

Studies in Australian Culture

*The Stockyard and the  
Croquet Lawn*

*Literary Evidence for Australia's Cultural  
Development*

G. A. Wilkes

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Literary Evidence for Australian  
Cultural Development

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Edward Arnold

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# One

## *Models and Methods*

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The purpose of this study is to examine Australian literature as evidence of Australian cultural development. It is evidence which social historians have already examined intermittently, but usually to illustrate patterns arrived at in other ways. There is a case for studying the literary evidence as the principal evidence, and for following it wherever it may lead. Although such an account must be partial, it nonetheless offers testimony which is unavailable from any other source. Even the disjunctions between the literary record and the historical development may prove instructive. Why, for example, is there no 'peak' in Australian literature to correspond with the achievement of Federation in 1901? Is Federation less of a landmark than has sometimes been assumed? The literary evidence will be found sometimes to reinforce familiar patterns, but at other times to challenge them, or to call into question the assumptions on which they depend.

Assumptions are hard to avoid. In tracing any kind of historical or literary development, the conclusions reached may well be determined by the model that is used. The historian of the Renaissance or the Reformation may for instance adopt the model of *post tenebras lux*, and his handling of the evidence is then likely to conform to that pattern, likely to make it come true. If the literary historian assumes that divisions in creative writing conform to the reigns of kings and queens, and speaks of the Victorian age and the Edwardian period, then these assumptions will have consequences for the literature with which he is dealing — authors like Landor and Peacock may be permanently stranded or disadvantaged, because their creative activities do not correspond. The same holds for a more dynamic model like constriction giving way to liberation, by which we may explain the emergence of Romanticism from the formalism of the eighteenth century. The evidence looked for in the eighteenth century will be evidence of formalism, the evidence looked for in the Romantic period will be evidence of liberation, and as such evidence will not be lacking, once more the model may seem to come true. Eventually the model can come to determine what is evidence and what is not.

Australian cultural development has normally been seen in terms of an emergent nationalism. This is probably an inescapable approach, given the circumstances, and no other preoccupation seems so persistent. But it is also responsible for a model of cultural development that has lent itself to stereotypes and distortions. It has normally been assumed that Australian cultural identity was first achieved in the 1890s, in such figures as the shearer and the bullock-driver, and that the typically egalitarian spirit of the day is reflected in the writing of such men as Henry Lawson, Joseph Furphy and A. B. Paterson. As a model of cultural development, this has had unfortunate consequences. Nationalistic impulses in the earlier nineteenth century, in Harpur or Kendall, have naturally been seen as strivings towards the Lawsonian ideal, and their true nature has passed unnoticed. Nationalism itself has been assumed to have taken only one form – the form familiar in Lawson and Furphy – and other significant manifestations of it have been overlooked. The possibility of a cultural identity in terms other than these has hardly engaged the enquirer.

A parallel assumption is that Australian cultural development is to be measured against the standard of English culture, and Australian nationalism by its departure from English values and loyalties. As nationalism implies independence, the pattern is again unavoidable, as perhaps is the antipathy which informs it. Again the writers of the 1890s define the typical attitudes. In Furphy's *Such is Life*, the Riverina is unduly infested (from the narrator's point of view) with English gentlemen — the ineffectual Willoughby, with his 'Dem your soul, you uncultivated savage'<sup>1</sup>, who becomes the offside of the savage he reproaches; Folkestone with his monocle, lecturing Montgomery about the familiarity he tolerates from his social inferiors; Smythe the squatter, who cannot recognize half a dozen beasts on his own station, and retires from the muster with a 'splitting headache' (p. 252). Even more offensive to Collins than these actual gentlemen and their imitations is the gentleman of colonial fiction, in his various guises: the 'languid Captain Vernon de Vere' who can trounce half a dozen colonials, without departing from Marquis of Queensberry rules; the 'rosy-cheeked darling of the English rectory' who from his experience of fox-hunting can master the buckjumpers of the outback; the 'hero of the croquet lawn' who inevitably takes charge at the threat of flood or fire, organizing the resourceful bushmen who are standing helplessly

by (p. 41).

Furphy is here dealing in stereotypes. Whatever represents English culture is refined, ineffectual and artificial; whatever represents Australian conditions is robust, democratic and authentic. The croquet lawn, mentioned by Furphy in passing, was in the settled districts rather like a piano in the outback, a sign of un-Australian elegance or leisure. Croquet had been played by the royal families of France in the seventeenth century, and after crossing the channel it had become a popular sport in England by the 1850s, especially at the country house and garden party level. The squatters who built their mansions in the Western District of Victoria in the 1860s and 1870s laid out croquet lawns and sometimes introduced peacocks to parade about them. J. A. Froude, visiting Ercildoun in the 1880s, remarked on the 'clean-mown and carefully-watered lawn, with tennis-ground and croquet-ground', and felt that he had arrived at 'an English aristocrat's country house reproduced in another hemisphere'.<sup>2</sup> In Tasma's novel *In Her Earliest Youth* (1890), as Sir Francis Segrave looks out on Collins Street from the reading room of the Melbourne Club, he leafs through invitations to dinner, to picnics, and to croquet, and when in Sydney Pauline Vyner receives a visitor outdoors, she dons a large straw hat and takes him to see how the croquet lawn is progressing. (Since that time croquet has of course taken a different direction as an organized sport, so that in 1980 a devotee could describe it as requiring 'guts, determination, courage, skill, sewer rat cunning').<sup>3</sup>

Furphy sets the 'hero of the croquet lawn' in the world of the teamster, the boundary-rider and the swagman, and resents the suggestion of his natural superiority to them in this environment. One symbol of this other kind of outdoors life is the stockyard. The word *livestock* seems to have become acclimatized very quickly in Australia in the shortened form of *stock*, generating more derivatives than any other word, except for *bush* — *stockyard*, *stockwhip*, *stockman*, *stockhorse*, *stockrider*, *stockroute*, and so on. The activities of the stockyard at branding time may be seen through the English eyes of William Howitt in his *Land, Labour and Gold* (1855), visiting a station near the Ovens River:

As we drew near the stock-yard, we heard desperate bellowings, and saw cattle running and plunging about madly, and a group of men all struggling with some one of the unfortunate beasts. There was smoke ascending, and a strong smell of singed hide and hair. Coming nearer, we saw what was going on. The cattle and great calves were crowding into one corner of a small compartment, and one of

the men was dexterously throwing a lasso over the heads of the calves in succession. One of them was noosed, he began to plunge, and run, and bellow furiously, as if conscious that no very agreeable treatment awaited him. But, in spite of his struggles, and plunges, and bellowings, he was rapidly dragged along to one side of the yard, where he was thrown down and the hot branding-iron clapped on his hip. It was no touch-and-go application, but a regular pressure on the poor wretch's hide for some half minute or so, till it burnt through hair and hide, during which the unlucky beast roared lustily. At the same time his eyes seemed starting out of his head with the throttling of the rope, which from the furious resistance of some of them actually cut through the skin of the neck. Once liberated, however, up they jumped without any bidding, and dashed back to the herd. (I. 157)

Such descriptions could be multiplied, but one is enough to show the distance from the world of the croquet lawn. The antithesis of the genteel and the robust, the refined and the crude, the old world and the new, and the contest between them for mastery, is the most familiar model of Australian cultural development. Fashioned in the 1890s, it not only proved influential for decades after, but coloured the interpretation of the decades before. The English and Australian traditions were assumed to be antipathetic, and the second could achieve individuality only by winning its freedom from the first.

Stockyard versus croquet lawn is but one way of formulating a relationship that had a variety of manifestations. It could as well be formulated in terms of landscape images, as in Dorothea Mackellar's 'My Country'. The three poems that are best known to Australians are probably 'Waltzing Matilda', 'The Man from Snowy River' and 'My Country', and all assert an image of Australia that sets it apart from England. In the first two poems this is done unconsciously, but in the third it is deliberate. The opening stanza of 'My Country' presents the English landscape as verdant and soft and ordered:

The love of field and coppice,  
Of green and shaded lanes,  
Of ordered woods and gardens  
Is running in your veins;  
Strong love of grey-blue distance,  
Brown streams and soft, dim skies —  
I know but cannot share it,  
My love is otherwise.

And the stanzas that follow present an opposing ideal:

I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains,  
Of ragged mountain ranges,

Of droughts and flooding rains.  
I love her far horizons,  
I love her jewel-sea,  
Her beauty and her terror —  
The wide brown land for me!

The stark white ring-barked forests,  
All tragic to the moon,  
The sapphire-misted mountains,  
The hot gold hush of noon.  
Green tangle of the brushses,  
Where lithe lianas coil,  
And orchids deck the tree-tops  
And ferns the warm dark soil . . .

Written when Dorothea Mackellar was nineteen, 'My Country' was first published in the *The Spectator* on 5 September 1908, and since then generations of schoolchildren have learned it by heart, and the 'stark white ring-barked forests' and the 'pitiless blue sky' have become part of the national insignia. Even Australians who have not seen the kind of landscape which the poem describes — or the English scenery which is shown in contrast — may draw some measure of their cultural identity from it.

I have chosen this model to explore because it is the most persistent and the most inclusive. In relying mainly on the literary record to test it, I acknowledge that the interpretation of literary evidence raises problems of its own. So far as literature is imaginative and creative, is it necessarily evidence of anything beyond the preoccupations of its authors? What weight is to be attached to literary merit? Are the popular writers who sustained the Bookstall paperback series as important for this purpose as a Brennan or a Patrick White? Are there significant aspects of Australian cultural development which happened to engage the attention of no creative writer, so that the literary record leaves these unrepresented?

Some of these problems can be illustrated from a single example. It struck me at an early stage in this study that the importance of horse-racing in ordinary Australian life is not registered in Australian literature. *Lucky Palmer* (1949) may perhaps be claimed as a minor classic, for the expert way in which Lawson Glassop has captured the mental perspectives of one kind of racing man. Frank Hardy's *The Four-Legged Lottery* (1958) is one of his lesser achievements. A. D. Hope does engage with the theme in his description of the inhabitants of New

### Holland in Book I of the *Dunciad Minor*:

Far in the South, beyond the burning line,  
 Where Gulliver that much-wrecked mariner  
 Described their customs, such as then they were,  
 And found them, like their manners, somewhat coarse,  
 The Yahoos live in slavery to the horse.  
 And since, though little altered from that time,  
 Great Britain gave them trade and beer and crime  
 And politics and healthy out-door games,  
 Now they wear clothes, and some can write their names.  
 A sort of costive English, too, they speak,  
 And sweat and drink and quarrel round the week;  
 And what they earn in their own time, they spend  
 On their four-footed masters each week-end.<sup>4</sup>

Here the radio broadcast on the subject 'Standard Works I'd Like to Burn: Alexander Pope' is heard with bewilderment:

Through the listening land  
 Dumb with astonishment the natives stand;  
 Unlettered lads, with mouths that gape or grin,  
 They scratch their heads and strive to take it in;  
 By every hearth some patriarch Yahoo  
 Cries as the cork pops out of the home-brew,  
 And from the shelf the Racing News is snatched:  
 "Well, what d'you know, Mum: bloody Pope's been scratched!"

(II. 139-46)

This calls to mind Peter Porter's poem on 'Phar Lap in the Melbourne Museum', but it remains a marginal feature of the *Dunciad Minor* itself.

Has Australian literature then given no prominence to horse-racing, or to sport in general? I was inclining to this view when I remembered the Australian racing novels of Nat Gould, which included over thirty titles, and the score of novels by Arthur Wright in the N.S.W. Bookstall series from the turn of the century until the 1930s. These fall in the area of popular fiction, where the important evidence is the number of editions gone through and the thousands of copies sold. Nat Gould's stories were potboilers, so much written to a formula that A. B. Paterson was moved to burlesque them in his short story collection *Three Elephant Power* (1917) — itself including a number of stories that belong to the turf. The burlesque called to mind A. L. Gordon's 'How we Beat the Favourite' — so popular despite the fact that it described a race run in England — and the parody of it in *The Bulletin Reciter* (1901).

At this point there came into my hands the *Autobiography* of one of the most sensitive of Australian poets, John Shaw Neilson. The year 1911 found him toiling on his block in the Mallee, struggling as usual with his defective eyesight, and trying to supply poems to A. G. Stephens.

I wrote 'The Dream is Deep' in the Summer time. I was riding about a good deal after stock at the time. I seldom could write anything in the Summer because the heat and the flies seemed to unsettle my mind. The best time for writing in the Mallee is from the beginning of May till the end of September. The mornings are sharp but there are a great many sunny days. The winter sunlight is particularly beautiful.

This entry is followed by the note that towards the end of 1911 he saw Melbourne for the first time, consulting an oculist about reading glasses. 'That was the year "Parisian" won the Cup'.<sup>4</sup>

A. D. Hope sees the Australian addiction to racing with the eye of the satirist. Nat Gould and Arthur Wright celebrate it as a national pastime, in paperback novels. Shaw Neilson's autobiography is a different literary mode, one in which the writer records what is important to him privately, and here the winner of the Melbourne Cup is remembered along with the poems written that year and the poet's memory of the winter sunlight as particularly beautiful. In this Shaw Neilson is like an earlier diarist, the Welshman Joseph Jenkins, who tramped the Castlemaine and Ballarat area from 1869 to 1894, supporting himself by a variety of manual tasks, reading *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* and entering into his diary englynion of his own composition. He recorded that 'Loafer' won the Cup in 1880, 'Bravo' in 1889, 'Melvalio' in 1891, and 'Tarcoola' in 1893.<sup>6</sup>

Is the Melbourne Cup so embedded in the national consciousness that it has become one of the ways of measuring time? In 'The Man from Snowy River', one of the trio of Australian poems mentioned earlier, it is instructive that the 'old man with his hair as white as snow' is described simply as 'Harrison, who made his pile when Pardon won the Cup', no further identification or date seeming necessary. There is no major literary work dealing with the racing world — Marcus Clarke's *Long Odds* (1869) failed at the time and has not been republished since — but its influence is still seen to be pervasive in other ways.

This example also illustrates how some of the most revealing literary evidence may be found in incidentals, in references made in passing. The 'Elizabethan world picture' and the 'great chain of being'

are probably falsified when they are displayed to us in textbooks, if they leave the impression that the Elizabethans must have lain awake at night worrying about the role of reason in the microcosm corresponding to the role of the monarch in the state and the position of God at the head of the hierarchy of the angels. These ideas probably occupied Elizabethan minds as furniture occupies a room, as something to be taken for granted. Similarly in the novels of Tom Ronan set in north-western Australia, the reader is hardly conscious of the way in which events in the narrative build up to the annual race meeting, and then subside as they draw away from it. But the novels in this way catch the rhythm of existence in north-western Australia of that period more surely than in what is transacted in the narrative itself.

Although it is only in the major writers that an issue is explored in any depth, literary evidence has to be sought at a variety of levels and in a variety of modes. A thorough-going account of Australian cultural development would enquire into the school magazines in which Dorothea Mackellar's 'My Country' regularly appeared, into the vogue in children's literature of the Billabong novels of Mary Grant Bruce, or the number of editions achieved by an anthology like *The Wide Brown Land*. As 'the sunburnt country' and 'the wide brown land' have become part of Australian idiom, there is further evidence to be sought in the development of a distinctively Australian vocabulary, and the attitudes it suggests to the country and the world beyond it. While the development sketched in the pages that follow is necessarily tentative and selective, it will move over as wide a range of material as limits of space permit, while also looking more closely at the work of some key figures. The approach is broadly, rather than strictly, chronological, as some chapters traverse again ground already covered from another point of view.

# Two Modes of Literary Nationalism

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## 1. ANGELS AND EAGLES

Before they came to Botany Bay they had been at Norfolk Island, but could neither anchor nor land; they made an observation with respect to it (which from its singularity, propriety, and force, I cannot suppress) — that it was only a place fit for angels and eagles to reside in. *Historical Records of New South Wales* (I. ii, 333).

One recurring theme in the earliest writings from the colony is the precariousness of the footing which the newcomers had upon it. The settlement established at Port Jackson on 26 January 1788 was essentially a gaol, a community of prisoners and custodians, with the difference that a vice-regal representative was warden. At first only the custodians had the capacity or the opportunity to write, and the earliest literary record is made up largely of their journals and letters. The interpretation of these documents is more a 'literary' matter than has been recognized, because the response of the writers to the new environment was not an untutored response. Not only were their expectations guided by the journals of Dampier and Cook, so that they studied the coastal scenery for the 'meadows' which Cook had described, but they brought with them such concepts as the Noble Savage, together with the ideas of Hobbes in *Leviathan* on primitive communities, while their descriptions of landscape are affected by the cult of the picturesque and their prose style reflects the contemporary sense of the decorum of literary composition.

It is important, in interpreting what seems to be a workmanlike narrative or description, to appreciate the mode in which the writer is working. The convict engraver Lycett, as Bernard Smith has shown, turned from a career of forging banknotes in England to forging landscapes in Australia, so much do his engravings depart from his original sketches in order to conform to the fashion of picturesque topography.<sup>1</sup> What is here instructive is the conflict between the original eucalypt and the indeterminate tree with laterally dispersed

foliage which convention required — the failure of Australian scenery to attain to the European picturesque. Yet every mode involves some distortion — even naturalism has a theory directing it — and at times the given approach, although apparently incongruous, can make some hidden affinity or harmony appear. One characteristic of the Australian landscape felt by the romantic and the unromantic alike was its immensity, its silence, its imperviousness to man. Captain Watkin Tench of the marines, on his explorations around Port Jackson, sometimes described the Australian scenery as it might appear to Capability Brown, and the activities of the natives as though they belonged to Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*.<sup>2</sup> But on the expedition of June 1789 which gave him a view, from Prospect Hill, of the 'great chain of mountains, called Carmarthen hills, extending from north to south farther than the eye can reach', the appropriate parallel was with *Paradise Lost* (II.917):

Here we paused, surveying 'the wild abyss; pondering our voyage'. Before us lay the trackless immeasurable desert, in awful silence. At length, after consultation, we determined to steer west and by north, by compass, the make of the land in that quarter indicating the existence of a river. We continued to march all day through a country untrodden before by an European foot. Save that a melancholy crow now and then flew croaking over head, or a kangaroo was seen to bound at a distance, the picture of solitude was complete and undisturbed. (pp. 153-4)

Another trip into this region in April 1791, to ascertain whether the Nepean and the Hawkesbury were the same river, brought Tench to another prospect which 'consisted of nothing but trees growing on precipices; not an acre of it could be cultivated' (p.228), and another reminiscence of *Paradise Lost*:

... I  
Toild out my uncouth passage, forc't to ride  
Th' untractable Abyse ... (X.474-6)

Perhaps what Tench sees is informed by his literary response to Milton, but between the landscapes of *Paradise Lost* and the gorges of the Blue Mountains he has detected an affinity. Brennan was to sense it over a hundred years later in his poem set in the Jamison Valley at Katoomba, 'Fire in the heavens, and fire along the hills'.

James Atkinson, a practical farmer who arrived in New South Wales in 1820, had little of Watkin Tench's literary background. *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales* (1826) is

a quite utilitarian manual, but Atkinson is found contemplating the plains on the other side of the mountain range with the same feeling Tench had shown for the mountains themselves:

The silence and solitude that reign in these wide spreading, untenanted wastes, are indescribable, and must have been witnessed to enable any one to form a proper conception of them; no traces of the works or even the existence of man are here to be met with, except perhaps the ashes of a fire on the banks of some river. The plain affording little or nothing for the subsistence of the savage, is wholly abandoned or but seldom crossed by him; the Kangaroos even shun the place, preferring the shade and shelter furnished by the forests; and nothing meets the eye of the traveller, with the exception of a few solitary Emus, to enliven the monotony of the dreary expanse. From the contemplation of this vacancy and solitude the mind recoils with weariness . . . (pp. 6-7)

Peter Cunningham, who had made four voyages to New South Wales as a surgeon superintendent on convict ships, and had lived two years in the colony, decided in 1826 to prepare a manual for emigrants with a much wider range than Atkinson's book. *Two Years in New South Wales* is again a work of observation and information, but in describing the first prospect of New South Wales from shipboard it falls into the same reflective mode:

The shore is bold and picturesque; and the country behind, gradually rising higher and higher into swelling hills, of no great elevation, to the utmost distance the eye can reach, is covered with wide-branching, evergreen forest trees and close brushwood, — exhibiting a prospect of never-failing verdure, although sadly deficient in that fresh and varied hue displayed by our own luxuriant summer foliage in England. Grey glimmering rocks, in solitary masses, or piled confusedly together, project here and there among these endless forests; while some gigantic, aged tree — scorched dead by the summer fires — uplifting at intervals its blasted branches above the green saplings around it, throws a sort of melancholy gloom over the verdant scenery, from the picture of dissolution presented by its black and decaying remains. (I. 23-4)

It is not so much the freshness of the scenery that is emphasized, but its antiquity and solitude.

This sense of the land as vast, desolate, and engendering a 'melancholy gloom' extends through the nineteenth century to Marcus Clarke and beyond it to the deserts of Patrick White's *Voss*. The mode of rendering is sometimes romantic, at other times starkly realistic in its recognition of the harsh and inhospitable. In 1790, when rations were running out and 'all the grain of every kind which we have been able to raise in two years and three months would not support us three weeks', Surgeon White exclaimed against 'a country and place so forbidding

and so hateful as only to merit execration and curses', and argued that 'it would be wise by the first steps to withdraw the settlement, at least such as are living, or remove them to some other place'. He reported with bitter satisfaction the opinion of the French explorers who could neither anchor nor land at Norfolk Island, that 'it was only a place fit for angels and eagles to reside in'.<sup>3</sup> This attitude to the colony was never entirely lost in the nineteenth century.

Another attitude, again of a 'literary' kind, contended with it. Tench was probably being ironical in his further reference to *Paradise Lost*, on the expedition of 1791, when he likened his party on the mountain top to Satan on Niphates, as they 'stood contemplating our nether Eden' (p. 228). But the prospect of Australia as another Eden, or as a Utopia yet to be secured, possessed the imagination of those who looked to the colony of the future. The journal of Judge-Advocate David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, extends from the foundation to 1802. Collins several times despaired of the profligacy of the convicts, the rapacity of the traders in rum, the recidivism of those whose sentences had expired. He gives us a picture of Sydney in October 1797, when the court of criminal judicature had to be assembled three times to deal with the offences of murder, perjury, forgery and theft:

It appearing on one of these trials, that three of the witnesses had manifestly and wilfully committed the crime of perjury, they were brought to trial; and, being found guilty, were sentenced to stand in the pillory; to which, as an additional punishment, their ears were to be nailed. Their sentence was put in execution before the public provision store, when the mob, either to display their aversion to the crime, or, what might be more probable, to catch at any thing that wore the form of amusement, pelted them with rotten eggs and dirt.<sup>4</sup>

We have moved from picturesque landscape to a scene from Hogarth. Often as Collins had to record the depravity of the convict women, he nevertheless wrote that 'were their value to be estimated by the fine children with which they had increased and multiplied the numbers in the settlement, they certainly would have been found to deserve every care and attention' (II. 87). By the end of 1797 he estimated that there were some 300 young people in Sydney who had not been born in England, and he wished that 'some institution could have been devised for separating the greater part of these (at present, innocent) members of the community from their vicious parents, where they could have been educated at the public expense' (II. 51). A similarly hopeful view

was taken by D.D. Mann in *The Present Picture of New South Wales* (1811):

The children born in this colony from European parents, are very robust, comely, and well made; nor do I recollect a solitary instance of one being naturally deformed. They are remarkably quick of apprehension; learn any thing with uncommon rapidity; and greatly improve in good manners, promising to become a fine race of people. (p. 61)

The conception of Australia as a promised land vies with the conception of it as a desolate and melancholy expanse. The three hundred native-born described by Collins in 1797 included one who would cross the mountains which had prompted Tench's Miltonic musings, and celebrate the event in a poem in heroic couplets, describing how

as a meteor shoots athwart the night,  
The boundless champaign burst upon our sight,  
Till nearer seen the beauteous landscape grew,  
Op'ning like Canaan on rapt Israel's view.<sup>5</sup>

The prosaic James Atkinson, having described the 'dreary expanse' with only 'a few solitary Emus' to enliven it, yet envisages a different future:

From the contemplation of this vacancy and solitude the mind recoils with weariness, and naturally turns with pleasure to anticipate some future and not distant period, when these vast and in many places fertile plains, shall be covered by productive flocks and herds, and enlivened by the presence and industry of civilized men. (p. 7)

'The presence and industry of civilized men'. While the Utopian quality of the future Australia has been noted often enough, the 'civilizing' ideal that accompanied it has not. And yet as the colony ceased to be explicable simply in terms of a gaol and its keepers, the second ideal was as much evidence of 'nationalism' as the first. It needs to be looked at more closely.

## 2. 'CURRENCY LADS' AND 'CIVILIZED MEN'

The designation of the native-born Australians as 'currency lads' and 'currency lasses' can be traced back to the early 1820s, extending the distinction between 'currency' (the local money used in the colony) and 'sterling' that had been made a decade before. The description of the 'currency lads' given by Cunningham in his *Two Years in New South Wales* (1827) includes all the features that came to comprise the