

THE IRON HORSE

RAILWAY MOUNTAINEERING.

DEVIATION AT GLENBROOK.

WHAT THE NAVVIES ARE DOING.

A MUSHROOM CITY.

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS VILLAGE OF GLENBROOK WAS, UP TILL 12 YEARS AGO, COMPARATIVELY UNKNOWN. THEN IT SUDDENLY BECAME NOTORIOUS AS THE SCENE OF A COLD-BLOODED MURDER. A PROSPECTOR, CAPTAIN LEE WELLER, WAS DONE TO DEATH BY THAT FIEND IN HUMAN SHAPE, 'BUTLER', WHO WAS HANGED FOR THE CRIME. AFTER BUTLER'S EXECUTION, THE PLACE SETTLED DOWN AGAIN TO ITS RURAL SECLUSION, AND THE GUM TREES AND BUSH GROWTH WERE UNDISTURBED, SAVE BY THE WALLABIES. THIS SOLITUDE, HOWEVER HAS BEEN BROKEN AGAIN. IN JANUARY LAST THE RAILWAY DEVIATION WORKS WERE STARTED AT GLENBROOK, AND HUNDREDS OF NAVVIES AND CAMP FOLLOWERS SWARMED INTO THE VILLAGE. A CAMP WAS LOCATED ON A PLATEAU ABOUT A MILE AND A HALF FROM THE RAILWAY STATION, AND IN A WEEK OR SO, STRINGY BARKS, GREY AND RED GUMS AND OTHER BUSH GROWTH WERE CLEARED OFF, AND THE GROUND WAS LEFT ALMOST BARE. HUNDREDS OF DRAYS, CARTS, AND VANS BROUGHT BUILDING MATERIALS FROM THE OLD RAILWAY CAMP AT 'CLARENCE'. THE SCENE CHANGED AS IF BY MAGIC, SHOPS AND HUMPIES WENT UP IN ALMOST A SINGLE NIGHT. THEY WERE STRANGE-LOOKING STRUCTURES, COMPOSED CHIEFLY OF SECOND AND THIRD HAND GALVANISED IRON, BAGGING WHICH WAS ONCE NEW, RUBERIOD, AND TIMBER OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS.

A HIVE OF INDUSTRY

NOW A LITTLE OVER FOUR MONTHS HAVE ELAPSED AND THE NEW TOWNSHIP HAS ADVANCED WITH THE TIME, THE RAILWAY WORKMEN SAY THAT THEIR SETTLEMENT IS NOT A CAMP. THEY REGARD IT AS A TOWNSHIP, FOR IT BOASTS A POPULATION OF 1200 NAVVIES, WITH THEIR WIVES AND FAMILIES. THIS SUDDEN INCREASE OF POPULATION IN THE VILLAGE IS INCLUSIVE OF THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE PLACE. FOR THE NAVVIES, THE RAILWAY DEPARTMENT HAS PROVIDED A DOCTOR AND A HOSPITAL. AT THE PRESENT TIME THE HOSPITAL IS BEING LARGELY AVAILED OF BY SUFFERERS FROM MINOR AILMENTS. FORTUNATELY, THE CAMP IS FREE FROM SERIOUS SICKNESS. TWO POLICEMEN HAVE TAKEN UP THEIR QUARTERS THERE, BUT AS THEY ARE REGARDED AS GIANTS OF GOOD ADVICE' TO THOSE WHO OCCASIONALLY BECOME OBSTREPEROUS, THE STRONG HAND OF THE LAW IS NOT FREQUENTLY USED, IN FACT, IN FAIRNESS TO THE NAVVIES, IT MUST BE SAID THAT THE DUTIES OF THE POLICEMEN ARE VERY LIGHT INDEED. THERE IS ALSO A RESIDENT CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLERGYMAN IN MINISTER TO THE SPIRITUAL WANTS OF THE NAVVIES. THE MAIN STREET OF THE NEW TOWNSHIP IS A QUARTER OF A MILE LONG, AND OF THE UNIFORMED WIDTH OF 66FT. IT IS COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS. THESE INCLUDE LARGE GENERAL STORES, A BOOTMAKER, TWO TAILORS, THREE BARBERS, FRUIT AND REFRESHMENT SHOPS, A BAKER AND BUTCHER, A HAM AND SMALL GOODSMAN, A VAN PROPRIETOR, TOBACCONISTS, NEWSAGENCIES AND A BILLIARD SALOON. ONE FEATURE OF THE DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE CAMP IS THE EXISTENCE OF MANY BOARDING HOUSES. AT SOME OF THEM, THERE ARE AS MANY AS 25 DAILY CUSTOMERS FOR MEALS, CHIEFLY YOUNG NAVVIES FOR WHOM THE SMILING WAITRESSES EVIDENTLY HAVE A CHARM.