yield in flour as payment for the wheat.

A FEAT REWARDED

Edward King was a very strong man and possessed excellent strong teeth, of which he was very proud. One one occasion he boasted to the miller, "I could lift that bag of wheat with my teeth." "If you can do that", replied the doubtful miller, "I'll give you the whole bag back in flour." So the boaster bent down and gripped the tag of the bag with his teeth, and not only lifted it from the ground, but swung it twice round himself! He was duly rewarded by the astonished miller with a full bag of flour. We may be inclined to doubt the veracity of this incident, but till a few years ago there were a number who were prepared to vouch for the truth of it.

Blacks were very numerous in these parts, some being quite hostile to the settlers, and many were the scares which the women-folk endured at their hands. Later, however, they obtained the services of some of the gins to assist with the simple household duties, but the bucks were too lazy to work for the whiteman, there being plenty of fish and game for their simple needs. Kangaroos, 'possums, bears, wallabies were so numerous as to be a constant menace to the growing crops.

TRAGEDY

During the early years and Penitent three more children were born to the Kings, the only attendant the young mother knew being her own devoted mother, for doctors and nurses were, as yet, unknown in the district.

Another drought, similar to the one they had experienced when first they came, visited the countryside, and this time with dire consequences for the settlers. Not only was food scarce, but, owing to the putrid water only to be found in waterholes, an epidemic of dysentery raged throughout the district. The young emigrants' knowledge of medicine was but meagre, and when their eldest child was smitten, in spite of their efforts, it languished and died. The grief-stricken father had to make a coffin of deal wood and bury the child himself. In a week he had to perform the same sad duty for the second; and then the baby sickened, and the anxious young parents watched while she weakened daily. Soon another box had to be made and another grave dug.

What a start for the young people! Their first two to be buried at sea, and then their remaining three children to be taken within a fortnight. They were dark days indeed, but they were made of pioneer stuff, and lifted their heads above their great sorrow and faced the future bravely.

THE BAR OF STEEL

The primitive hoeing methods had to be superseded. Other tools became urgently necessary, and the only way to get these was to make them. For this purpose a bar of steel was required. It was ascertained that bar steel could be procured at Maitland, eighteen miles distant. So young King set off and walked to Maitland where he bought the bar which was so long that, in order to carry it on his shoulder and keep the front of it from digging into the ground as he walked, he had to trail the after part along the ground. He carried that bar triumphantly home on his shoulders across those eighteen miles. Such was the strength and determination of some of our pioneers.

THOSE POTATOES

By now they are growing maize as well as wheat, and had their first small crop of potatoes. These latter would have to be bagged and carried on their backs to Raymond Terrace as the wheat had been. His father-in-law, Gill, had a particularly good crop, and late one evening, having bagged them up, instead of taking them to the shed near his house, decided to hide them in the reeds on the river bank, where they would be on his way when taking them to the township in the morning. King advised him against this, remarking that there were a number of 'ticket-of-leave' men, or ex-convicts in the neighbourhood, and he might have been observed. But the older man was, by nature, very trustful, and said, "They'd never take my potatoes, Edward." But in the morning, sure enough, the lot had vanished!

THE HORSE

King's crop, on the other hand, enabled him to purchase their first horse, for which he made the harness and dray himself. It was much easier to get this stuff to market by this home-made contrivance than upon his own powerful shoulders, and much time was saved. A plow, which had seen better days, and which was acquired cheaply, was soon being drawn by the horse through what was now the clearing, and naturally the returns from this labour-saving device more than repaid its proud owner.

Running past his farm was the natural waterway of the river, and for long he had envisaged building a boat, but the necessary tools had been the stumbling block. However, as circumstances permitted, these were gradually obtained, and though he had not had any experience in the art of boat-building, nothing daunted he set to work, and, from the magnificent cedar which was upon his property, succeeded in building a boat of sorts. This craft, if it was not exactly a racing skiff, was stout and strong, and enabled him to pull down stream to market, and thus give the horse a spell.

King now built a better house than the first primitive structure. Again, as was the case with the boat, though he had never learnt the trade, the use of tools seemed to come natural to him, and, whilst not neglecting his farm work, he was able to erect a home of which he was justly proud. A stove in the kitchen now replaced the old dug-out on the river bank which had served its day in all weather in their earlier struggles.

During the remaining years on the Williams River following the tragic deaths of their children in the dysentery epidemic, their fifth child, Ellen, was born. She was reared to womanhood, and married George Sutors, with whom she lived at Largs for many years and passed away at a ripe old age. Then, three years later John was born. He later became a farmer at Wallalong on the Paterson river, where he married Emily Bishop. He took a prominent part in church work, and on the death of his wife, retired with his daughter to Morpeth, where he died at the age of 84.

So, after some ten years of struggling with the virgin forest, overcoming the natural difficulties arising from the depredations of droves of marsupials, mastering the hardships of transport, and rising above the crushing weight of sorrow, we see the young people with their two little children on the way to establishing themselves on the difficult place they had come to as new chums, when they made a decision which was to eventually bring out those qualities which were lying, as yet, dormant within them.

CHAPTER 3

WALLALONG.

Bilas Gill, it will be remembered, had elected to settle at the Cowpastures, but correspondence had been kept up with his relatives on the Hunter, and after seven years decided to follow his brother; so, in the year 1845 he came up and settled at Woodville, on the Paterson River, the next tributary of the Hunter, which enters the main stream at Hinton. His property he named "Albion Farm".

Though a farmer, he was also a famous preacher. Not only a giant in stature, but doubly fulfilling Thomas Collins' prophecy at his conversion: "Here comes a giant for the Lord," he was one of the greatest evangelists of the Hunter, and later the Hastings River districts. He travelled extensively holding mission services and establishing cottage prayer meetings.

Being convinced that his relatives would do better upon the rich flats of the Paterson River, he spoke of them to Dr. Walter Scott, who some time previously had been given a grant of land lying along the river to the north and west of Hinton, and who was desirous of having the river flats developed. Scott was more than willing to try out Mr. Gill's relatives, as he held the preacher himself in the highest esteem.

So it came about that, after the first decade of their colonial experience in which they had managed to eke out a precarious existence from poor country, the scenes of their early struggles and deep sorrows, the Kings and the Gills moved to Wallalong in the year 1848.

EARLY DIFFICULTIES.

Here were primitive conditions and hard work again, and the first year saw very little return for all their labour. There were homes to build, land to clear, and the first crops disappointing. At the end of the year King, now thirty three, went to Dr. Scott and said, "It's no use, Dr. Scott, I've worked hard, but I'm a failure, I can't pay you your rent." "That's alright, King," said the understanding owner laying his hand on the young giant's shoulder, "I know the kind of man you are and just how hard you've worked. The day will come when you will not only pay your rent but have much more." Thus encouraged, he went back with a light heart to his wife, and the prophecy was abundantly fulfilled, for he became a very successful farmer, the following year proudly paying for both years.

THE FAMILY.

Coming to Wallalong with two children, the family soon increased, Sarah being the first to be born in the new home. She afterwards married John Roderick and lived for many years at Balmain, where her husband was employed as a diver at Mort's Dock, until he met his end when a newly-launched vessel carried the ways with her into the water and he was engaged in freeing them; his life-line became entangled in the floating timbers and he was suffocated.

Briefly the names of the family born during the succeeding years are as follows: William, married Annie Bishop, and after settling at Largs as a builder and contractor, continued to reside there in retirement, and passed away at the age of 83.

Albert, married Mary Martin, and settled as a farmer on Wallalong; as a side-line he built skiffs out of the cedar logs which were deposited on his farm during the flood of '93. He lived to a ripe old age.

The next were twins: Abram, who married Alice Boyle, and became a schoolmaster in which profession he wielded a great influence in several districts for many years. His twin sister, Naomi became the wife of Charles A. Taylor, also a schoolteacher.

The next child was Edward, who began to preach at an early age. After training, he entered the ministry of the Methodist Church in 1878 and married Elizabeth Dudley. He died in harness at Kempsey in the year 1905, and lies in the same graveyard with his great uncle, Silas Gill.

Arthur and Andrew followed, and the last of the family were again twins: Louisa who became Mrs. J. M. Stocks, and Editha who married John Harmon.

At the time of writing, the last named twins are the sole surviving members of the family, both being now over 82 years of age.

HIS CONVERSION.

Mrs. King was certainly a wonderful mother. She bore seventeen children, rearing eleven to maturity, and not having the modern advantages of doctors and nurses. But she was also a "mother in Israel," a truly Christian woman, having at an early age given her heart to God under the preaching of "Uncle Silas", for whom she always had a very deep affection.

When Silas Gill came to her home after walking many miles to his Sunday appointments or cottage meetings during the week, she would prepare hot water and bathe his tired feet, and render him the same loving service that Mary did for her Lord.

For long the preacher had exercised an influence over her husband, but it was not till he had attended one of Gill's meetings when he was forty years old that the great change of heart that we know as "conversion" came over him. The "Giant" had led him into a light that "never dawned on land or sea," and from that time he, too, began to preach the gospel of redeeming love, becoming, like his wife's uncle, a powerful preacher with a ready flow of language and a winsomeness which made him greatly beloved.

A CLOSE CALL.

Edward King was always fond of the gun—ever since the time when one got him into trouble as a boy in England. But in this free land there were no gamekeepers or poaching laws, and with his increasing prosperity he purchased the finest sporting gun that he could procure—a deadly weapon with an extra long barrel. There was none like it in the district, and its fame spread until it became the envy of two wild characters who had been descended from convict stock. Many were the bags of game that fell to that gun, and its owner could now indulge in his favourite sport without the fear of the treadmill looming over him.

He built a hut on the edge of a swamp some distance from his farm in which he kept his duck-shooting canoe—a very light and frail craft which he had built himself from the best cedar. His practice was to place a bunch of bushes in the nose of the canoe, and then, kneeling down with his gun handy, he would propel the light craft with his hands and thus steel upon his quarry far out in the swamp.

On this fateful afternoon he had been followed by these rascals who, knowing his habits, had ambushed themselves at a place they knew he must pass in his canoe. Here they deliberately shot him with buckshot at fairly close range. He received the charge mostly in the head and rolled over, capsizing the canoe and loosing the gun. The shock of the sudden emersion revived him somewhat and enabled him to flounder feebly toward the bank, and eventually to crawl by slow stages back to the hut. When they saw that he had got out of the water and that the gun had disappeared in the muddy swamp, the miscreants decamped, having failed in their dastardly design.

Here, in a pool of his own blood, he lay in agony as night came on, and feebly calling for help when he would return to momentary consciousness, and as the hours dragged by there were more than the evening shadows which began to close over him.

At home there was great anxiety as the night darkened and he did not return. He had never been late like this. At last the two elder sons started off to look for him in the farm dray carrying with them a door which their intuition warned them might be necessary if their worst fears were to be realised.

During the hours of suspense the practical wife prepared plenty of hot water and what medicines might be needed, and endeavoured to console the frightened children.

The boys drove the plodding horse as quickly as they could through the darkness to the swamp, and as they neared the hut kept up a constant coo-ee-ing. Then one of them saw a dark object on the swamp which they knew to be the upturned canoe. They searched nearby, and then heard a feeble moan from the direction of the hut. Hurrying thither they were horrified to see their father lying prone on the floor, his head a mass of congealed blood, and apparently about to breathe his last.

Tenderly they lifted him upon the door they had brought, having unharnessed the horse which would find her own way home. They then commenced the long tramp home over the rugged countryside, having decided that the dray would jolt the patient too much. What a journey that was! Each time they were compelled to rest they anxiously ascertained if their sire were still alive, and then would take up their task again.

Other members of the family who saw the light carried by the bearers came to ascertain the fate of their father and hurried back with the news. Two of the younger boys then set off on the three-mile walk to Morpeth to bring the doctor who had lately been established there, and returned with him in the early hours of the morning. Though the patient was very low, he proceeded to extract the buck-shot from his shoulders and head. Many of the pellets he discovered had flattened themselves on the victim's cranium. The doctor at last decided that he was in too weak a condition to attempt to remove all the shot, and left his patient as comfortable as he could for the time being. He came daily till the wonderful constitution of his patient began to assert itself, after which he slowly recovered.

Throughout his life at various times he suffered much and had several operations at a later date, but even then pellets would continue to work to the surface, and the writer remembers feeling lovingly some of those hard lumps on his grandfather's head as he listened to the story of the wicked men who had attempted his life.

The doctor accounted for his recovery by the fact of his iron constitution and indomitable will-power, together with the careful nursing of his wife.

The gun was later recovered from the ooze of the swamp, and thoroughly cleaned, and was responsible for many a bag of game in the following years.

The rascals were apprehended and tried for manslaughter at Maitland, and would have been sent to prison for a lengthy term, but on his recovery, King heard that their mother was a widow in straitened circumstances, and as the victim, he pleaded for leniency having freely forgiven the young men. They were subsequently released on condition that they left the district, and later both met violent deaths upon the Clarence River.

For years King continued to give their mother monetary assistance, and the district learnt that the preacher could practice what he himself preached: "Forgive your enemies as Christ hath also forgiven you."

VIKING SPARN

Up to about the middle of the 19th Century the only available means the farmers had of getting the products of their labours to the Sydney market was by the early steamers, "Sophia Jane," "Phoenix", "Victoria", and "Rose", belonging to the then Hunter River Steam Navigation Company. At one stage this Company had no competition, and as is usually the case in such circumstances, increased their freight charges to an exorbitant amount, and became so independent that they frequently passed farms by, leaving the produce upon the bank. General dissatisfaction was felt by the farmers all along the river.

King resolved to better those conditions both for himself and for his long-suffering neighbours. At Eccleston, on the Williams River, McPherson's ship-yard had a schooner in the course of construction, and King inspected the vessel on the slips. He bought her as she stood and had her completed according to his own ideas. On her launching he had her named "Dart".

Eventually she came into commission and regularly plied between the Hunter and Sydney with produce. To the general satisfaction of the farmers, he so cut freights that he obtained a large share of the riverside trade. So effective was his competition that eventually the steamship company discontinued the custom of stopping along the river to pick up their cargoes, and confined their activities to the Sydney-Newcastle-Morpeth run.

THE ADVENTUROUS "DART"

This first vessel of the farmer-shipowner had an adventurous career. A trim little schooner of 150 tons burthen, very sea-worthy and a fast sailer, earned her owner a good return for years, even going to the northern rivers for freights during the slack seasons on the Hunter.

She was commanded by a Captain Smith, who, as events later proved, had his eye on the main chance. On one occasion tidings of the vessel were late in arriving, and enquiries revealed that the captain had gone beyond his owner's orders, and had sailed off north with the schooner. She was reported at Brisbane, and King at once followed her to the northern capital only to find that she had sailed further north before his arrival. He followed as far as several of the North Queensland ports, where he learned that she had gone off to the islands of the Coral Sea on a 'black-birding' cruise.

When he discovered that his "Dart" was engaged in the lucrative but nefarious traffic in 'black ivory'---capturing island natives and selling them to the Queensland plantations---he determined to recover her at all costs and bring her skipper to book.

At Townsville he chartered a vessel and began a chase through the Pacific which led them on many wild-goose chase and occupied many months, during which time the "Dart" succeeded in making several successful raids in the true Bully Hayes style. Now the viking began to show itself, and, regardless of cost, King followed up every clue until, eventually, he caught up with her.

She was about to sail with her cargo of 'black ivory' below hatches when he came into the island harbour and she was caught red-handed and her captain arrested.

For his piracy the captain did several years penal servitude and had his 'ticket' cancelled; the "Dart" returning to her old business under a new command sent up from Sydney. But the whole experience of the schooner's purloining and her subsequent engagement in the iniquitous slave trade, which her owner was so greatly opposed to, made him determined to get rid of her as soon as possible.

THE "HARRIET KING"

On his return from the island chase, and subsequent to the court proceedings, and whilst still running into the "Dart", King entered into arrangements with her builders to lay down a larger vessel for him. The keel of this vessel, a brig of some 200 tons, was laid in 1860, and when her hull was launched under the name of "Harriet King" in honour of his wife, she was towed round from the Williams River into the Hunter, and thence up stream and into the Paterson, and anchored off his home farm, where she was finished off and rigged under the supervision of a young draughtsman named John Roderick, who had been loaned to McPherson by Mort's Dock of Sydney. This young man fell in love with the owner's daughter, Sarah, whom he married on the completion of his task.

During her outfitting the beautiful brig attracted much attention, and her progress was watched by a much wider circle than that of the neighbouring farming community.

Mr. and Mrs. King were very generous people who loved their church, and many were the benefactions bestowed upon needy causes. To celebrate the completion of the "Harriet King", and just prior to her maiden voyage, a grand tea-meeting was held on board to which crowds of people came from the surrounding districts as far as Maitland and Newcastle.

Mrs. King was renowned cook, and the whole of the food for that great event was prepared by her. It was a great success, and the whole of the proceeds were given for the refurnishing of the Methodist Church at Morpeth, of which they were members, and of which Mr. King was the circuit steward for upwards of half a century.

The brig's first commander was Captain Champion, whose wife always accompanied her husband on his voyages, and was greatly beloved by the whole complement.

After being put into commission the brig commanded and adventurous career in the Pacific, frequenting New Zealand, the Islands, most of the Australian ports, and even across the Pacific to Valparaiso.

The owner now felt freer to leave the farm in the hands of his boys whilst he indulged in his love of the sea, and frequently sailed with the "Harriet King" on her many voyages.

He eventually sold the "Dart", which, after a long life at sea, became a coal hulk in Sydney harbour, and it speaks well not only for her builder, but for the quality of the timber of which she was constructed, that, after sixty years, she is still afloat in use.

CHAPTER 5.

SHIPBUILDER.

Not content with owning two vessels, this enterprising man conceived the idea of building a ship himself--this one to be the largest and best of his fleet. He talked over his idea with his elder sons, two of whom had a pronounced strain of the viking love of ships in their veins, always making models of various types of ships, and quite skilled in the use of many kinds of tools. They had also played no small part in the fitting out of the "Harriet King," under the supervision of their brother-in-law, Roderick. The boys were all enthusiasm, John Roderick was brought up from Sydney to be taken into their counsel, and arrangements were soon entered into with Mort's Dock for his temporary loan for the great enterprise. Dr. Scott was interviewed with regard to timber, and he readily agreed to give all the timber that would be required from the forests upon his various estates, and wished them every success.

Plans were then drawn, calculations arrived at, and much preliminary groundwork prepared. Contracts were concluded with Sydbey firms for the supply of canvas, chains, ropes and other gear, all being brought up by his own vessels to his place at Wallalong. Workshops were built and accommodation provided for the artisans who would be employed; huge saw-pits were erected over the river bank for the purpose of sawing the logs which were to be drawn from the forests within a radius of 20 miles from his farm; a large log was hollowed out and connected with a boiler for the purpose of steaming the planks into the required shapes; and finally a slip-way was prepared upon "The Point," a projecting piece of land on his farm in a bend of the river.

These preliminaries commenced in the year 1862 and took several months to complete.

BUILDING OF THE "SOVEREIGN"

In an article which appeared in the "Sunday News" under date 17-7-1925, which accompanied a photograph of the graceful vessel in full sail, the author said, inter alia, "The barque was
"constructed on the banks of the Paterson River 60 years ago
"under Lloyd's special survey and sailed to all parts of the
"world. She was a great advertisement for Australian Timber,
"for the whole of the wood used in her construction was
"gathered within a radius of 20 miles of Edward King's farm,
"being hewn from the forests nearby, built by a farmer-
"shipwright. Such is the history of this historic vessel
"built in Australia."

King himself selected the trees that were to fall to the axe, and superintended the hauling of the huge logs by jinker to the saw-pits where sawyers cut the logs into planks by means of long upright saws--one worker being stationed on a staging erected above the log, whilst his mate was in the saw-pit beneath, the saw gradually biting its way down the whole length of the log. There were no power-driven circular saws, planing machines, or other modern conveniences. Little wonder that this herculean task occupied years of hard manual labour.

The keel of the new vessel was laid down on the prepared slip at the point in 1863, and shipwrights were brought up from Sydney to commence the building.

The projected vessel was to be a three-masted barque of 300 tons burthen, and all her fittings were to be worthy of the flagship of her owner, who intended to have her christened "Australian Sovereign," though this fact he and his wife kept a secret until the actual launching.

HECTIC YEARS.

Now commenced those years the memory of which has been handed down in the various branches of the family as "while the vessel was building." For the younger members of the family they were full of excitement, and for the older ones increasingly interesting work, whilst for the mother of a large family they would have been busy years in any case, but she insisted doing all the cooking for the employees. The timber-cutters, teamsters, sawyers, shipwrights, riggers and others lived in cabins at the Point and all came to the homestead for meals. A flagstaff was erected near the home, the sail-maker making a special "dinner-flag" which impiably had upon it the face of a man with his thumb and fingers protruding from the nose in the attitude of "swearing" as the youngsters called it. This comical flag was always flown when the meal was ready, and was the signal for a general line-up of toilers around the long table, all of whom did full justice to Mrs. King's bountiful cooking.

"LABOUR" TROUBLE.

The whole of the work was under the superintendence of John Roderick, a very quiet-spoken man who was greatly respected by all and who usually managed to keep the peace between the various types of tradesmen employed. But over the years the work went on not without its labour troubles, mainly due to the fact that most of the men had come from Sydney and found the peaceful country life, so far from their usual haunts, to be a little too peaceful, and longed for the swing-doors and the foot-light's glare. Sometimes the men would go off to Newcastle to spend their wages on a "bender," which might keep them unfit for work for some days, or perhaps those who offended too often would be dismissed and fresh hands would have to be brought up from Sydney, and in any case it would mean a hold-up of the work. There were also the wet seasons to contend with when tarpaulins would have to be hurriedly erected. But on the whole the work proceeded more or less without serious delay.

"LITERALLY SMOSHED"

There were no made roads through the farms and forests in those days and heavy rains occasionally held up the log-jinkers, which became stuck in the deep mud and had to be dug out, leaving great gaping wheel-tracks. King accompanied the timber-getters after one of these wet seasons in order to mark some more standing timber for future axes, and rode home on the top of a log. Through the bush there were many tracks which criss-crossed their path and made the going particularly rough. As the result of an unusually heavy jolt he became unseated and fell-fortunately into a very large rut over which the jinker was passing. Before the team could be brought to a halt, one of the huge wheels which carried one end of the suspended log passed right over his body, which was pressed down into the rut made by a team in the wet season. Fortunately the surrounding ground had hardened, so that the wheel did not sink into this cross-rut, but passed over it; otherwise it would have meant the end of the enterprise.

One of the sons who had observed the fall, rushed up expecting to see his father crushed to death. "Are you alright, father?" was his anxious enquiry. From the depths of the rut came the familiar voice which had lapsed into the Sussex dialect. "I bar'nt killed, but I be literally smoshed!"

However that proved to be an exaggeration, for, on being extricated from the mud it was found that no bones were broken, though he had received many bruises, and in a few days was none the worse for his narrow escape.

THE WHALE BOAT.

During the course of construction, certain supplies for the vessel sometimes ran short between the infrequent visits of the "Harriet King," and the sons, William and Albert would take one of the ship's whale-boats and pull all the way to Newcastle for them, a distance of 35 Miles by river. They would leave in the early morning, going down with the falling tide. Their business would have to be hurriedly transacted at the port, for there is a true saying that "time and tide wait for no man," and this they discovered on one of their trips to be most painfully true. It was almost impossible to pull the heavy ship's boat against the tide, and after struggling for a few miles and making no headway, they were compelled to tie up at the bank of the river and wait for the next tide. Mostly, however, they were able to judge things better and would arrive home late the same night. What a boon a modern motor-boat would have been to those young men.

THE LAUNCHING.

After some two years, during which the hull was being constructed upon the slips, the vessel was ready for launching. Much interest had been shown by many visitors during the building, her graceful lines and clipper bow giving promise of speed, so when the launching was announced large crowds came from Maitland and Newcastle. Those from the latter place came mostly on the small steamers which ran excursions for the purpose, while others came by train to Maitland, and thence per an assortment of vehicles. Locals were early lining the both banks, and every vantage point was soon crowded.

Having in mind the successful tea-meeting that was held on board the "Harriet King" on her completion, Mr. and Mrs. King decided to celebrate the launching of the "Sovereign" with a still greater tea-meeting. This time, however, they realized that it would not be possible to hold the function on board, for it would be impossible to accommodate the number of people who had promised to be present; so it would be held on the farm under canvas. Large marquees were brought up from Sydney for the great occasion, and when they were erected, together with other structures made from the vessels huge sails, and all decorated with gaily flying bunting, the scene must have looked like a gigantic circus in a sylvan setting.

As previously, the whole of the cooking arrangements were in the capable hands of Mrs. King, who had a band of willing helpers in her daughters and neighbours. No expense was spared to make this not only a red-letter day in the life of the farmer-ship-builder, but also a memorable one in the history of the River.

THE GREAT MOMENT.

It was a beautiful day, and a more beautiful scene could hardly be conceived. The blue hills in the distance, the green lucerne flats, the winding river with its serried ranks of weeping willows, the beflagged tents, the gaily arrayed crowds, the steamers with their many passengers, and finally "The Point" with its slip-way surrounded by flags in the midst of which lay the object of all this excitement--the vessel which was soon to take to her native element.

As the hour approached, the official party moved to the staging under the bow of the ship, the vast crowds lining the river began to cheer and the steamers caught the infection of the moment and their shrill cock-a-doodle-dos frightened scores of birds out of the trees in which they had taken shelter from the unusual crowds that seemed to be everywhere.

Though, of course, unheard by the crowd, Mrs. King, in a neat little speech, named the ship "Australian Sovereign," and as the time-honoured wine splashed upon the clipper's bow, the order was given, and the vessel began to slide into the water to the accompaniment of renewed cheering from the crowds and stronger blasts from the steamers.

NOT ON THE PROGRAMME.

The launching did not go without a hitch, however, for one of the restraining ropes snapped with the strain, and the vessel slid across the river and stuck in the mud of the opposite bank, her rakish counter coming to rest against the chimney of a farm-house which was built close to the water.

Cheers rent the air and whistles blew their loudest at this unexpected item of entertainment, but another laugh was coming. A large hawser was connected to the bow of the vessel and carried across the lucerne paddock past the tea-meeting tents, and hundreds of neighbours and visitors--many of whom were in frock coats and top hats--willingly laid hold of the rope in an attempt to free the ship from the mud. All being ready, the order to pull was given and the strain taken up. The vessel was firmly established in her mud nest, however, and across the farm a tug-o'-war was in progress, though all the manpower was on the one side as against the tenacity of the mud on the other.

The first pull proving unsuccessful, many more people ferried themselves across the river to add their weight, and once more the strain was taken up--this time by upwards of 600 men. When the full weight came, suddenly the rope broke, and the hundreds of willing workers were precipitated heels-over-head, with top-hats flying in all directions!

This was to signal for prolonged hilarious laughter, in which the victims joined as heartily as the onlookers, many declaring that the trip up from Newcastle was worth it for that sight alone.

Further efforts of this kind were abandoned, and the pleasure steamers were brought into the picture, ropes being passed from them to the refractory ship, which, as though scorning the lubberish attempts of the landmen, bowed gracefully to craft of her native element, and moved serenely out of the mud into mid-stream from where she was warped alongside the piers and moored.

THE TEA MEETING.

The crown now made for the huge tents for the tea-meeting, which was something far more sumptuous than the equivalent modern afternoon tea. We would have called it a "Banquet," but the name "tea-meeting" had been handed down for generations among the people called "Methodists," and so tea-meeting it was. At the official table were some of the more prominent guests, many of whom made congratulatory addresses, and wished the new ship every success. Mr. King responded to all the speeches in his own inimitable style, his witticisms provoking roars of laughter. The singing of the "Doxology" brought the proceedings to an end officially, but when the crowds dispersed and three cheers had been given to Mrs. King and her assistants, the steamers taking the happy excursionists back commenced too-tooting their farewells, which lasted for some miles down the river.

All had the feeling that if good wishes meant anything, the new ship had made a good start, and that a memorable page had been turned in the history of the River, and, indeed, in the maritime history of Australia. As on the previous occasion, the whole of the proceeds were given towards the erection of a new church in the neighbourhood.

FITTING OUT.

The launching successfully over and the vessel securely moored against the piers, upon which staging had been built from the shore, the work of fitting out commenced--the huge masts had to be stepped, cabins built, bowsprit and spars rigged, and all the running gear attached. As the work progressed, the Paterson River continued to be the scene of a pilgrimage of ship lovers, the bending of the sails proving particularly spectacular. On one very calm day the full cloud of sail was bent on all masts, as though she was in the open sea. It must have been a glorious sight when every stitch she was to carry was exposed to view--a fully rigged

barque in full sail upon a calm river with a background of weeping willows.

Fortunately the day continued without a breath of air and all the sails were furled before evening. One wonders how she would have behaved thus crowded with canvas had a strong wind arisen.

During the months of her fitting-out, the "Harriet King" came up river with supplies and gear. Her skipper at the time was Captain Smith -- No relation to the skipper who had absconded with the "Dart" some years before. He was a good seaman but had a higher estimation of Captain Smith than many others had. As he watched the progress of the "Sovereign," he pictured himself promoted to be her master, and had so convinced himself that the owner would follow this course, that he openly boasted that he would be the "Sovereign's" first skipper.

But the owner had other ideas, and engaged Captain Kindred as her first master. Under him the barque was taken in tow to Newcastle to receive her first cargo, coal, for Hong Kong.

SAILOR SONS.

The sail-maker who was employed on the "Sovereign" was an old sea-dog with a repertoire of yarns from the seven seas, and nothing delighted the boys more than to hear him spin a yarn. He would hold their attention for hours with his colourful accounts of "a life on the ocean wave." The imagination of one of the younger sons, Abram, was fired with the old sailor's stories, and he determined to go to sea at all costs. So strongly did the viking strain course through his veins that he made up his mind that he would sail with the "Sovereign", permission or no permission.

The parents talked the matter over, and decided that the best course to take would be to let the young man cure himself by having a taste of salt water under conditions in the "foks'l," though they were averse to his crossing the world without some other member of the family to keep a friendly eye upon him. So it was arranged that two of his elder brothers, William and Albert, should also sail on the maiden voyage.

These young men had been working on the vessel from the start, and were delighted at the opportunity to see the world. Purposely, therefore, one of the cabins was left incomplete, to account for their joint presence on board in order to complete the work. They were signed on as ship's carpenters, while the more impetuous spirit had to sail "before the mast," his parents wisely thinking that under these conditions he would be the more likely to be contented with a less adventurous life.

LEAVE TAKING.

When the cargo was all stowed, father and sons came to Newcastle to join the vessel, the owner naturally wishing to see the pride of his fleet set out upon her maiden voyage. Newcastle was very interested in the graceful barque that had been built by local enterprise, and when she left her moorings and was being towed to sea, crowds lined the wharves and breakwater to bid her farewell and see how she took to the sea.

The owner remained on board proudly pacing the poop and noting with pleasure how she rode the seas as sail after sail was caressed by the breeze, until the tug was about to cast off, and then, having given his blessing to the boys who were leaving home for the first time and would be away for many months, he accompanied the pilot aboard the tug. But on the return trip his eyes were glued to his beautiful creation, which was now crowding on her wings and leaning over to the freshening breeze.

THE CURE.

The tug had scarcely cast off, and the vessel beginning to feel her feet, when the would-be sailor began to experience his first bout of mal-de-mer, and began to feel that it was all up with him--but it wasn't. He became so violently ill that he made sure he was going to die, and his brothers became concerned for him, and reported his condition to the captain. The skipper was used to seeing people in this condition and assured the brothers that he would be alright in time, but visited the boy just the same. Abram pleaded with the captain to put in at Port Stevens which they were now passing, declaring that if he would do so he would gladly walk home on his head! After some days he recovered, but all visions of spending his life at sea were dispelled for ever, and throughout the trip he never succeeded in gaining his sea legs sufficiently to cause him to reconsider his determination to keep away from salt water.

A FAMILY ROMANCE.

The "Sovereign" proved herself very sea-worthy much to the delight of the sons who had taken such pride in her building. She had a good run up the Australian coast, but in the tropics met with variable winds. The fairway for sailing vessels had always been through the St. George's Channel, which lies between the islands of New Britain and New Ireland, but owing to contrary winds which drove her some hundred miles to the east, the captain decided that, instead of attempting the long task back to the channel, he would sail up the eastern shores of New Ireland, and rejoin her former course north of the Admiralty Group. All went well till they were three parts of the way along New Ireland, when, for a couple of days, they lay becalmed midway between the mainland and a group known as Tabar, or the Gardner Group.

In those days the inhabitants of both islands were savage cannibals, and they were not appreciating the fact that they were becalmed in such waters. Some of the crew soon detected smoke signals rising from both islands, and could distinctly hear the tattoo of war drums. It was not long before a fleet of war canoes approached from both directions. The savages soon surrounded the ship and attempted to board her. The captain warned all hands of the danger of allowing them on board, and so peaceful measures were tried, and trinkets which had been brought for the purpose of trading should the opportunity offer, were thrown to the canoes. At first the natives exchanged fruit, vegetables, and curios for the trinkets, but it soon became apparent that they were only skirmishing whilst their companions were endeavouring to gain a foothold on board.

It took the crew all their time to ward off these attempts, and presently the drums were beaten and the leaders held a council of war, which resulted in a concerted attempt to force their way. The captain served out the twelve guns which were kept in his cabin for emergencies. This certainly looked such a time, for the canoes were now ranged alongside, and had it not been for the firearms, they might well have been at the mercy of these howling devils.

At a signal from the captain a volley was fired over their heads, and when the smoke cleared it was evident that the savages were scared, for the whole fleet was moving back to the shore as fast as their paddles could prop them. Another volley helped to speed them on their way, and though a strict watch was kept, no further attempt was made on the vessel.

All were greatly relieved when a favourable wind sprung up the following day and the "Sovereign" drew out of harm's way.

As a little boy, the writer had often handled some strange things which he was told were island curios that his uncles had obtained on their voyage to China. There were curiously carved combs, mats, spears, headdresses, etc, which filled his mind with wonder. Little did he dream that one day he should see such things at first hand.

Half a century later, the grandson of the owner of the "Sovereign" came to that same coast of New Ireland as a missionary, and was the pioneer missionary to the natives of Tabar--the descendants of the savages who had surrounded his grandfather's vessel so long before: and the curios which he had wondered at as a lad he now saw in daily use. He was privileged to see these descendants of cannibals changed into peace-loving, civilized, and very lovable people.

CHINA.

The vessel later had a brush with those intrepid pirates of those days--the "Malay pirates," but she outsailed them, and some days later ran into a typhoon in the China Sea. She weathered the storm like a thoroughbred, and eventually made Hong Kong.

Here she discharged her cargo, whilst the three brothers explored the island, doing all the "sights," and making many purchases of eastern curiosities to bring back to relatives and sweethearts. She crossed to Kowloon and other places, and generally made the most of the weeks spent in port.

During the voyage the younger son gathered a wealth of information which must have been put to practical use in his profession in later life, for he became a schoolmaster. How interesting his geography lessons must have been, and how the youngsters must have frequently sought to "draw him out" by asking leading questions about the Orient!

HOMEWARD BOUND.

The great tea-clipper races were then at their height, and such well-known fliers as Thermoplae, Sir Lancelot, Lightning, and Cutty Sark were usually first to be loaded with the new season's tea, and start the great race round the Cape for the London market. Whilst waiting at Canton for their cargo, the boys could take in the beautiful lines and towering masts of many of these racers to their heart's content, and though their own departure was delayed, they were amply rewarded for their inaction by gazing at the continual movement of world-famous clippers threaded their way through a maze of junks to and from the harbour.

At last she obtained a place where she could be loaded and with a full cargo, all of which had been carried on the shoulders of coolies, she cleared the harbour, southward bound. Fair winds brought her again to the tropics, where, however, she ran into the doldrums, and weeks were spent without making much headway. The run down the Australian coast was uneventful, and the farmer's sons felt very homesick when the vessel was abreast of Newcastle, though too far out to see the familiar landmarks.

When rounding Cape Howe they ran into southerly gales, the vessel shipping many seas; but the stout craft behaved splendidly, albeit some of the cargo was damaged by water. The weather continued rough through the Strait, and all were glad when the tug came out of Port Phillip and took her in tow, eventually to tie up at the Melbourne wharves.

The boys did the sights of the southern capital for some days whilst awaiting a passage back home. At last they boarded a Sydney-bound steamer, and at the latter port transhipped to the Newcastle packet, and thence home, where a great welcome awaited them.

Thus ended the maiden voyage of the largest locally built transocean vessel of her day, which marked another milestone in the career of her farmer-shipbuilder owner. The vessel made several long voyages in her career, including America and China, but never again with the owner's sons as members of her crew.

REVERSES

During the time the "Sovereign" had been abuilding, speculation was rife as to whom her command would be entrusted, and it will be remembered that Smith, commander of the "Harriet King", had fully expected to be promoted to the larger vessel, and had openly boasted that he would be skipper of the new ship.

Great was his chagrin and disappointment when he was passed over by the owner, and the command given to Captain Kindred---a new comor! He felt that he had been discredited in the shipping world, and that seamen in all the taverns from Newcastle to 'Frisco would have the laugh on him. So badly did he take what he called his 'disgrace', that there were not a few who warned the owner that the skipper of the "Harriet King" had vowed to get even with his employer for thus lowering his dignity, and advised him to get rid of the man. King spoke to the skipper, who, to serve his own ends, professed that everything was alright, and the owner felt that everything would blow over.

LOSS OF "HARRIET KING"

The injured man bided his time, and for several trips thereafter nothing happened whilst the vessel carried meagre cargoes, but the grudge had now become an obsession, and when the brig was carrying her most valuable cargo for years, she was wrecked off the coast of New Zealand in perfectly calm weather, the vessel being much nearer the land at the time than was the usual course. The job was well done, and vessel and cargo became a total loss.

The circumstances surrounding this disaster were such as to leave little doubt in the minds of those who were interested, that Captain Smith had, at last, got even and had his revenge. It was not, however, an unqualified triumph for Smith, for, at the marine enquiry into the loss of his ship he was convicted of negligence and lost his certificate.

LOSS OF SOVEREIGN

The loss of the beautiful brig that sailed the sea under his wife's name was a severe blow to her owner. However, he had his own creation, the graceful tea-clipper, and for years she sailed the Pacific in all directions with varying cargoes.

She was now commanded by Captain Berry, a good seaman but impetuous, and his flare for taking risks at last brought disaster. Her last voyage was to Noumea, the port of New Caledonia. The vessel had always previously taken the pilot on board before attempting the reef-strewn passage. On this occasion she hove-to for some time flying the flag for a pilot, but, as no response seemed to come, the captain's impatience got the better of his judgement, and supposing that he could navigate the passage himself, sailed the barge into harbour, with the result that she ran upon the Amideo Reef and became at total loss.

The fact that the captain lost his ticket for his impetuosity was little compensation for the loss of his vessel to the owner. She was his flagship, his own creation, and he had spared no expense upon the lovely barge which would respond to the freshening breeze no more.

As in the case of the "Dart", whose timbers have kept her afloat for 70 years, so with the "Sovereign", for, though broken by the waves of the Pacific on her coral bed, her bones refuse to give in, and portions of her timbers were seen fifty years later by descendants of the builder when they were on a visit to New Caladonia.

A FURTHER PROJECT

Edward King, with his straight back, blue eyes, commanding figure, and adventurous outlook, his love of the sea in all its moods, and the ships which challenged its dangers, must have come from the sea-rovers of long ago, for the loss of his "Sovereign" was only a temporary eclipse.

He soon emerged from the cloud which the loss of his ship had made, with the determination to build another vessel--this time one that would not be subject to the vagaries of the wind. He made elaborate plans for the construction of a steamer, and was in correspondence with British firms for the fabrication of engines for the vessel. He made several trips to Sydney in pursuance of his plans, going into the costs of boilers and steel plates, for this was not to be a wooden vessel, though it was to be built on the old site.

This project occupied his attention for several months, and acted as a solace for the loss of his wind-jammers.

A WISE CONSORT

His wife, who all through his life had been his inspiration and who knew him so well, encouraged these plans while they acted as a restorative to his wounded spirit. When she saw that he was his old self again, she quietly talked over family matters with her spouse, pointing out that the sons were now settled with their families---two of them on the land, another as a builder and contractor, whilst the younger ones were preparing, one to enter the teaching profession, and the other to enter the ministry.

They should be allowed to make their own careers.

She pointed out that the building of a steel steamer would require many more workers than had the wooden vessels. She herself was not as young as she used to be, and would not be able to superintend the cooking for so many, and if he persisted in the work she would not be able to render him the assistance which she would like to give. His own life had been a strenuous one, and he was now well-to-do. Rather than have all the worry that the building of such a vessel would entail, surely he could afford to take it a little easier now, and enjoy with her the restfulness of their later years.

She reminded him that he loved preaching, and would now be free to devote himself more fully to this work.

So this wise woman reasoned with her husband, who all his life had respected her judgement, and calmly weighing her arguments, he decided to give up the project which, through the months, had restored his spirit, and now determined to give himself more fully to the work of preaching the Gospel.

THE PREACHER

As a preacher he became very successful, travelling widely throughout the district and being much sought after for his services, his name appearing upon many Circuit Plans. He frequently took three services on the Sunday, walking to some and driving his mare "Dutchess" in his buggy to the more distant appointments.

He was a forceful and original preacher; never at a loss for words and always definitely evangelistic, he won many for the Kingdom of God. Not a few stories are current among the old hands of his quaint sayings, for, in his enthusiasm he would frequently lapse into the old Sussex dialect, which added a certain picturesqueness to his utterances.

For over half a century he preached with great acceptance. As a small boy the writer accompanied his grandfather on many of his preaching tours, ostensibly to open the gates, but more likely for company for the two were greatly attached to each other. He well remembers the upstanding, forthright old preacher with his quaint dialect and witty sayings.

On one occasion he heard the preacher declare in a sermon, "The Grace of God be like a round of beef--you can cut and come again".

Unlike many preachers then and now, he never used notes for his discourses, but towards the last, owing to failing vision, it was his custom to write out his text on a small piece of paper which he kept in his waistcoat pocket, lest he might have difficulty in finding the text in the Bible.

On one occasion the writer remembers the little church at Mount Vincent, where the pulpit was situated in a corner near to an open window. During the singing of the hymn before the sermon he saw the old man take out his text and lay it upon the open Bible, and then, taking up his hymn book, join lustily in the singing. Unnoticed by him, though not by the congregation, a puff of wind carried the paper out of the window. The hymn concluded, and the people settling down for the discourse, the preacher fumbled in his pockets, took up the hymn book, turned over leaves of the Bible, and then had another fumble in his pockets, and then announced, "Ah, I've lost me text! But it doesn't matter." Then, thinking of some suitable quotation from the old Word, he announced it and proceeded all unfuffled to preach the sermon he had in his mind to deliver. He evidently would have agreed with the dictum: "A sermon can be preached from any text, at any given distance from the text!"

BEGATTIN

There are still a number living who remember the following incident.

It was Christmas time, and he wanted to preach on the birth of Jesus Christ. There was no trouble over his "text" this time, but it was the matter of the Scripture reading which was the cause of endelibly pringing that service on the minds of his hearers. Evidently too busy to select his reading before leaving home, he opened the Bible and commenced reading the first chapter of St Matthew's gospel. Students will know that the birth story comes at the end of the chapter, while the first 17 verses contain the genealogy of Christ. Having taught himself to read, and never being very good in pronouncing some of the Biblical names, he waded in and stumbled over the names through several verses. Casting his eye down the page, and seeing nothing but "Jhonias begat Salathiel", and Salathiel begat Zorobabel," etc., he made another attempt and stumbled through another verse; then, disgustedly turning over the page, he remarked, "Ah, and they kept on begattin till the end of the chapter!"

Not only was his preaching sought after, but as a layman he wielded a powerful influence in his church. He was elected as Circuit Steward of the Morpeth Circuit, a position he held for fifty years with marked ability. Aply assisted by his wife, he was a tower of strength to a succession of ministers who realized his worth.

He was a very liberal giver to all charitable and religious organisations, and was voted to the chair of all public gatherings, and usually headed all subscription lists with a substantial cheque.

During the ministry of the Rev George Lane, the latter, in asking him to occupy the chair at a Missionary Meeting, delivered a happy speech eulogising the chairman, and then, turning to the chair, exclaimed, "O, King, live for ever --- Edward King." "Ah, I dare say," said the old man with a twinkle in his eye, "He knows I'm good for a £10 note!"

THE REPRESENTATIVE

For many years Edward King represented his church at the District Meeting---now called Synod---and the annual Conference in Sydney. He always stayed with his daughter, Mrs. C.A. Taylor, who then resided at Bald Rock, Balmain, and, together with his son, the Rev Edward King, would take the ferry across to the Sussex St Wharf and thence to Conference, where he was an outstanding figure.

The Rev J.G.M. Taylor once told the writer that, whenever Mr. King rose to speak there would be an expectant silence, and lobbyists would hasten into Conference. Well-knowing that he would have something worth listening to. His wise counsel, forceful utterance, quaint dialect and irreprossible humour, won for him a unique place among the laymen of his day.

THE LIKENESS

On one occasion in the old Centary Hall in York Street, the Home Mission Society decided to have photographs of the pioneers of Methodist thrown upon a screen by 'magic lantern' as part of their annual Demonstration, and consequently required King's photograph for the purpose of making a slide. The old gentleman had a rooted objection to sitting for what he called his "likeness", and so his son was forced to resort to guile in order to obtain it. "I was thinking of having my photo taken, father," the son announced one morning on the ferry. "Ah, well I'll go wid ye." said his sire. Arrangements having previously been made with the photographer, to the Crown Studios they went, and the Rev Edward King ostensibly posed before the camera. But it was his father, sitting near, who was taken without his knowledge.

When the eventful Demonstration came off, a group of the King fraternity were sitting together, and as slide after slide came on, the old man kept up a running commentary. "Ah, I know dat man; why, dat's old Pickering: I remember ---" But before he could complete his reminiscence, another face flashed upon the screen. "Ah, dat be old 'Boomerang' Yus, he was ----" And so it went on much to the amusement of many sitting nearby.

Presently his own photograph came on. Silence! Then, turning to his son, he asked, "Who be dat old fool, Edward?" It was the only one he didn't recognise! When the story was related in Conference next day there was a roar of laughter in which the old man joined heartily.

A DISTANT HOLIDAY

After entering the ministry in the year 1878, his son was transferred to Queensland and stationed at Chartors Towers, succeeding the first minister to be stationed on the tableland. His proud father journeyed to North Queensland to visit his son, and during his stay conducted many services in the district. He must have assisted his son in other ways, for the writer visiting "The Towers" forty years later, spent some time during his Missionary Deputation engagements, going through the old records of the circuit that were found in the parsonage study.

He was able to trace many of the activities of his uncle in that newly-formed Methodist centre, but what interested him most was coming upon his grandfather's handwriting on some

official documents. The ink had faded considerably, but he recognised the handwriting at once.

The old man had evidently been a witness to a number of marriages celebrated by his son. In this capacity he would doubtless have congratulated the happy couples in a neat speech, for on such occasions he excelled himself.

There in the musty old Marriage Register was the name--- Edward King---boldly written as witness in several places to marriages celebrated in the early eighties of last century.

CHAPTER 6

EVENTIDE

The writer's personal knowledge of Edward King dates from the time when he first "took notice." The evening shadows were even then beginning to lengthen for the hero of this sketch. His massive head was snow white, and his erect frame had begun to droop; his feet had lost much of their sprightliness, though he could still walk for miles without tiring, and he was still keenly alert to all the topics of the day; he could still take long preaching tours, and he could row "de old boaat" with the best. Like Moses of old, his natural strength was not abated.

HIS GREATEST SORROW.

The only sweetheart he ever had, the girl he had married when she was only 16, the mother of his seventeen children, the inspiration of all his enterprise, and the sharer of all his triumphs and disasters, worn out with her own strenuous service, fell on sleep in the month of June, 1890, in the 73rd year of her age. She was laid to rest in the family allotment of the cemetery at Hinton.

All the remaining children were now married and had families of their own, and the old man was alone in the home that was literally crammed with memories. A family council was held after the funeral, and it was felt that it would be a pity to take the father away from the old home to reside with any of the various members of the family. So a solution was arrived at by requesting Louise, one of the last-born twins who then resided at Maitland, to give up her own home and come to reside where she had been born and keep house for her ageing father, her husband at that time being away on the Richmond River.

So it came about that the writer, together with other members of the family, came to reside at Wallalong.

A GREAT COMPANIONSHIP

The old man consoled himself with the little boy who became his boon companion, accompanying him everywhere. Part of his daily ritual was to climb on the old gentleman's shoulders as he sat at table after breakfast, and comb the snow-white hair--a diversion which was greatly encouraged by his grandfather, and which often lulled him to sleep. As the combing would proceed the old man would invariably ask: "Be dare an shud, ves?" "Shud" was the Sussex equivalent for dandruff.

THE PILGRIMAGE

Every Saturday for years the old man would take his little grandson down to "de old boaat" and row the three miles down to Hinton, where together they would proceed to his wife's grave. Lovingly he would hoe any weeds that may have sprung up, place new flowers in the stands, and generally tidy up. Then he would stand bareheaded, with his hand upon the tombstone, and commune with the spirit of the departed for what seemed to the little boy an inordinate length of time. He seemed loath to leave the spot, and perhaps it was the childish impatience of his companion which would cause him eventually, with a last long look and a deep sigh, to be led away down to the boat again, and thence the long pull home. But the memory of the one he had "loved long since and lost awhile" would linger through the journey, and his companion's habitual chatter would be subdued, for instinctively he felt that he was on "holy ground" and in the presence of things unseen which he vaguely apprehended but little understood.

OTHER TRIPS

A life long friendship may be summed up in the words: "We were ship-mates together." Mr. and Mrs. Brooker came out with the Kings on the "Lady Nugent," and had settled some miles further up the Paterson River beyond Dunmore Bridge. Here the relict of his shipmate continued to reside, together with an infirm sister whose passage to this country had been paid by Edward King. He felt a kind of responsibility for these two old ladies, and they frequently sought his advice over their business affairs.

"Ah, I think I'll see how old lady Brooker be doin," he would say, and off we would go. It was a long pull but full of delight to his companion, for as well as the magnificent river scenery to delight his eye, the old gentleman would tell him stories of his own early days. Finally they would tie up at the wharf and proceed to the old home where they would be ushered into an old "sitting room" filled with carved straight-backed chairs with antimacassars, upon one of which the little boy had to sit very still and endure a lengthy conversation which was altogether over his head. After a cup of tea and a walk round the garden, at last they were free to get back to the boat and the homeward journey would soon dispell the feeling of imprisonment experienced in that silent house.

Sometimes he would decide to pull the boat round into the Hunter and up to Morpeth. As he pulled round bend after bend in silence, a deep sigh would escape him. Had he been picturing the time when his beloved "Sovereign" had been towed around these bends? The old river was full of memories for the man who would never feel the heaving poop beneath his feet again. At Morpeth he would pay calls on some of his cronies, purchase "Spanish" at the shop which had two enormous bottles filled with coloured water prominently displayed in the window, next would come the fruiterer's and finally a shop with many glass jars filled with lollies. With these purchases they would return to the boat and home. The "Spanish," or licorice, was always kept in the home, and daily would the old man present a small piece to the boy, who all his life has been partial to the confection.

MAITLAND.

Maitland! What a wonderful place to the little boy, with its many shops facing High Street, and its busy crowds.

Occasionally old "Duchess" would be harnessed up to the buggy and that wonderful journey through the farms, across Dunmore Bridge, through Largs and East Maitland and then West Maitland itself would fill the boy with delight. Of all the purchases that filled the tray of the buggy, he remembers but one--the pocket knife! As a matter of fact the old man would purchase a dozen at a time, but the lad was not to know that. The return journey could not pass quickly enough till he could use that precious weapon upon the clump of bamboos down the bank! When the opportunity arrived at last, many bamboos suffered at his hands, some of them returning the compliment by leaving a poisonous splinter as a reminder of the battle.

Next day the pocket knife was nowhere to be found, but in response to the plaintive, "Fa, I lost my knife," the old man would go to that wonderful draw of his and pacify the youngster with another. In a day or two the same performance would be gone through till the stock was depleted.

Looking back over the years, that youngster often wonders whether certain cousins of his were not responsible for the loss of at least some of those knives!

THE CHURCH FLOTILLA.

Sunday morning on the Paterson River presented a beautiful sight half a century ago. The various families along the banks for some miles would dress in their Sunday best and take to the boats--the women and girls in their gay frocks and open parasols to protect their faces from sunburn, the men dressed in black, their coats folded neatly upon the thwarts, their sleeves rolled up, rowing-- and all making their way to "service" at Wallalong "Chapel."

The graceful green willows lining the banks with their slender branches caressing the water, would frequently harbour a choir of magpies chortling a Sunday introtit as the boats gilded past. Here and there would be clumps of reeds from the depths of which would sound the rich, deep notes of the reed-bird, while finches and wrens would add their chatter, and the glorious kingfisher would dart through the foliage. Sometimes redbills, waterhens, and ducks would rise, protesting at their disturbance, and fly to safety, or a pelican would wait till the last minute, and then its great wings would lift it above the water to go skimming the surface for hundreds of yards only to come to rest and float gracefully like some ancient Roman galley in the distance.

Green lucerne fields, sheds crammed with hay, and farm-houses would glibe by in turn, and yonder three farm-horses would be nodding their heads together as they enjoyed the Sabbath rest.

As many as ten boatloads of worshippers at a time could be seen upon the river, the King fraternity accounting for five or six themselves.

The writer will never forget those Sabbath days. The two-mile pull along the placid waters, the collection of boats at the landing-stage, the gathering of farmers chatting in the church yard, the saddle-horses and the buggies, the solemn entry into the House of God, his mother presiding at the organ, his grandfather in the pulpit, and his uncles solemnly taking up the collection. Then, service over, the return pull home. After lunch would come the pull across the river and the two-mile walk to Larga, repeating the text to the teacher in Sunday School, the notso interesting lesson, and the long walk home.

SPARROWS.

At the old home there grew three large orange trees in a row which harboured countless sparrows. Recalling how sparrow-pie had been enjoyed when he was a boy in England, grandfather decided on one occasion to have another taste of the old dish. He dug a furrow parallel with the trees which he strewed liberally with grain, and then squatted down at the end of the long furrow with his double-barreled gun loaded with fine shot. When the birds filled the trench they received the first barrel. The slaughter was great, the flying dirt killing as many as the shot. When the rest rose they received the other barrel, with the result that carnage reigned. There were three tubs full of birds, and his daughter was plucking and cleaning the tiny game for hours. She did not attempt to do the lot, but had sufficient for several pies, much to the delight of the old sportsman.

VISITING PREACHER.

A frequent visitor to the old home was a local-preacher by the name of Barnes, a man with a fatal fluency of speech, who, 'twas said, got his sermons out of "The Christian Herald." King had a free Sunday and was a member of the congregation when Barnes preached. As usual the preacher came to dinner, and when the meal was over his host pointedly asked, "Where did you get that one, Bill?" much to the confusion of the preacher.

THE CAT.

The writer remembers a cat which was by way of being a pet with him. His grandfather was under the impression that it was a "tom," but when it had kittens in the clothes basket, the amusement was great when he burst out in surprise, "Be it a sow-cat, den?"

When the merriment, in which he joined heartily, had subsided, he chuckled, "Ah, dare be no fool like de old fool."

THE '93 FLOOD.

In March, 1893, the district was visited by torrential rains, twenty-three inches in twenty-four hours being registered during part of the deluge, as a result of which the record flood occurred.

As the river overflowed its banks, all the live stock was swum to the hill country behind boats, and as the water rose in the houses, families were removed to hay-stacks in the sheds. Owing to experiences in former floods, these sheds had been built on raised mounds, but this one rose to a height of nine feet in the upraised shed, and the top of the hay-stack was only six feet above flood level. The farmhouse showed just the top of the ridge. On these stacks two families lived for three weeks in the most primitive conditions; not that the flood lasted for so long, but the houses had to be washed of the mud which had gathered in them, and dried before they could be used again.

What fun it all was for the younger fry! The salvaging of many things in the boats, the haystacks floating past, many of them crowded with fowls, and the sky-larking carried on by the pent-up boys.

The flood brought down many cedar logs that had been felled at the headwaters eighty miles away, and these, together with piles of driftwood were deposited over the farms. The concern of the man on the land was to clear his farm of the rubbish as soon as possible, and great fires were started in the driftwood causing much valuable timber to be consumed.

Edward King advised his son, Albert, to retrieve as much of the cedar as he could, for, although he was a farmer, ever since the building of the "Sovereign" he had built skiffs for the neighbours and was really an expert boat-builder.

He took his father's advice and many logs were hauled off neighbouring farms and towed by boat round to his wharf, later to be converted into graceful river craft.

When the flood subsided, there was left upon the countryside a rich loam nine inches thick, which rejuvenated the land so that for years after phenomenal crops were harvested.

BEATING FLOODS.

As Maitland is built on the banks of the Hunter, the '93 flood proved a great disaster for business people in that and other towns. Between the two Maitlands the river goes off at a tangent and after meandering around the country for seventeen miles, returns to within half a mile of itself at a place called Narrowgut. A channel was dug which short-circuited the river by seventeen miles, and helped future flood waters to get away.

At Wallalong the farmers decided to dig a large drain at the back of their farms to carry off through flood-gates the waters of possible future floods. The work was many months in progress, the farmers giving a day a week each to the project.

A PROPHECY.

The soil that came from the drain was brought to the river bank, and was used to build a retaining wall ten feet high right round the farms. Edward King agreed with the idea of the drain to take the superfluous waters away, but was opposed to the building of the dam which would keep the land from being periodically inundated with fertilizing silt. He argued that, although floods did a lot of damage they also did good, for they helped to rejuvenate the land; and he warned them that they would impoverish their farms by persisting in their design.

However, the majority thought only of the recent damage, and constructed the dam, with the result that there has not been an inundation since.

A few years ago the writer visited a relative on one of those farms, and was told that the only way crops can now be assured is by a liberal use of artificial fertilizers.

Edward King's prophecy has come true.

AN AMUSING INTERLUDE.

These were leisurely days, before the advent of the ubiquitous motor lorry which rushes produce to market, or fluctuating market prices were listened to over the air. Days when farmers would think nothing of taking a day off to help any cause.

When the great drain was being dug, a neighbour had a man working for him who was a bit simple; no one knew his name other than George, and he was devoted to his master and implicitly believed what was told him.

An old willow tree had been swept by the flood across the road, and it was necessary to saw it through in order to remove it out of the workmen's way. But sawing green willow is something like sawing through a roll of blankets--hence the following story.

In the presence of many of the workers, his boss bet a neighbour a pound that George could work so hard that his shirt-tail would catch fire? To this George instantly responded, "That's right." So a test was to be made on the willow tree the next day. Word had gone around, and a good crowd gathered to see the fun. The cross-cut saw bestrode the offending willow, man after man taking turns on one end of the saw but only pretending to work, while the other end was manned throughout by the redoubtable George. He was soon perspiring freely, and to give him more freedom, he pulled out his shirt from his trousers. The crowd alternately jeered and encouraged him, which had the effect of making him redouble his efforts.

Finally as the tree was almost severed, and George almost exhausted, his boss was lighting his pipe behind him and touched the match to the flying tail, causing his back to be soon ablaze, to his own deep satisfaction and the roar of approval from the crowd.

Old Mr. King, who held the stakes, solemnly passed the money over to George's boss, and heartily congratulated George on his prowess!

THE DOG.

The same George had a non-de-script dog, faithful enough but like a sausage--half-bred. The Maitland Show was approaching, the great event of the year, and some of the lads assured George that he had a good dog and should put him into the show. For weeks George groomed the animal and then took it to the show confident of a prize.

Edward King had taken his grandson ostensibly to see the sights of the show, but principally to see the fun he knew would be caused by the dog. When the judging was over and the dog not placed, King commiserated George to such an extent that he went up to the judge, and asked, "I say, why didn't my dog get a prize?" "Which is your dog?" asked the judge. "Why, that beautiful dog in No. 8," said George. Looking down the kennels, the judge said, "Oh, that! Why there's a lot wrong with that." Hereupon George demanded, "Well, what's wrong?" By now the crowd had gathered, and the judge wanted to escape. "Well," he said, "for one thing his legs are too short." George looked very hard at him for a minute, and then fairly shouted, "But they touch the ground, don't they?"

That was the last Show Edward King attended. The crowds were too much for him.

THE "ANNA MARIA"

The great event of the week was the coming of the "Anna Maria," a flat-bottomed, stern wheel river droger, which called at the various farms, putting out long planks down which slid the bales of hay that been pressed in the sheds.

When she had a full load she steered badly, owing to the fact of being down at the head. Like a drunken man trying to walk a chalk-line, she would nose into the mud, first on this side of the river and then on that, until she would eventually come to Morpeth and transfer her cargo to the old "Namoi," to be taken by the old paddle-steamer to the Sydney markets.

She was an old steamer then, having been built in 1861, but her puffing and panting were a great delight to little boys. Not such a delight, however, was her whistle, which was a fearsome blast for little ears to endure.

She was commanded for many years by Dave Todd, who was ever ready for his joke, and knew of a certain little boy who would plug his ears and run screaming to his grandfather for protection should the whistle be used in the vicinity of the farm house.

On one occasion he remembers a big cousin for a "lark" pinning his arms behind his back as the steamer was passing, and shouting, "Blow the whistle Davey," which Todd readily did, roaring with laughter at the struggling, screaming little captive on the bank.

The old gentleman came to the rescue, and something of the old-time master of men flashed out. The bully was hurled from the bank, and Todd received a vituperative castigation which he remembered for years. Nothing aroused his anger more than to see pain inflicted wantonly.

LAST DAYS.

The time arrived when his daughter went to live at Newcastle, and the patriarch was taken from the old home to end his days with his son, William at Largs. He made several trips to Newcastle to see his daughter, but towards the last it was felt that he should not be allowed to travel alone; so the last few years were spent quietly, the PRESENT fading into the background, whilst the PAST became increasingly more vivid as second childhood came upon him.

In the year 1908 he peacefully fell on sleep in the ninety fourth year of his age, to open his eyes in the land of eternal youth.