

SEPTEMBER, 1901

The monthly evening meeting was held on September the 9th, the President, His Excellency the Administrator, presiding, when the following paper, illustrated with lantern slides, was read:—

NOTES ON A TRIP TO THE BARN
BLUFF COUNTRY.

(By Mr. J. W. Beattie.)

The greater part of the following notes on the Barn Bluff country were written under the most distressing conditions imaginable, both from the tourist and photographic aspects—the latter especially, as it was in the interests of photography that I made the journey. Sitting in a little hut, in the midst of wildly beautiful country, made still more wild, and also dismal, by the awful strife of the elements outside, which, day after day, raged with a fury scarcely imaginable to a lowlander, and, to my way of thinking, certainly worthy of a better cause

If long-continued pleasure brings weariness, it can be imagined into what mental state one is driven when the opposite cause is in operation, and day succeeded day in furious wind and rain (the roaring of the wind in the big trees around keeping me awake at night), to be succeeded by heavy snowfalls, and thunder and lightning, making every living and dead thing around in such condition that it was, to say the least, misery to walk outside the hut, the tension became so acute that I could scarcely sleep at all. How I wished the Barn Bluff country elsewhere, and called myself names for undertaking the trip at this late time of the year, and the only sympathy I usually got would be from the extra hearty wind gust outside, sending a cloud of fine snow through the cracks in the weather-boards of the hut, down my neck, a process cooling, if not comforting. At last came the crisis—I could bear it no longer. The packer had been expected night after night, and he never came, and each successive disappointment became more acute. Tucker was running low, and if more snow came, the consequences might prove serious, so I decided to clear out, and one Sunday morning saw me plodding through the February Plain, swag on back and camera in hand, and the following day (Monday) found me at Mr. Howe's comfortable house at Mole Creek—42 miles from Pelion—tired, but thankful at being out of the storm region, and within reasonable distance of home, after an absence of nearly three weeks.

I left Hobart on April 4, by express, in company with Messrs. E. Hawson and Boxall, who, with myself, formed the party bound for the Barn Bluff country. The route lay via Mole Creek, then to Liena, on the Mersey River, 12 miles further on southerly; then via Innes's Track to Pelion Huts, 28 miles ahead, through Gad's Hill and February Plains, still heading southerly, then away to Barn Bluff, 14 miles further on in a N.W. and north-easterly direction. The weather in Hobart, on leaving, was very wet—southerly—which continued nearly to Evandale, where we left it, hugging the Great Western Tiers right on to Mole Creek, although there was an occasional shower before the terminus was reached. We arrived at Mole Creek about 5.20 p.m., and carried our baggage on to Mr. Howe's store, where we also cast aside the garments of city wear, and assumed those suited to the rough, wild country which lay ahead of us. We were joined here by Mr. W. J. Lloyd, head teacher of the Mole Creek State School, who completed our party.

After refreshment, we started for Liena (Mersey River) at about 7.30, on riding horses, the swags coming on in a chaise cart, and we progressed admirably, the road all the way being exceedingly good, and with the moon at the full it was a very pleasant journey. The Western Tiers end somewhat abruptly their western trend at Mole Creek, their grand, wall-like formation running southerly from there, and it is this bold terminal headland that we can see from Pelion, 40 odd miles south, standing out finely, and retaining almost the same form that it presents to the Mole Creekers on its northern side. From Mole Creek we keep along the main road westerly for a mile or so, turning sharply south after crossing the Sasfras Creek, and keeping on the Circular Ponds and Liena-road. We fall in with some good farms midway on the journey, the Circular Ponds district representing a patch of good agricultural flat land under the Western Tiers, so-called from the prevalence of "pot holes" or depressions, peculiar to limestone country; but the country generally right through to the Mersey is barren, hungry-looking, and unsuitable for agriculture. On the west side the road is bounded all the way through by the Barren Tier, and when the fine form of the Western Tier is lost, on the east, steep, rough, timber-clad hills and gullies prevail, in which a couple of saw-mills do business. It was with some satisfaction that at last we found ourselves above the great valley of the Mersey River,

whose waters, in the wonderful stillness of the beautiful night, we could hear rushing on a thousand feet below, and, leaving the road, which zig-zags down the great depth, we lead our horses down a "short cut," picking up the road again lower down, and soon we reach the Mersey Bridge, across which lies the incipient township of Liena. The Mersey River here is small, somewhat similar in size to the Meander at the bridge, Deloraine, but differing widely in feature, in that it flows through steep, "gorgy" country, the abrupt head of the Barren Tier, north-westerly, being rather imposing. There is a clear, grassy, flat on the western side, with a couple of cottages and a hut, comprising the township. The latter building we took possession of, stowing our luggage and fodder for the night, we ourselves camping about three-quarters of a mile further south in a house belonging to a settler, who, at the time, was absent. We arrived at the Mersey at about 11 o'clock, and by the time we got settled in our rugs for the night it was considerably after 12. As the orders were to be up at 5 and make an early morning start direct for Pelion, we had rather a small margin left for sleep, and we, unfortunately, rather overdid it by getting up at 5.30. Breakfast and packing up take time, and it was 8.10 before we got fairly on the road. This was the mistake of the day, which caused us so much trouble and discomfort later on, and it is one which all travellers in bush country try to avoid—starting late on a long journey. It's bad policy, and generally ends in trouble. Had we got away at 6 o'clock, as we ought, we would have come out of it with comfort all round. We started with a smiling morning, nice sunshine, and a south-westerly breeze, but as we got upwards and onwards our evil genius met us, and never left us during the whole of our stay in the locality; the wind went round to the nor'-west, and it blew and rained dismally. Our track lay for a short distance along the banks of the Mersey, when we strike southerly into a road running up Gad's Hill a distance of four miles, with a rise of something like 2,000ft., through fine land generally, heavily timbered, and prettily clothed in fern, sassafras, and myrtle. It is a long, weary pull up this hill, well-graded as it is, much of it being in wretched condition, and the wonder was how, in some places, the patient pack horses, heavily laden as they were, came through it without accident.

The summit of this hill once gained, we stand on the northern end of a great plateau, a divide between the Mersey and Forth Rivers, and the track runs southerly along this elevation, ultimately bring-

ing us to the head waters of both these rivers, the distance being between 20 and 25 miles. Geologically considered, the plateau has a belt of granite passing over its northern end; then an overlay of basalt, with about four miles of a fucoid sandstone country, the balance of the distance having a capping of dolorite.

At the top of the hill we pass through a cattle station belonging to a member of the Field family, known as "Gad's Hill Station," nicely grassed, where we noted numbers of horses and cattle enjoying themselves amidst the plenty around. Through the finely-grassed and wooded plains of this station the track, made by Mr. Surveyor Innes in 1896, really commences, and runs in a more or less southerly direction right out to Pelion, and as the going here is good we make full progress towards our destination.

About eight miles further we come to the Berriedale Plain — another of Messrs. Fields' possessions—a large, open mixture of button rush and grass, rather poor, and very wet, and by the time we reached the stockkeeper's house we were rather damp, and feeling sorry for ourselves. However, we made a halt here, under the spreading shelter of a "gum top," slung the billy, and gave the horses a rest and something to eat, and, in an hour's time, we were off again. The prevailing timber of the Gad's Hill country seems to be swamp gum (*E. amygdalina*), gum-top (*E. sieberiana*), and stringy bark (*E. obliqua*), of good quality, while further south no good timber of any account is met with, a very stunted peppermint (*E. amygdalina*) chiefly prevailing. I am told there are also extensive patches of fine wattle country on Gad's Hill.

Passing over to Berriedale Plain, keeping southerly, and rising through dense forest, we break out into what is known as February or Mackenzie Plain. This is a large extent of open button-rush country, broken up into timber patches, rises, valleys, and tarns, and our route runs through it for a distance of eight miles or more, and it is one of the most trying and dangerous parts of the journey. Exposed for the whole of the distance to the caprices of a cruel climate, the traveller may readily be caught in a dense fog or snow-storm, and so be in peril of losing his way, before he can get clear of the plain, as the track is ill-defined, and the staking infrequent, and only those possessing a very intimate knowledge of the country would be able to find their way out in safety. In spite of all the associated perils of this great plain, however, it appears, in fine weather, very beautiful, the clumps of timber splashed and dotted over its ex-

pense, giving it a pretty, park-like appearance, and the uninitiated would naturally imagine the country to be quite the reverse of what it really is—a veritable barren, howling wilderness, the “Terra del Fuego” of Tasmania. From the highest part of this plain, called the Divide, which is also the highest part of the plateau, a very fine panorama of the mountains ahead, from west to south, can be obtained. The Cradle Mountain, away to the north, Mount Oakley Range and West Pelion, to the west; while between west and south we can see the Pelion, Du Cane, Rugged, and Pillinger groups, all fine, bold mountain ranges, while on the plains below us two or three big tarns break up what would otherwise be rather a monotonous foreground, completing a finely picturesque panorama. I have, unfortunately, to give these picturesque details somewhat prematurely, as they were obtained during the return journey only, the whole features of the country, from the February to Pelion Huts, being “wiped out” during the journey out by the dreadful state of the weather. When our party fairly entered upon the wilds of the February Plain the weather turned downright cruel, a heavy, cold, cutting wind, with driving rain, setting in, and making things particularly miserable. How we wished to be within sight of the huts! Riding became out of the question; so we dismounted, and plunged through the boggy ground, leading our horses, which was hard work, in addition to the heavy walking, for the poor beasts were, by this time, tired out on account of the wet and thoroughly bad state of the track. The lateness of the hour, also, began to make us feel anxious, travelling being so slow under such adverse conditions, and our guides were frightened at the prospect of darkness overtaking us while on the plain, the track being so indefinite and easily lost, so we had to exert ourselves to the utmost, splashing through it, and just succeeded in gaining the end of the plain as the daylight almost faded out.

Towards the end of the plain, and where it narrows down into a gully-like form, collecting and concentrating its drainage, as one of the great feeders of the Mersey, and delivering its waters down into the great river gorge far below, we get a fine and bold angular aspect of Mount Pillinger—or Mag’s Mountain—which very picturesquely terminates this end of February Plain. Crossing the narrow valley of this part of the plain, rising quickly and turning westerly, we stand on the eastern trend of the Oakley Range, and our track runs, well-defined, down its sides, bring-

ing us into the Pelion Plains at Lake Ayr. At the head of this track we are confronted with an impressive scene, a vast mountain amphitheatre, formed by the Pillinger, Rugged, Du Cane, East Pelion, and Oakley Ranges. This is the birthplace of the Mersey River. It is a grand picture, full of food, both for the artist and the philosopher. The one would revel in material for his canvases, and the other would find his soul lifted up towards the One whose presence under such conditions comes so near, and is made so manifest by His wonderful works around.

But our party, at this time, saw none of this beauty. Mist, rain, and the gloom of night, blotted it almost all out, showing only just enough of an indefinite space to leave a vague impression on our minds that there was something grand beyond, if we could only see it.

The Oakley Range, where we stand, is about 1,800ft. above the plain below, and the distance to the Pelion Huts, our destination for the night, is five miles. The made road down this range is rough enough to negotiate ordinarily, and the boggy plains still worse; but can anyone conceive what a five-mile tramp through them in the dark would be like? None of our party had ever had such an experience, and certainly don’t wish for a repetition. How we got through it so well is a wonder to me, and I can only attribute this to the ability of the packers, in some measure, and, most of all, to the sagacity of the pack horses, who had been there before. Speaking for myself, it was a most peculiar experience, for, in the semi-darkness, everything on either side presented the most grotesque and puzzling shapes and appearances, and when we got on the plains, the wavy, white grass, of which I had no previous experience, gave the surroundings the appearance of vast lake-like stretches, and made things look most uncanny. On we went, however, stumbling and splashing, moving slowly in single file. Sometimes down would go one of the pack horses, and the procession would stop until the order was passed along to move on again, then more stumblings, shoutings, boggings right up to the knees, complete collapses over the wretched grass clumps, wringing wet, and still on we had to move. The distance seemed interminable, but at last the sagacious horses turned off the track, and headed right up the hill, and the joyful news came back along the line that we were at the huts. It was a tough scramble up the hill, but the comfort ahead lent additional strength to our already overtaxed stock, and the shouts that came back from the huts above us, in answer to our yellings, were as balm to our

troubled spirits. "Get the 'billy' on," we shout as we climb, and in a few minutes more we can see the lights inside the huts, and are soon alongside, and our troubles for the time being are ended; just at half past 8 p.m. There are two huts on the hill, in the timber, one being higher on the hill than the other, and from the higher one came an old friend—Mr. G. Renison Bell—to meet us, and we introduced ourselves, to his utmost astonishment. Although heartily pleased to see us, yet he thought it savoured somewhat of lunacy to come into this country in such weather, more particularly did he apply this to myself, with all my photographic baggage; and I believe he was right.

Mr. Bell is here, I understand, in the interests of the Great Western Railway Co., prospecting the country. However, here we were, right in the heart of the Pelion country, and, wet or fine, we would have to make the best of it, and so we really did. With a splendid fire, a change of dry clothing, plenty of "tucker" and hot tea, we soon regained our normal condition, and felt comfortable, and even happy, although the wind and rain roared and splashed outside. Next morning (Saturday, 6th inst.), at daybreak, we were roused up by the packers to know our intentions, and, considering our struggles of the previous day, and the fact of the weather still continuing very wet, and no prospect of change, we decided to put in the day at Pelion, and hope for the best. The weather was south-westerly, plenty of wind, with heavy rain squalls, and a low scud driving across the sky at a tremendous pace. However, about mid-day it began to improve, and by 1 o'clock it stopped raining, and cleared enough to allow us to get outside and look around. The two huts are rather snugly situated in the timber, on the hill above the track, but a much more convenient situation might have been chosen for them. They are acceptable, however, in any situation in such a country, and especially under present circumstances. They were erected by a Northern company holding some mineral concessions in the vicinity, which I shall refer to later, and are at present only used as rest houses by tramps, like ourselves. Under the able guidance of Mr. Renison Bell, we set out to climb into the country lying behind the huts—to the south-east—and, passing through a belt of dense myrtle scrub, rising rapidly, we soon gained an open plateau, under the Pelion Range, from which we could pick up our last night's course, and view our prospective one to Barn Bluff as well. We found ourselves surrounded by a chain of

high mountains forming a basin, and having a radius of something like four or five miles, with an opening to the north and north-west of, perhaps, a couple of miles, where, stretching away in the distance, are open button-rush plains, rises, and timber patches, with an impressive background of Barn Bluff and Cradle Mountains towering up against the sky. This great basin, in which we stand, forms the head waters of the Forth River, and a vast and magnificent gorge, into which the contributions from this basin empties, is formed on the open, northern side already noted, running outwards, as far as can be seen, in a north-easterly direction. The gateway, if I may so term it, of this great Forth gorge, is in keeping with its grandeur, for, on the east, stands up boldly and fully from the plain, the western termination of Mount Oakley (whose range continues easterly for four or five miles, and forms the northern side of the basin), with its broken columnar greenstone formation, resembling, rather strikingly, our Cape Raoul; while on the west the fine proportions of Mount Pelion West, with a grand columnar greenstone capping, conical somewhat to the east, but resolving into a great wall facing north. Pelion West forms the western end of the great half-circular chain of mountains on which we were now standing, its eastern termination being a conical mount, with a sharp, natty, greenstone pinnacle top, called East Pelion, and between these two extremities of the chain are three finely-proportioned mountains, one on the west, called Mount Ossa, now named "Backhouse," after the great philanthropist and scientist, and friend of J. B. Walker's father, after whom he named his son James, the remaining two being nameless. The Surveyor-General suggested this name as an association for the purpose of better identification of Mr. Walker. Here was a chance to perpetuate the memories of two of Tasmania's worthy sons, for what can be more graceful, and also sensible, than the keeping alive, topographically, the names of those who have nobly and unselfishly served their country? This form of nomenclature, in conjunction with native names, is, I think, most desirable, and I cannot help again repeating what I have often said before, that it is a pity some authoritative system of nomenclature, undertaken by a recognised body, should not be established to deal with such important matters.

The two names chosen by us, and which have since been approved by the Surveyor-General, were Bonwick and Walker, men whose tastes and inclinations were so much alike, and whose sympathies and

energies were always directed towards the advancement of the interests of Tasmania particularly, and also of Australia generally. Mr. James Bonwick still lives in London, and is well and kindly remembered by many here who have sat under him in past days as scholars, and whose works on Tasmanian history, relating particularly to the extinct native races, are valuable text books on that subject. Of the merits of Mr. James Backhouse Walker, so lately taken from amongst us, it is hardly necessary for me to remind you. I can safely and very feelingly say, that "he being dead yet speaketh." Not only are his valuable historical researches regarded as standards of our past, but the effects of his great activity in the cause of the higher education of this State bear testimony to-day to his ability and worth, with a freshness and power which appeals to us all.

Under Mount Oakley's eastern end is a long lake, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile long, and rather narrow, called Lake Ayr, after, I presume, Mr. Bobbie Burns's "toon o' Ayr." From this lake, and also from a small though voluminous stream, "Bonwick's Rivulet," junctioning with the lake outfall, the Forth River receives its primary impetus. The whole panorama was grand and fascinating, although the wind was bitterly cold, and from behind the kindly shelter of a great rock we drank it all in. Coming down from the higher levels of Bonwick, and turning towards its western trend, we visited one of the Pelion coal tunnels. The work done here represented a tunnel of over half a chain long, with heaps of coal lying at its entrance on either side. Two seams, have been discovered, one 17in. in thickness, the other 26in. Considerable exploratory work has been done towards testing these deposits, three tunnels in all having been put in, and much trenching done. The results seem as yet to be only moderately valuable, analysis showing, according to the Assistant Government Geologist, a low quality of coal, with a value dependent on the success of the Barn Bluff mining field. The Launceston people seem to have a much better opinion of the coal, their analysis proving, they say, one sample to be a splendid steaming coal, and another sample was admirable for coking purposes. It is also alleged that the Pelion Copper Company used it at their forge, and considered it to be the best quality of coal in the colony. However, I think there can be no question as to the value of these great coal deposits, if the Barn Bluff country "pans out" well, timber all around being exceedingly scarce. Coming down towards the hut, and the weather still keeping fine, we crossed over the plain,

northerly, towards Mount Oakley, where, on the high banks of the yet youthful Forth River, we come upon the Pelion Consolidated Copper Company's mineral show. There are four lodes uncovered on the property, and partly prospected. Those running from the north and south assay well for silver, and those east and west for gold, and all down the creek mineral indications are to be found in the country rock, a quartzite schist.

The company ceased work, I am told, after spending something approaching £1,200 on the property, on account of the utter isolation of its position precluding all possibility of getting their ore out. There are several tons of really good ore, bagged and at grass, awaiting means of transport. I heard that work was to be resumed as soon as the development of the field around is likely to secure a means of communication with outside, and then their fine property must become of great value.

Towards evening the weather became again stormy and wet, and next morning (Sunday, April 7) it was as bad as ever, and we had to remain in the hut all day, Monday, 8th inst., broke fine with frost, so we made a start for Barn Bluff Camp, getting away from Pelion soon after 7 o'clock. From the "branch off" to the Pelion Huts, the track runs through a belt of forest, clothing the southern bend of the Forth Gorge, and then sweeps round in a great bend, under the bases of Mounts Walker Ossa, and West Pelion, which tower up very grandly all round, and rising along the eastern side of West Pelion until the Forth Gorge is cleared, we turn sharply round north-westerly, and have a clear run in that direction for eight miles or so, over button-rush plains and timber patches. Just as the track takes its north-westerly turn, it overlooks the Forth River Gorge, and it presents to us a scene of the wildest grandeur. Photography cannot convey anything like a correct representation of the scene which I have not seen surpassed, in all my bush wanderings, for weird sublimity. Here it is that the whole of the drainage from the great Pelion Group, Lake Ayr, and the Oakley Range, form into one united stream, and pass on as the Forth River.

From here we can see the great formation of the Barn Bluff mine, the big knob, standing up finely on the west side of the gorge, not more than three or four miles distant as the crow flies, yet our windings make the distance eight miles, or more, before the camp is reached. The day turned out exceptionally fine, and we had ample opportunity to see the fine mountain scenery around, as we progressed. The Pelion Group, which we were leaving,

looks very grand, the full proportions of the different members of the group becoming finely marked the further we kept to the north-west. Southerly just clear of West Pelion, the Eldon Range rolls out boldly in the distance, and coming further west, Murchison and Black, and other hills, which I did not recognise, all show up well, but too distant to photograph effectively. But the pictures are to the north-west, standing up with splendid effect, the two highest mountains in Tasmania, Barn Bluff and Cradle Mountain. According to Innes, Cradle Mountain is 5,085ft. and Barn Bluff 5,045ft. I was told that the name of "Cradle" originated from the shape of the mountain resembling a gold miner's cradle. Perhaps that is correct, although I cannot vouch for it. But concerning the christening of Barn Bluff I feel I can safely speak, and I do unhesitatingly denounce it as a vile slander on a noble mountain. No effort of the most fertile imagination can, in my opinion, resolve this mountain into anything approaching the resemblance of the most orthodox or unorthodox of barn of the past or present, and I would like so much to have a chance of giving it a really good name. (How would Beattie's Bluff do?!!!) After crossing a long stretch of plain, we enter rather broken country, leaving our north-westerly course, and coming round easterly, in the vicinity of Swallow's Camp. We find ourselves now in country bearing a melancholy interest, T. J. Connelly, the Rosebery resident, having recently perished in the snow somewhere in this vicinity, and the search parties were still actively engaged in searching for his remains. Coming down to Swallow's Camp, pitched above the shores of a lovely lake named "Windermere," we met one of the searchers, and from him we learned all of the pitiful details—few, certainly, but painfully significant—surrounding the disappearance of the poor man. It was sad to look back, only a couple of months when I met him in Rosebery looking well and cheerful, and romping with his two little girls on the verandah of the hotel. Lake Windermere, just under Swallow's is a lovely lake, with an area of about 500 acres, and fringed with King William Pines, the shores making effective pictures, particularly with the bold head of Barn Bluff looking patronisingly over the rather steep north-western bank of the lake. We camped here for an hour, slung the billy, and drank tea and scenery to our hearts' content. Swallow has a good mineral show, partly opened out here, and which is about to be thoroughly developed, and he has others in the vicinity. Now that we are within the Barn Bluff mineral field it may be of interest to briefly describe some-

what of its geological features. I will quote from Mr. Waller's recent report on the district, which I daresay many of my readers will not have the opportunity of seeing:—"The country consists mainly of finely laminated schist. The whole country shows marked evidence of prolonged glacial action. Superficially it strongly resembles the Lake Dora district. The rock most frequently met with is a strongly foliated quartz schist. I think that quartz schist is a more appropriate name for the rock than quartzite, the name by which the rock is locally known, as it lays more emphasis on its schistose character. The rock occurs in long bare ridges all over the country, the intervening flats and hollows being covered with button-grass or scrub, or being occupied by small lakes. I think that it will be found that the softer schists are really in greater abundance than the quartz schist, but these being softer have been worn away by the erosive action of the glaciers, and, therefore, are now hidden from view beneath the button-grass and glacial debris of the low-lying ground.

Leaving Lake Windermere we rise over its western boundaries, and move across broken country, in a north-easterly direction, towards the Barn Bluff mining property, about three miles distant. Barn Bluff and Cradle Mountain are seen to advantage just above the dip down into the gully where the camp lies, but I had almost forgotten to mention passing another lake, lying in very fine bold surroundings midway between the camp and Lake Windermere. We called it Lake Andrews, after Mr. H. Andrews, who is the pioneer prospector of this part of the country. I was going to say Mr. Andrews' home was at Liena—he certainly has a wife and family living there—but from what I saw and heard of him I should conclude his home was in the wild Pelion country, for there he is always to be found "badgering" about. He knows every "hole and corner" of it, and keeps a nice assortment of mineral shows "up his sleeve" for the convenience of any speculative traveller who may come along. May he "go in and win," I say, for he well deserves any success that may come to him! These two lakes—Windermere and Andrews—for beauty of form, are as nothing compared with the lovely lake situated just above the Barn Bluff property. About a mile in length, and broken up into beautiful bays and promontories, and magnificently backed by Cradle Mountain, it is a subject which I hardly think can be excelled in Tasmania for delightful composition. Possessing so much of the elements of the beautiful, and being nameless, our party unanimously decided to name it after one who possesses, we had always thought, in an

eminent degree, elements of the beautiful of another and higher type, which we all so much admire and love. I refer to that benevolent, Christian gentleman, the Hon. Sir James Agnew. This lake, whose outflow junctions with the Forth River below, is to furnish the mining company with water-power to drive their machinery, and the enormous pressure obtainable, combined with the inexhaustible supply which the lake can furnish, will be an asset of incalculable value to the mine.

The Barn Bluff property, of which so much is heard now, is comprised of two 80-acre sections of a highly metalliferous character, the efforts of the proprietary, up to date, in their endeavour to determine the value and extent of their huge caperiferous outcrop, being represented by about 21 open cuts, or excavations, denoting a large expenditure of money and enterprise. Here are some assays from some of these excavations, obtained from our Government Analyst:—

No. 1 Face.—Copper, 4.5 per cent.; silver, 1oz. 17dwt. 16gr.; gold, trace.

No. 2 Face.—Copper, 9.5 per cent.; silver, 0oz. 19dwt. 19gr.

From across huge face.—Copper, 4.6 per cent.; silver, 2oz. 9dwt.

Assay by Mr. Stitt, of Zeehan.—Copper, 6.7 per cent.; silver, 14oz. 14dwt.

These assays will give some idea of the surface prospects. What depth will prove has yet to be decided, but indications point to greater values. Vigorous tests in the shape of tunnelling will soon be commenced, and the results will be awaited with much interest by a large section of the investing public. Mr. Murray, late Government Geologist of Victoria, who lately visited the property, makes some interesting remarks on its geological formation and probable value, which, I think, is worth a brief quotation, coming, as it does, from such an authority. He says:—“A number of excavations show quartzitic schistose rocks, with a general east and west strike, highly impregnated with iron pyrites, and a considerable proportion of copper pyrites. It cannot be described as a lode, but as a great belt of schistose bands impregnated with ore, some rich, others poor, but, taken as a whole, I consider it to be a good, low to medium grade proposition. As to the downward extent of the great formation, the probabilities are that it extends as far as human skill can reach, and from a rough consideration of some 8 millions of tons of ore bearing rock in actual sight, 25 per cent. of which would prove payable, I should estimate the workable ore within 4 per cent. of copper, besides such gold and silver contents as may occur. Higher up the gully, above the Barn Bluff property, is another mine known as the North Barn

Bluff. We did not visit it, but could see the workings, high up on the hillside, represented by a couple of tunnels, with the ubiquitous mullock heap at their entrance.

The Barn Bluff Camp is snugly situated in the timber by the Agnew Creek. We found it very comfortable, although at the time deserted, all the occupants being absent on their Easter holidays. Next morning (Easter Tuesday, April 8) found us on the move again, returning to Pelion, under, alas, the lamentable conditions of fog and mizzling rain. Fine weather here seems to be the exception, and as we crossed the open plains, where yesterday all around us Nature smiled in kindly welcome, not a vestige of surroundings could be seen; all was blotted out by mist and rain, and in many instances it was difficult to determine the run of the track, as it is not staked, and those who are not acquainted with the country have to be guided by the horse tracks, which are often easily missed. From the yawning valley of the Forth, up its great gullies and gaps, streamed the fog, wrapping up and soaking all Nature in its ghostly embrace and as we filed along the plains, phantom-like through its envelopments, our situation was far from agreeable or comfortable. It was not until we got well on towards Pelion West that the sun began to break up the mist, and away to the south the mountains stood out bright and clear. Skirting the edge of the plain above the Forth Valley, the scene was grand in the extreme; the breaking mists, twisting, writhing, and swirling, from the great gulph beneath, looked like emanations from some gigantic witch cauldron, and we looked on in admiration. The Pelion Huts were soon reached, and preparations for the return journey home made by all but myself, I remaining to obtain the balance of photographs that time, and the weather had prevented me from securing. Wednesday, April 9, at 7 o'clock, Messrs. Hawson and Boxall left me, Mr. Lloyd having, I had forgotten to mention, gone home on Sunday. I did certainly have some misgivings at staying behind with such a lot of photographic baggage, in such a wild uncertain climate, and so far from outside help. Yet I felt I had not done my duty, and as the packer promised to return in a week's time, I thought it right to stay, and, of course, I had good company with Mr. Renison Bell. How I fared from the time I was left, until the day I was compelled to flee out of it, I have briefly indicated at the commencement of this article, and as I have already outrun the length of any decent paper I will fill in the time of my stay with brief extracts from my diary to reduce length as far as possible.

April 9.—Wind, S.W. Blowing and raining all day.

April 10:—Wind, S.W. Blowing and raining all day.

April 11:—Wind, west; cleared afternoon. Got photo. Mount Bonwick.

April 12:—Wind, west. Wet all day.

April 13:—Wind, changed to N.W., and cleared a little in the afternoon. Got photos in Forth Gorge.

April 14:—Fearful weather. Blowing living gale, with rain. Hailstorms during morning. Thunder about midday. Afternoon, snow. Rain at night.

April 15:—Rained and blew all night. Fearful weather all day. Wind, rain, and sleet.

April 16:—Fearful night of wind, snow, thunder, and lightning. Everything white. Snowed nearly all day.

April 17:—Snow about 8 in. deep. Damp and misty.

April 18:—Turned frosty during night, and morning broke clear and bright. Cradle and Barn Bluff looked sublime, snow clad, with early sun streaming on them. Started off with camera to ascend East Pelion. Mr. Andrews assisted me, and we had a fearful struggle in the snow through the scrub, up the mountain side, and when we reached the top fog came down, and blotted all the landscape out. Came back to hut drenched and disgusted.

April 19:—Dull and threatening. Went with Andrews out to pine scrub, but weather turned wet from the west, and it rained heavily all day. Came back to the huts drenched.

April 20:—Dull, foggy, and showery. This is now the fifth day over the time packer promised to come for me. Decided to tramp in, and will start to-morrow.

April 21:—Quiet morning. Wind S.E., looking fine. Started at 8.15 with H. Andrews for Berriedale Plains, 17 miles. Bid good-bye to friend Bell with a good deal of misgiving. He is all alone, and tucker none too plentiful, and no sign of the packer with his fresh supply. Got to Berriedale, easy walk, at about 5 o'clock, and set to work to get in firewood for the night.

April 22:—Left Mark Shaw's at ten to 9, arriving Gad's Hill station at 11 o'clock. Went down old track into Liena, and camped an hour at Mr. C. Roden's, who kindly insisted on dinner. Weather, very bad, wind and rain in torrents. Got into Mole Creek, Mr. Howe's store at 4.15 p.m. tired, but glad I had escaped.

April 23:—Left by 6 a.m. train. Ran into Launceston, and came on to Hobart by afternoon express.

It only now remains for me, in conclusion, to say something regarding the prospects of this district as a whole, and the

condition, both present and prospective, of the means of communication between it, Mole Creek, and also the West Coast. From those who are competent to give an opinion, those who have personally inspected and prospected the field, I find a general consensus of opinion most favourable to its future success as another addition to our copper producing centres. That, surely, is satisfactory; also we must not lose sight of the valuable coal deposits, already mentioned, which, in a country where timber is not abundant, and every year becoming scarcer, will form an invaluable substitute, and may, indeed, be largely utilised further afield. Another important factor in the future welfare of this field is the existence of splendid water facilities for the generation of power suitable for all mining operations. Such a field, so highly favoured by Nature, requires, to make it a success, a railway, and I suppose that will ultimately come, when results, which always speak louder than words and any amount of writing, demand it. At present, however, the means of communication is, to put it very mildly indeed, extremely unsatisfactory, and is deserving of the immediate attention of the Government. From Liena to the Barn Bluff copper mine, the distance by present track is 42 miles, while, taking it as the crow flies it cannot be more than 17 miles. Much of Gad's Hill is positively unsafe for pack and saddle horse traffic, and is really a menace, and should be immediately remedied. The track along the plains sadly wants attention in a great many places, a bit of corduroy here and there, and in exceptional boggy places, cutting out the turf altogether, and getting down to the solid gravel. Then I would strongly urge better staking of the plains, the stakes not to be so far apart. As it is at present this is a sad deficiency, and who knows but had this been properly arranged, as it most assuredly should be, poor Connelly would not have been lost, and without considering the irreparable loss sustained by the poor fellow's relatives, this State would have been saved much expense, and also alarm. Now let us glance at what Government propose doing towards the improvement of this route. It has been ascertained that the distance can be materially shortened, and this is to be accompanied by deviating in a south-westerly direction from Berriedale Plains to the Forth Valley, which will be gradually descended, making an easy grade, and ultimately reaching the high ground somewhere near the centre of the mineral area. This deviation, it is estimated, will effect a reduction in the distance of something like 15 miles, and will also avoid much of the high snowy country which occupies so much of the route of

the present track. The West Coast outlet is the continuation of the Innes's Track, which we have already dealt with as far as Barn Bluff, and passing through Mount Farrell, terminates at the Emu Bay Railway at Pieman River, 36 miles further on.

One last word. I cannot close without expressing my heartiest thanks to those who so kindly assisted me during the trip. To my companions, Messrs. E. Hawson and Boxall, ever ready to lend a hand

with the camera. To H. Andrews for his very kind help in this and other directions, and also to the Parson Brothers, the packers, so obliging at all times. Then last, but not least, to my friend G. Renison Bell, who, during my stay, did so much to make it comfortable and enjoyable. I shall not readily forget the yarns and songs, and best of all "soul chat" which we had during the evenings before that warm old fireplace of the Pelion Hut.

OCTOBER, 1901.

The monthly evening meeting was held on Monday, October 9th, His Lordship the Bishop of Tasmania (the Right Rev. Dr. Montgomery), vice-president, presiding.

PAPERS.

The following papers were read:—"Practicable Forestry in Tasmania and elsewhere," by Mr. A. Mault; "Note on Itacolumite, or flexible sandstone," by Professor E. G. Hogg, M.A.
