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**William Redfern, the First Australian Medical Graduate, and His  
Times.**

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(Read before the Society, March 27, 1928.)

WILLIAM REDFERN.

William Redfern was a convict. It would be, perhaps, nearer the truth if we called him a martyr. He may have been indiscreet on one occasion in his youth; but he was never a criminal, and always a gentleman.

In 1797, a youth of nineteen years of age, he was surgeon's mate on His Majesty's ship *Standard*, one of the ships that participated in the mutiny at the Nore. This outbreak occurred within a few months of "The Great and Glorious Victory off Cape St. Vincent," when the names of our Captains and the deeds of our bluejackets were the talk and pride of all England. Although "our ships were British oak and hearts of oak our men," and although "we scorned the foreign yoke," all was not well with the Navy. For some injudicious remarks at that time, Redfern found himself in the valley of the shadow of death—he was condemned to be shot. His youth, however, saved him, and the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life.

[PORTRAIT OF REDFERN c.1832]

Dr. William Redfern.

## SOME OF THE CONDITIONS THAT LED UP TO THE MUTINY AT THE NORE.

We all profess to be proud of “our boys of the bulldog breed that made Old England’s name,” but have we given them always a fair deal or vouchsafed to them that consideration that is or should be their just due! The conditions in which “poor Jack” lived and moved and had his being in the eighteenth century were deplorable. Hygiene and dietetics—the two things needful for keeping men fit, contented and well—were ignored by the heads of the Navy. It is true that Captain Cook demonstrated in a striking way what could be done by these means, but demonstrations and even arguments are seldom sufficient to bring about reforms, be they ever so urgent or necessary. The sailors’ place of abode was dark, damp, badly Ventilated, dirty and evil smelling. In winter it was dark, damp and cold; in summer it was dark, hot and wet. But whether it were winter or summer it was always gloomy. There was overcrowding also. The unfortunate wretches were herded together like sheep in a railway truck. If their place of abode was deplorable, their food was execrable. The water served out to each man was often foul, and always insufficient for his requirements. The bread was unwholesome and hard as flint. It went to sea in the form of biscuits, composed of flour, water and an adulteration of all sorts of inferior materials. That was bad enough, but it was not the whole story. The biscuits went from ship to ship and from station to station, till at length from age and neglect the original mixture of which they were made became transformed into nothing more than discs of rottenness and weevils. The beef, pork and pickled horse were indurated by an excess of salt. The allowance of meat to each sailor was, by a naval regulation, a pound per day; but the quantity actually received was rarely over one-third of that amount. The meat was practically devoid of nutriment, wholly without flavour, and so hard that it could take a polish like agate or cornelian. Small quantities of decayed cheese and rancid butter were found occasionally, but not generally, in the diet list. Rum,

crude and immature, was a delicacy to be served out on rare occasions only.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the hardships due to bad quarters and worse food, the bluejackets had to endure many others, of which none was great, but each of them corroding. Naval discipline was far too rigid and irritating - short leave and other concessions depended entirely on the whim of some petty tyrant.

The pay in the Navy had not been increased for a hundred years or more, although the cost of living had gone up considerably. The pension allowance, too, totally inadequate, had remained unchanged for an equal period. Finally, there were the raids of the pressgang - that terror that stalked by night. The method of obtaining men for the Navy by means of the pressgang was unjust and cruel. It led frequently to much hardship and suffering. Not all the incidents connected with the work of the "gang," however, were tragic. The story of the adventure of the young "Snotty" who, during the progress of his first raid with the "gang," got separated from his companions and fell into the hands of a number of lewd women of the baser sort, is distinctly humorous. Tobias George Smollett, himself a naval surgeon, gives us in *The Adventures of Roderick Random* a graphic description of one phase of the life in the Royal Navy about this period. The picture is undoubtedly fanciful, but are the details given very much overdrawn? Roderick's story runs on:—

In the morning after the Captain came on board, our first mate (Assistant Surgeon), according to custom went to wait on him with a sick list, which when the grim Commander had perused, he cried with a stern countenance, "Blood and oons sixty-one sick people on board my ship! Harkee, Sir, I'll have sick in my ship, by God!"

The Captain then ordered the patients to be sent to him on the quarterdeck to be reviewed. The first who came under his cognizance was a poor fellow just freed of a fever which had so weakened him that he could hardly stand. Mr. Mackshane, the

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1. The information given here of the conditions in the Royal Navy at the time of the Mutiny at the Nore is taken chiefly from *Celebrated Naval and Military Trials* (by Peter Burke, Sergeant at Law) and *Great Historical Mutinies* (by David Herbert, M.A.).

surgeon (a newcomer on board the ship and a tool of the Captain), felt his pulse and protested he was as well as any man in the world, and the Captain delivered him over to the boatswain's mate with orders that he should receive a round dozen at the gangway immediately for counterfeiting himself sick; but before the discipline could be executed the man dropped down on the deck, and had well-nigh perished under the hands of the executioner.

The next patient to be considered laboured under a quartanague, and being in his interval of health, discovered no other symptoms of distemper than a pale meagre countenance and emaciated body; upon which he was declared fit for duty and turned over to the boatswain, but being resolved to disgrace the doctor died upon the forecastle next day during a cold fit. The third complained of a pleuritic stitch and spitting blood; for which Dr. Mackshane prescribed exercise at the pump to promote expectoration, and in less than an hour he was suffocated with a deluge of blood that issued from his lungs. A fourth, with much difficulty, climbed to the quarterdeck, being loaded with a monstrous ascites, or dropsy, that invaded his chest so much he could scarce fetch his breath; but his disease being interpreted into fat occasioned by idleness and excess of eating, he was ordered, with a view to promote perspiration and enlarge his chest, to go aloft immediately. It was in vain for this unwieldy wretch to allege his incapacity, and the boatswain's driver was commanded to whip him up with a cat-o'-nine-tails; the smart of this application made him exert himself so much that he actually arrived at the futtock shrouds; but when the enormous weight of his body had nothing else to support it than his weakened arms, he quitted his hold and plumped into the sea, where he must have been drowned had not a sailor who was in a boat alongside saved his life by keeping him afloat till he was hoisted on board by a tackle.

It would be tedious and disagreeable to describe the fate of every miserable object that suffered by the inhumanity and ignorance of the Captain and Surgeon, who so wantonly sacrificed the lives of their fellow creatures. Many were brought up in the height of fevers and rendered delirious by the injuries they received in the way. Some gave up the ghost in the presence of their inspectors; and others, who were ordered to their duty, languished a few days at work among their fellows and then departed without any ceremony. On the whole, the number of the sick was reduced to less than a dozen.

From whatever source our information is gained — be it from history or fiction—one fact is borne in upon us: the lot of the eighteenth century sailor was hard and oppressive. The groans and complaints of the poor wretches must have reached the ears of the authorities time and again; but the official ears were either deaf to

or misinterpreted the significance of the murmurings. In the year 1797 the crisis was reached. First at Spithead, and later in May at the Nore, the men of the Navy normally loyal and docile, ran amok. Their powers of endurance had become tattered and threadbare, so they succumbed readily to the insane virus of insurrection. However wrong were the methods used to gain relief from a galling load, the sailors' risings at Spithead and at the Nore most effectually directed public attention to the gross abuses existing in the Navy. One of the results of the Mutiny was a slight increase in the population of New South Wales.

#### WILLIAM REDFERN: EARLY YEARS.

The exact date on which Redfern was born is not known. Five different years, ranging from 1770 to 1778, have been given by as many different authorities as his birth year. They cannot be all correct. J. T. Bigge, the Commissioner, tells us<sup>1</sup> that at the time of the Mutiny at the Nore, Redfern was about nineteen years old. We can reasonably accept this age as correct, for the Commissioner got this information direct from Redfern himself. In that case, Redfern was born in the year 1778. Where he was born is equally uncertain. Possibly it was in Wiltshire, in England; but that is only conjecture. Nothing is known of his school days. We are told<sup>2</sup> that he studied for the medical profession and passed the examination of the Company of Surgeons, London, the predecessor of the Royal College of Surgeons, but did not receive a diploma. It is within the range of possibility that Redfern received the whole or part of his professional training in Edinburgh, Scotland. This again is speculation, but there are some points in favour of this statement: Mr. R. H. Antill, of Jarvisfield, Picton, New South Wales, a grand-nephew of William Redfern, has

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1. Report of the Commissioner of inquiry into the state of Colony of New South Wales, by John Thomas Bigge (ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, June 10, 1822), page 84.

2. *Historical Records of Australia*, Series 1, Vol. VI., p. 745.

in his possession two of the doctor's text books.<sup>1</sup> Again, it was to Edinburgh that Redfern took his son when the lad was sufficiently old to benefit by a grammar school education.

#### REDFERN AFTER THE MUTINY.

After the Mutiny, Redfern spent four years in an English prison; then at his own request he was exiled to Australia.<sup>2</sup> He left England about the middle of the year 1801, arriving at Sydney on December 14. He travelled either by *Canada* or *Minorca*. The ships *Minorca*, *Canada* and *Nile* left England at the end of May or the beginning of June, 1801. The *Nile* was reserved for female convicts; the *Canada* and *Minorca* had male prisoners only. After a short stay in Sydney, Redfern was sent to "that compendious and concentrated hell, Norfolk Island," where he assisted the Surgeon and superintended the work at the hospital. Within two years of his arrival in New South Wales he received an absolute pardon from Governor King. This was on June 19, 1803. The *Sydney Gazette* under that date, on page 4, contains the following:—

#### NOTICE.

WHEREAS His Excellency was pleased to Grant Free Pardon and Conditional Emancipations to the following persons on His

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1. Dr. Smellie's work dedicated "To the Students of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh." (b) *The Anatomy of the Human Body*, by John Bell, Surgeon. Dr. Bell was another Edinburgh teacher.

2. "Mr. Redfern, in consequence of the Mutiny at the Nore in 1797 was, at his own particular request to Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick, then Inspector of the Transport Service, sent to this colony in 1801. During the passage he assisted the surgeon and kept the journal of the treatment of the sick." This statement is taken from page 38 of Governor Macquarie's brochure, "A Letter to the Right Honourable Viscount Sidmouth in Refutation of Statements made by the Hon. Henry Grey Bennett, M.P., in a Pamphlet *On the Transportation Laws, the State of the Hulks, and of the Colonies in New South Wales*": By Lachlan Macquarie, Major-General and Governor-in-Chief of New South Wales. London: Published by Richard Rees, No. 14 Percy Street. Printed by B. McMillan, Bow Street, Covent Garden, 1821.

Majesty's late Birth Day, some of them have not yet received them; notice is hereby given that such as are included in the following list may have their respective Deeds on Application at the Secretary's Office. D. D. MANN, Clerk.

FREE PARDONS.

WILLIAM REDFEARN,

At Norfolk Island. Redfern showed of what metal he was made. The excellence of his work, his practically unlimited capacity for work, and his good conduct attracted the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Foveaux, who at the earliest opportunity strongly recommended this young man for the position of Assistant Surgeon on the Colonial Medical Staff. Writing to Lord Castlereagh in a letter dated Sydney, September 6, 1808, Lieutenant-Colonel Foveaux says<sup>1</sup> :-

The distress'd state of the Colony for medical aid and the expression of your Lordship's wish to provide such as could be obtained in this country has induced me to appoint Mr. William Redfern to act as Assistant Surgeon. As his skill and ability in his profession are unquestionable, and his conduct has been such as to deserve particular approbation, I beg to solicit for his Confirmation.

Three weeks later, in the issue of the *Sydney Gazette* for September 25, 1808, under the caption, "Government General Order." we read:—

Mr. W Redfern is appointed to act as Assistant Surgeon in the Colony is to do duty at Sydney.

When Colonel Lachlan Macquarie assumed the office of Governor of New South Wales on January 1, 1810, he recognised the need of an efficient medical service. Discovering that the Acting Assistant Colonial Surgeon was a man of capacity and worth, he did what he could to secure the confirmation of his appointment. In his first despatch to Viscount Castlereagh, dated Sydney, New

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1. *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. VI., pp. 741, 757.



South Wales, March 8, 1810, the Governor urged the claims of William Redfern, corroborating the testimonial of Colonel Foveaux. "I also beg to recommend," he wrote, "that Mr. William Redfern, who has for some time past been acting as Assistant Surgeon in the Civil Medical Establishment of this Colony with great credit to himself and advantage to the public service, may be confirmed in that situation by a commission from His Majesty."<sup>1</sup> Macquarie's recommendation was favourably received, and Redfern's appointment as Assistant Surgeon was confirmed by Earl Liverpool, the Secretary of State, in a despatch dated Downing Street, July 26, 1811.<sup>2</sup> The position carried a salary of £136/17/6.

#### AUSTRALIA'S FIRST MEDICAL GRADUATE.

In 1808, as everyone knows, Australia had neither a University nor a Medical School. It did not possess even a well-equipped institution where a good, sound secondary education could be obtained. Yet, in that year Redfern passed a qualifying examination and received a licence to practise. At the time of his appointment to the Colonial Medical Service, although he had gone through a course of medical training in England, Redfern possessed no certificate nor any credential to prove his bona fides. He therefore voluntarily underwent a searching examination to test his technical knowledge. By this examination a precedent was established. From this time on for many years, all those who desired to commence medical practice in New South Wales had to pass a professional examination. The name of anyone failing to pass the test was gazetted, and the individual ordered to cease treating the sick and afflicted.<sup>3</sup> The inscription on Redfern's diploma - the first ever issued in Australia - was the following:—

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1. *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. VII., p. 306.

2. "Mr. Redfern will succeed to the situation of Assistant Surgeon vacated by Mr. Wentworth": *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. VII., p. 561.

3. *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. VI., Ser. 1: Note 185, p. 745.

We whose names are hereunto subscribed do hereby testify, that we have examined Mr. William Redfern touching his skill in Medicine, Surgery and other necessary collateral branches of Medical Literature, and we find him qualified to exercise the profession of a surgeon, etc., etc., consequently to fill the situation of an Assistant Surgeon in any Department of His Majesty's Services.

Given under our hands at Sydney, in New South Wales, the first day of September, 1808.

THOMAS JAMISON, Principal Surgeon.

J. HARRIS, Surgeon, New South Wales Corps.

WILLIAM BOHAN, Assistant Surgeon, New South Wales Corps.

This examining Medical Board was appointed by Colonel Foveaux.

The friendship early formed between Macquarie and Redfern matured with the passing of the years. In a despatch<sup>1</sup> dated Sydney, June 28, 1813, the Governor begged earnestly for a commission for the Assistant Surgeon. He wrote:-

Mr. Redfern was appointed Assistant Surgeon by Colonel Foveaux on August 1, 1808. Mr. Redfern was appointed by Warrant by the Commissioners for taking care of the sick and wounded seamen first, as Assistant Surgeon on His Majesty's ship *Standard*, having previously undergone the necessary examination. But in order that no objection might be taken in point of professional abilities he underwent at his own expense an examination here before a Medical Board appointed for the purpose by Colonel Foveaux. The Certificate of which Board was transmitted to Lord Castlereagh in a despatch dated September 6, 1808; and in a paragraph of which despatch Colonel Foveaux strongly solicited the confirmation. Mr. Redfern has done duty as Assistant Surgeon here and at Norfolk Island from June, 1802. Lord Liverpool was pleased to confirm Mr. Redfern as Assistant Surgeon as communicated to me in his Lordship's despatch under date July 26, 1811. He had not, however, received his commission as Assistant Surgeon, and in case it has not already been made out, I have to request your Lordship will be pleased to give orders respecting it being done. I consider Mr. Redfern as a professional man a very great acquisition to the colony. His talents as a Surgeon being far superior to those of any other person of that description in the colony, and perhaps equal to those of the most skilful medical men in any other country. With such talents and such claims, Mr. Redfern unquestionably looks forward to filling the highest situation in the Medical Department of New

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1. *Governor's Despatches*, Vol. I., No. 3, June 28, 1813, in the Mitchell Library.

South Wales in regular rotation of seniority, being able to produce satisfactory proofs of his ability both with regard to professional Abilities and character.

When Redfern arrived at Norfolk Island some time in January, 1802, Colonel Foveaux took advantage at once of his professional knowledge and dexterity. The newcomer was appointed to assist the Surgeon in charge of the station. On June 19, 1802, he was given the oversight of the hospital, and acted as Assistant Surgeon. This position he retained till May 12, 1804. Later, Redfern was transferred to Port Jackson, where he acted as Assistant Surgeon till his appointment was confirmed on July 26, 1811.

#### AUSTRALIA'S FIRST HOSPITAL.

A hospital is an institution rather than a building. There were two buildings, the one succeeding the other on the first site chosen for hospital purposes, but the institution was the same. The first hospital in Australia was erected on an area of land in George Street North, Sydney. The place is still occupied by a Government institution - a police station - where the moral rather than the physical ills of frail humanity now receive attention. On the front wall of this building has been placed a commemorative tablet by the Royal Australian Historical Society, carrying the following legend:—

THE  
SITE  
of the  
First General Hospital  
in Australia  
1788-1816  
R.A.H.S.

The erection of the first building was commenced as early as February, 1788, and was the work of twelve convict carpenters and sixteen men loaned by the ships in harbour. The original building was demolished in 1796 and re-erected on a stone foundation. In the second building the diseases and hurts of the settlers were treated till 1816, when the Rum Hospital in Macquarie Street was

[ILLUSTRATION OF HOSPITAL]

First General Hospital, Dawes Point, Sydney, 1796-1816.

opened. Redfern began his Australian career in the 1796 hospital. It is interesting to note, in Appendix C, page 196, of *The History of the Sydney Hospital*, by Dr. J. Frederick Watson, that the name of William Redfern is to be found among those of the officers in charge of the Sydney Hospital during the convict period. Some of the "First Fleet" Surgeons were still hard at work in Sydney when Redfern joined the hospital staff; so he may be regarded as a link between the first beginnings and the more modern development of medical practice in this country. During a part of his term as medical attendant at Sydney Hospital, Redfern had an apprentice named Henry Cowper. This youth enjoyed the unique distinction of being the first clinical student in Australia.

#### THE FIRST MEDICAL SPECIALITY IN AUSTRALIA.

Undoubtedly, the first Medical Speciality in Australia was that branch of the profession dealing with preventive medicine and hygiene. When Captain Cook was about to leave England on his first voyage in 1768, he received from the Lords of the Admiralty certain instructions that were to be carefully followed. The instructions for his surgeons only will be mentioned. These were:—

Whereas there is great reason to believe from what Doctor McBride has recommended in his book, *Experimental Essays on the Scurvy and other Subjects*, and in his pamphlet entitled *An Historical Account of the New Method of Treating Scurvy at Sea* (of which you will hereafter receive copies), and from the opinion of other persons acquainted with the Scorbutic disorder, that malt made into wort may be of great benefit to seamen in scorbutic and other putrid diseases; and whereas we think fit experiments should be made of the good effects of it in your present intended voyage ... The Surgeon is to keep an exact journal of the effects of the wort in scorbutic and other putrid diseases not attended with pestilential symptoms, carefully and particularly noting down, previous to its administration, the cases in which it was given, describing the general symptoms, and relating the progress and effects from time to time; which journal is to be transmitted to us at the end of the voyage.<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. I., Pt. 1, pp. 314, 315.

The doctors who sailed with Captain Cook - Surgeons Monkhouse and Perry - were principally public health officers. The chief work of the first fleet surgeons was in the department of preventive medicine. They realised that it is better to put a fence on the edge of a precipice than to build a hospital at the bottom of it. From 1788 to the present time the speciality has been growing and developing. At first it was a portion only of the work of the Colonial Surgeon; later, certain doctors with special knowledge were set apart as whole time public health officers.

From insignificant beginnings great institutions for the prevention of disease and the preservation of public health have sprung. The term "Public Health" embraces now such a vast field of action that no one individual can be an expert in every phase of it. The original specialty can become split up into a number of special specialities, each of them big and exacting. In the year 1814, an event occurred of prime hygienic importance. Three ships - the *General Hewitt*, the *Surrey*, and *The Three Bees* - arrived in Sydney, each with a deplorable tale to tell of disease, suffering and death. On one of these ships, the *Surrey*, there had been upwards of fifty deaths from preventable disease, the result of ignorance, incompetence and neglect. The casualties included the captain, the first and second mates, and the surgeon. The colony was shocked when the tidings of the catastrophe reached the people. The Governor ordered the assistant surgeon to make a thorough investigation of the case; also, to report on the cause and prevention of sickness in immigrant ships, hoping to obviate a repetition of the tragedy. Redfern's report discussed the subject under five headings - clothing, diet, air, cleanliness, and medical assistance. The document is too long for inclusion here, but excerpts from it will show the character of the whole. In this report, Redfern demonstrated that he was an accurate observer and a wise counsellor. His Remarks on the attainments of the ships' surgeons were apposite. These men were incompetent from their age, ignorance, or intemperance; very often from all three. "They are," the report states, "either students straight

from the lecture rooms, or men who have failed in the respective lines of their profession.”<sup>1</sup> As a remedy, it was suggested that well trained naval surgeons - each supreme in his own department and independent of the captain - should replace those derelicts who had masqueraded till then as surgeons. Redfern’s recommendation was favourably received and immediately carried into effect by the authorities. Then Fate, that capricious jade, played one of her extraordinary tricks. One of the first surgeons to arrive in New South Wales under the new regime was James Bowman, who later succeeded to the position Redfern had considered his own by right.

Redfern’s remarks on gaol fever, its aetiology and infectiousness, are worth noting. As an introduction, he states his *confessio fidei* concerning fresh air.<sup>1</sup> “Air, the great Pabulum of life, without which existence can scarcely be maintained for a minute.” Then he goes on:—

The bodies of men when closely confined in considerable numbers possess a power of generating a most subtle poison, the nature is not cognizable, but in its effects not only injurious and deleterious to the bodies of those by whom it is generated, but spreading baneful influence far and wide among all who come within the sphere of its action is fully evinced by many lamentable instances on record. The case of Mrs. Howitt and others who escaped from the Black Hole of Calcutta and were afterwards seized with the fever which was generated during their confinement, and the seeds<sup>2</sup> of which were carried with them is a proof of the first part of this position; and the second will be equally certified by the relation of one of the most striking instances of the kind on record, which happened on the 11th of May, 1750. At the Old Bailey the prisoners were kept for nearly a whole day in small ill ventilated and crowded apartments. Some of them laboured under jail fever; when they were brought into Court the windows at the end of the hall opposite to the place where the judges sat were thrown open, the people on the left of the Court on whom the wind blow were infected with fever, while those on the opposite side escaped. The Lord Chief Justice and the Recorder who sat on the Lord Mayor’s right hand escaped, while the Lord Mayor and the rest of the Bench who sat at his left were seized with the distemper. Many of the Middlesex jury on the left side of the Court died of it, while the London

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1. *Historical Records of Australia*, Ser. 1, Vol. VIII, p. 275 *et seq.*

2. Redfern is here anticipating modern research.

jury who sat opposite to them received no injury. But why should we go so far back and quote cases in proof of that of which we have got a melancholy instance before our eyes. In the transport *Surrey* the poison was generated by the close confinement of the convicts in the prison. It diffused its malignant influence through every part of the ship and spared none who came within the sphere of its action.

With the knowledge of the day, this part of Redfern's statement was an excellent exposition of cause and effect. It was clear, logical and convincing. The report concluded with the following recommendations:—

- (1) That more warm clothing be provided for the winter passage.
- (2) That more regard be directed towards personal cleanliness by facilitating the means of washing and cleaning their persons and dress.
- (3) That cold affusions be employed as largely as possible.
- (4) That the masters of transports be prohibited from purchasing or exchanging, unless by direct instructions from the Transport Board, any part of the rations of the convicts.
- (5) That a different distribution, or rather an increase of the quantity of the convicts' wine be provided for.
- (6) That no reduction, unless under peculiar circumstances, of the regulated allowance of water be suffered.
- (7) That no part of their rations or articles of comfort be surreptitiously or fraudulently withheld.
- (8) That in order to prevent the generation of contagion it is absolutely necessary that the convicts with their bedding should be admitted every day, when the weather will permit, on deck for a certain time; the longer the better.
- (9) That the prison hospital be regularly cleaned and fumigated with nitric or muriatic acid in a gaseous state; that the fumigation be as perfect and as general over the ship as possible; well airing and drying the prison before the convicts are sent below.
- (10) That for the better preservation of the health of the convicts more eligible medical attendants, and on a different establishment be provided.
- (11) That an agent for transports be sent out in whose person might be combined the two offices of agent and principal medical officer, invested with powers to cause the necessary regulations to be carried into effect.

At the end of the report, in a few sentences, the author gives us a valediction:-

If, however, anything contained herein be the means of throwing any additional light on the management of the convicts and



by giving more effect to the benevolent intentions of His Majesty's Government of ameliorating their condition or be the means of saving the life of a single individual, I shall feel more than amply compensated for any pains I have bestowed on the subject.

The report was dated September 20, 1814.

Vaccination as a prophylactic against smallpox has been practised in Australia since the earliest years of the nineteenth century. It was introduced to New South Wales in 1803 by John Savage, a friend of Edward Jenner. Redfern vaccinated the Governor's son, Lachlan Macquarie, twice - once unsuccessfully from arm to arm, and once with fresh calf lymph, when the operation was successful.

#### CONCERNING EMANCIPISTS.

The Emancipists formed an important part of the community in the earlier years of Australia's history. The term "emancipist" was applied to any individual who had been, but no longer was a convict. It mattered not how he had gained his freedom, whether by the expiration of the sentence he was serving, or by a pardon - absolute or conditional - granted by the Governor. The free settlers viewed the emancipists variously. There was one section, well-to-do and influential, of which Robert Lowe, J. T. Bigge and Lieutenant-Colonel Molle were typical, that regarded those who had served a sentence as social outcasts whose ostracism should be permanent. The enormity or insignificance of the crime committed had no weight with them; "it mattered not whether the individual was steeped to the lips in crime or innocent altogether,"<sup>1</sup> if he had been convicted once his social doom was sealed. Then there was another section, like Gallio, who cared for none of those things, the attitude of which towards the emancipists was one of indifference. There was still a third section, of which the Governor himself was the leader. This section

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1. From Robert Lowe's speech in the Legislative Council on October 10, 1849, when he objected to Dr. William Bland, an emancipist, having a seat in the first Senate of the Sydney University. The speech was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of October 11, 1849.

desired to rehabilitate, with the very best of intentions those who by their contrition and good works had proved themselves worthy of recognition. Curiously or rather naturally enough, this policy of redemption was vigorously opposed by the first section. The Australian pharisee thanked his God that he was not as other men were; he would have no dealings with those emancipist Samaritans. Macquarie's method of carrying out the great work of rehabilitation may have been clumsy, and he may have been wanting in tact; but the idea of reclaiming the members of this unfortunate class was certainly humane and commendable. The principle enunciated by Macquarie was this: "That Emancipation when united with rectitude and long-trying good conduct should lead a man back to that rank in society which he had forfeited, and do away, inasfar as the case will permit, all retrospect of former bad conduct."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the emancipist should be fully and freely forgiven; his past forgotten insofar as it is possible to do so, and he should be eligible for any situation for which he was suited by either training or capacity. The Governor set the lead by showing hospitality to a limited number of prominent emancipists, each of whom was a man of acknowledged probity.

One of those chosen for vice-regal recognition was William Redfern, Assistant Surgeon on the Colonial Medical Staff. Redfern was specially favoured by the Governor, by whom he was appointed medical attendant to the vice-regal household. His intimacy with Macquarie and his frequent presence at the Government House were rather a challenge to those opposed to the reception of emancipists. The attitude of the Military caste towards meeting and recognising Redfern was, generally, one of sullen submission. While his old regiment was stationed in New South Wales, Macquarie could rely upon the sympathetic support of some of its officers, who had been his friends and colleagues in other days. His most faithful ally and co-adjutor was the Major of brigade, Captain Henry Colden Antill. This officer saw much of and shared

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1. *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. VII., p. 357.

the Governor's admiration for Redfern, The friendship between the two younger men developed later into a kinship when Captain Antill and Dr. Redfern married two sisters, daughters, of Mr. Edward Spencer Wills, of Sydney and Geelong.

With the departure of the 73rd Regiment, Macquarie's influence with the Military ceased practically. The 73rd was succeeded by Colonel George Molle's regiment, the 46th. The officers of that regiment, from the Colonel down, were very exclusive and infected with class prejudice. They were hostile to the Governor, and strongly resented his attitude towards reformed convicts. During the whole time the 46th was stationed in New South Wales, the relations between Macquarie and the soldiers, were not at all cordial. At first there was just a certain aloofness and lack of social intercourse; later, the conduct of some of the officers became so offensive that the Governor refused to have any communication with the Commandant that was not strictly official.

In due time the 46th was recalled, being replaced by the "Heroes of Talavera," the 48th. That regiment arrived in Sydney, in August, 1817. Among the officers of the 48th there was a division of opinion as to the line of action to be adopted with the emancipists. Some of the seniors, notably Lieutenant-Colonel Erskine, Major Morisset, and Major Druitt, took their cue from the Governor. They fraternised with Redfern at the Government House, accepted his hospitality, and made him welcome at their quarters. Colonel Erskine even went so far as to invite the doctor to the regimental mess. At one of these mess dinners the junior officers present suddenly left the table as a protest against being asked to meet an ex-convict on equal terms. The Colonel, in consequence of this, behaviour, framed a mess rule forbidding anyone leaving the table until "the first thirds" had been drunk.

The indiscriminate repudiation of the emancipists was at once unjust and cruel. Many of them were free from any criminal taint, and were, moreover, gentlemen by birth, education and instinct. But, because they were unfortunate enough to come to New South Wales

as exiles, a large section of the settlers wished to make them feel that they were pariahs. Happily, the line of demarkation between the free and the bond has disappeared long since, and we are now one people with a common destiny.

#### JAMES BOWMAN SUCCEEDS D'ARCY WENTWORTH.

On May 5, 1818, D'Arcy Wentworth, the principal Colonial Surgeon, resigned his position. He had done the work since February 24, 1809. At first he had acted as *locum tenens* for Thomas Jamison, who had been ordered to England as a witness in the Bligh-Johnston affair; later, he became his successor. Jamison did not return to New South Wales; he died in England in the year 1810. After D'Arcy Wentworth's resignation, Redfern hoped for, but did not receive promotion. Much to his surprise and chagrin, James Bowman, an outsider received the appointment.

It is passing strange how, at times, the results of a reform act adversely on the reformer. The medical profession is working at high pressure to eliminate disease and push back death. If these things could be accomplished, the occupation of its members would be gone. A fate of this kind overtook Redfern. He had made some excellent suggestions to the Transport Board through the Governor that resulted in a better medical service on the transports, less discomfort in travelling, an improvement in the general health of the passengers, and the saving of many lives that would have been lost through preventable diseases. Then, the first surgeon to come to Australia as Medical Superintendent of one of these transports was James Bowman, the man destined to supplant him.<sup>1</sup>

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1. James Bowman arrived in Sydney on January 19, 1816, as Surgeon Superintendent on the transport *Mary Anne*. He had been trained as a naval surgeon. On February 29, 1816, he applied for a position on the Colonial Medical Service; but, being disappointed in not getting just what he desired, returned to England. He came back to Australia in 1818, and succeeded D'Arcy Wentworth as principal Colonial Surgeon. James Bowman married Mary, daughter of John Macarthur, of Camden, New South Wales.

## REDFERN'S DISAPPOINTMENT AT NON-SUCCESSION.

Naturally Redfern was annoyed and dissatisfied at the appointment of James Bowman as principal Colonial Surgeon. He had every reason to suppose that his own promotion had been assured.

Redfern had had a fine record of many years' good service in the colony. He was capable, popular with the patients, and had much clinical and administrative experience. Macquarie, who knew his capacity better than anyone else, was particularly anxious to secure Redfern's advancement. The Governor's recommendation, a good example of an intercessory prayer, is here quoted:—

In succession to Mr. Wentworth as principal surgeon to the medical establishment of this Territory, I beg most respectfully to recommend Mr. Assistant Surgeon William Redfern to be appointed Principal Surgeon, as in every respect perfectly competent and well qualified for executing the duties of that important office, being a man of very eminent talents and an excellent scholar and possessing universal knowledge. Mr. Redfern is at present only second assistant on the medical establishment, Mr. James Mileham being the first senior assistant. But this gentleman, though a very worthy good man, is very defective in medical knowledge; he is very old and very much affected in his eyesight, which render him incompetent for the active and important duties of Principal Surgeon. These are my sole motives for passing over Mr. Mileham and recommending Mr. Redfern the next officer in succession to him, and these reasons, I trust will have their due weight with your Lordship. I have, &c., L. MACQUARIE.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to his official position on the Colonial Medical establishment, Redfern had been medical attendant on the families of Governor Bligh and Governor Macquarie, two of the King's representatives in Australia. He had also successfully treated members of many of the best colonial families. John Macarthur, out of the fulness of his heart for good services rendered, bore excellent testimony to Redfern's worth. Writing to his wife from Bath, England, on May 3, 1810, he says, among other things:—

Judge then what must have been and what are still, my feelings at reading the almost unhopd for news of the favourable change which has taken place in the health of my beloved girl.

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1. *Historical Records of Australia*, Ser. 1, Vol. IX., p. 787.

The day I received your letters, Mr. Redfern's nephew came over from Trowbridge, kindly sent by his father with a letter, from Mr. Redfern to me, in which your account of the darling girl's progressive recovery is most fully and pleasingly confirmed. I think I need not tell you, that if I had as much power as I have inclination, Mr. Redfern's reward for the service he has rendered, Elizabeth should be as great as the skill he has manifested in discovering and applying an efficacious remedy to her extraordinary disease. I hope he will be informed that no pains were spared on my part to ascertain how far it might be practicable to obtain confirmation of his appointment, and I beg to assure him that whenever Mr. Bligh's affair is settled, whatever little interest I may have shall be exerted in his favour.<sup>1</sup>

Again, in a letter dated London, July 20, 1810, Macarthur mentions his appreciation of Redfern's skill. He wrote:-

Tell him I saw his brother and nephew at Trowbridge, and that I shall feel the greatest pleasure if it should be in my power to aid their exertions to serve him.

A private testimonial of this kind, the honest opinion of a soldier, is of much more value as a record of a man's worth than the most flattering epistle written for public use.

There was another reason why Redfern expected promotion: the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, later Lord Melville, the Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, had laid it down as a principle in a despatch dated November 15, 1793, "that the right of succession to the office of Principal Surgeon should belong to the Assistant Surgeon in order of seniority of their commissions."<sup>2</sup> This practice had been observed without exception till the resignation of D'Arcy Wentworth. Nor was this all. Redfern had a definite promise from Earl Bathurst himself, that he should succeed D'Arcy Wentworth. The evasion of this promise is difficult to explain. Possibly, the influence of the anti-emancipationist party was sufficiently strong at headquarters to prevent an ex-convict getting his dues. Be that as it may, the promise was broken. In spite of his high qualifications for the

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1. *Some Early Records of the Macarthurs, of Camden*, pp. 192, 198. John Macarthur's daughter was threatened with permanent invalidism.

2. *Historical Records of Australia*, Ser. 1, Vol. I, p. 458.

position to which he considered he was entitled, in spite of testimonials of which he had many, and in spite of his previous long and honourable record of service well done, Redfern failed to succeed D'Arcy Wentworth as principal Colonial Surgeon. In a section of a despatch from Earl Bathurst to Governor Macquarie, dated Downing Street, April 14, 1819, the appointment of James Bowman was announced. "I am further to acquaint you," the paragraph ran, "that the Prince Regent, has been pleased to confer on Mr. James Bowman the appointment of Principal Surgeon of the Colony."

As soon as James Bowman succeeded to the office, William Redfern resigned his commission in the Colonial Medical Service. His letter containing the resignation is as follows:-

Sydney, 18th October, 1819. Sir, His Royal Highness the Prince Regent having been pleased to appoint Mr. James Bowman to be Principal Surgeon in His Majesty's Territory in New South Wales in room of D'Arcy Wentworth Esq., resigned And as I had reasonable expectations from the strong recommendation of your Excellency in my favour, from a long laborious and useful service of eighteen years; and from the promise of Earl Bathurst to Viscount Castlereagh, and from his Lordship to my brother that I should succeed to the vacancy occasioned by Mr. Wentworth's resignation, I cannot but feel that those reasonable expectations have thus terminated in severe mortifying disappointment - that my most sanguine hopes and best prospects in life are thus utterly blasted, I have, therefore, the honour of thus tendering my resignation - soliciting your Excellency to have the goodness to forward the same for the gracious acceptance by His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, and at the same time beg leave most respectfully to entreat that your Excellency will be pleased to permit me, in the meantime, to retire from the duties of my situation as Assistant Surgeon, till the will and pleasure of His Royal Highness on the subject shall be made known. I have the honour to be, Sir, with the greatest respect, Your Excellency's most obedient servant, W. REDFERN, Assistant Surgeon to His Majesty's Settlement in New South Wales.

In addition to his letter of resignation addressed to the Governor, Redfern sent Earl Bathurst a communication reminding his Lordship of the promise he had made, and mentioning his own great disappointment at being superseded by Mr. James Bowman.<sup>1</sup> He also petitioned

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1. *Historical Records of Australia*, Ser 1, Vol. X., p. 274.

for a half-pay pension on account of services rendered. This letter was accompanied by two testimonials - one from Colonel Foveaux and one from Mr. D'Arcy Wentworth. Redfern ceased duty as Assistant Surgeon on October 14, 1819.

#### REDFERN AS MAGISTRATE.

Redfern's career as a magistrate was brief. His appointment to the Bench was the result of his failure to become Principal Colonial Surgeon. Macquarie was almost as disappointed as Redfern himself at the turn of events, and sought to succour his wounded friend. He was willing to give the doctor anything he had in his power to bestow in the way of compensation. Redfern expressed a desire to be made a Justice of the Peace for the district of Airds, where his property was. Macquarie did this, and more; he made his protégé a magistrate of the whole territory of New South Wales. This was a bold, perhaps an unwise thing to do; it gave Redfern precedence over many older and more experienced officers.

But in the matter of making an emancipist a magistrate, the Governor's authority was not to go unchallenged. Mr. J. T. Bigge, the Commissioner, who was in New South Wales at that time, strongly objected to Macquarie's action. He said in effect:-

The policy of the Governor in fraternizing at all with reformed convicts is bad enough and to be condemned by every gentleman; but when he attempts to raise one of the most notorious of them to the magistracy of the whole colony, a vigorous protest must be made. I shall not allow him to do it.

But Macquarie was not so pliant as Bigge had hoped. The rugged Scottish soldier whose character reflected his country's motto – "Hands off, wha dares meddle wi me!" - was determined to accomplish his purpose. The correspondence that passed between the Governor and the Commissioner was characterised by much plain speaking, not to say acrimony. Macquarie admitted that in a matter of school learning, Bigge might be his superior; but in a knowledge of men and things, he would yield to



no man, not even to a Commissioner. Macquarie closed the correspondence by telling Mr. Bigge that he intended to make the appointment, and there the matter was to end as far as he was concerned.

But, “the best laid schemes o’ mice and men gang aft agley,” as Macquarie found out later. The notice of Redfern’s appointment to the magistracy appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* of Saturday, November 13, 1819.<sup>1</sup>

Government House, Sydney, Friday, 12th November, 1819. His Excellency, the Governor has been pleased to nominate and appoint William Redfern Esquire to be a Justice of the Peace and Magistrate in the District of Airs and throughout the territory of New South Wales; and he is to be respected and obeyed accordingly. By his Excellency’s Command, J T. CAMPBELL, Secretary. – *Sydney Gazette*, Saturday, November 13, 1819.

Commissioner Bigge, however, did not let the matter end there; he communicated with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. His story and his arguments found favour in the eyes of the English authorities, and at last Macquarie had to accept and acknowledge defeat. He was compelled to cancel Redfern’s commission. It was an unhappy Governor that addressed the following despatch to the Right Honourable Earl Bathurst, K.G., His Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, etc:—

My Lord, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship’s letter, No. 9, dated the 10th of July, 1820, relative to the King’s disapproval of my appointing Mr. William Redfern, late Assistant Surgeon in the Medical Staff of this Colony, a Magistrate, and directing him to be removed from that office. I have now to report to your Lordship that the King’s commands have been carried into effect in respect to the removal of that gentleman from the Office of Magistrate. I have, &c., L. MACQUARIE.<sup>2</sup>

One short year saw the rise and fall of Redfern as a magistrate.

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1. Government and General Orders, Civil Department.

2. *Governor’s Despatches*, Vol. IV., November 9, March 20, 1821, in Mitchell Library, Sydney.

## REDFERN AND JOHN BULL.

Mr. J. T. Bigge's attitude towards the emancipists was one of active hostility; he saw no good in any of them. Redfern particularly, he delighted in humiliating. In part, he was responsible for Redfern's resignation from the Colonial Medical Service; the doctor's dismissal from the Bench of Magistrates was wholly due to the Commissioner's influence with the Colonial Office. But Redfern had graduated from the "University of Hard Knocks," and refused to be crushed by Bigge's blows. These attacks were as undeserved as they were unjust. Redfern knew this and, as he possessed neither the inclination nor a sufficiency of the Christian grace of meekness to endure them without protest, he counter attacked. His intention was to write a book, in which he would tell the world what manner of man Bigge was. He collected data to be printed later, as an adequate and sufficient reply to all the Commissioner's aspersions, and sought a publisher. As an earnest of the coming harvest, Redfern sent a letter, evidently a precis of the larger work, to *John Bull* for publication. But the editor - possibly he was a Scotsman - was too canny to publish it. *John Bull* circumspect, and fearful of the consequences if "Freedom of the Press" became too free, printed, not Redfern's letter, but its own comments on what had been written. Redfern's communication was a plain statement of facts as he saw them. It was personal, unrestrained in language and unequivocal. It may be of interest to reproduce *John Bull's* comments. They are to be found in the issue of that journal for August 25, 1822:-

We must decline inserting Mr. Redfern's letter, as being a personal attack upon a gentleman known only to us in his public character. We can feel for Mr. Redfern and can easily make allowance for the expression of his sentiments upon the subject of Mr. Bigge's Report; but we cannot suffer this paper to be made a vehicle of an attack upon a public officer, who has had a very arduous and unpleasant duty to perform, and has, for all we know, performed it well. Mr. Redfern appears to have mistaken us; we are anxious to disclaim any connexion, or communication with any of the parties; we take subjects up upon public grounds without fear, favour or affection, and when Mr. Redfern's book appears we will read it, and, as it seems an object to him to have himself spoken of by us, we will deal fairly by him,

observing always that the task assigned to Mr. Bigge by the Government was one which could not from its nature fail of making enemies of that class of the Colonial population to which Mr. Redfern, unfortunately belongs.

It is impossible, to say if Redfern succeeded in obtaining the services of a publisher for his book; there are no copies of it available now. It is a pity we do not possess the portrait of Mr. Bigge from the pen of Dr. Redfern; it was drawn faithfully, even though some of the features were exaggerated. As it is, Bigge's picture of Redfern hangs alone and is lop-sided; it requires the other to act as a counterpoise.

#### REDFERN AS A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

Redfern held the position of Assistant Colonial Surgeon during the greater part of his professional life in New South Wales. At first he was stationed at Norfolk Island; later, his headquarters were at Sydney. The salary he received from this appointment was £136/17/6 per annum. In addition to this, he was supplied with rations, fuel, light and quarters. The doctor lived in the north wing of the Macquarie Street hospital - the old portion of the building now occupied by the Parliament of New South Wales. The Surgeon's work at the hospital consisted chiefly in the treatment of sick and injured convicts; but free people, seamen and assigned servants were also received under certain conditions. An indigent free person could have treatment at the hospital on the recommendation of the medical officer after his financial history had been investigated. The fees charged for the medical treatment of sick sailors, the payment of which came from the employers' pockets, were the perquisites of the surgeons, who shared and shared alike. The master of an assigned servant had to pay for the patient's rations only. But the official work of the Colonial Medical Staff was confined not entirely to attendance on the waifs and strays; the civil officers of the Crown could claim also free medical service<sup>1</sup> Besides attending the

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1. The information about the work of the Colonial Medical Staff at the Hospital has been taken chiefly from *The History of the Sydney Hospital from 1811 to 1911*, by J. Frederick Watson, M.B., Ch.M.

[PHOTOGRAPH OF HOSPITAL c.1900]

The “Rum” Hospital, Macquarie Street, Sydney, opened 1816.

cot-cases in the hospital building, Redfern attended an out-patient clinic for the ambulatory cases. The medical team of which we hear so much in these days consisted, in the early years of the nineteenth century, of one man, and, as there was perfect unanimity in that “team,” and no time wasted in useless argument, the work was soon accomplished. Redfern’s activities extended beyond the four walls of the hospital; he had unrestricted private practice. He was seldom at the infirmary after mid-day, and then only to attend a case of extreme urgency. As a private practitioner, Redfern enjoyed a great vogue. His practice was large - probably the largest in New South Wales at that time - and his fees were correspondingly high; so his income was something substantial. His clientele embraced all sections of the community, from the Governor at one extremity to the no-class outcast at the other. On one occasion he attended even Royalty.<sup>1</sup>

Redfern’s reputation as an obstetrician must have stood high; the fee for his services was frequently twenty guineas. Redfern’s opinion and help as a consultant were much in request both in town and country. Redfern would have been successful in any calling. He knew not only his work, but he had also a shrewd knowledge of human nature. He did not possess the soothing voice and gentleness of Dr. Bland - he was even brusque with his patients - but those on whom he was called to attend felt safe in his hands, and had a sure and perfect conviction that a recovery would be effected if it were humanly possible.

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1. “The King’s illness continued to increase rapidly, and on 7th December (1821) Mr. Crook, the missionary, was requested by a messenger to attend immediately as Pomarre had fainted. He accordingly hastened to the royal residence with Mr. Redfern, a surgeon from Port Jackson, and found that the patient’s end was fast approaching ... The British ships in the harbour fired minute guns, recognizing the solemnity of the occasion.” The foregoing is an extract from *The Missionary*, Vol. II., p. 84 (Church Missionary Society, 1888). The extract refers to the last illness and death of the reigning prince of Otaheite. He had been the protector of the English missionaries. This incident occurred evidently while Redfern was on his way to England in 1821.

## VACCINATION AND ITS INTRODUCTION TO AUSTRALIA.

Edward Jenner (1749-1823) vaccinated his first case - a boy named James Phipps - on May 14, 1796. The lymph was taken from the arm of a milkmaid who had contracted cow-pox from an infected beast. One of Jenner's pupils came to Australia in 1803, bringing with him a knowledge of this epochal discovery and some lymph, but unfortunately this lymph had lost its potency by the time it reached Australia. A supply of active lymph arrived in 1804.

Vaccination was quickly recognised in New South Wales as a great and valuable addition to the armamentarium medicum.

On June 24, 1804, there was a notice in the *Sydney Gazette* inviting the public to attend the hospital for the purpose of submitting to the operation of vaccination. The wording of the notice runs as follows:—

All parents who wish their children to be inoculated with the cow-pox are desired to attend the Principal Surgeon at the General Hospital on Saturday next with their children, and after that day they are to attend every Wednesday and Saturday from eight to ten o'clock in the morning; during which hours regular attendance will be given to all descriptions of persons, desirous of availing themselves of so great a blessing as that which now offers in the happy introduction of the vaccine virus.<sup>1</sup>

## REDFERN'S VISITS TO ENGLAND.

Redfern returned to England three times after his transportation to New South Wales in 1801. The first visit was paid in 1821, when he went to England as a delegate from the emancipists to obtain relief from certain disabilities that had been burdensome and oppressive to that section of the colonists. He went again in 1825. His last journey to the home land was in 1828. On this occasion he was accompanied by his son, William Lachlan Macquarie Redfern, who was going to Scotland to complete his education.

It was, undoubtedly, on the first voyage that Redfern

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1. Four hundred were vaccinated successfully in 1804. *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. V., p. 429.

attended the sick Otaheitean prince. This voyage, too, was notable for the “fact” that Redfern died at sea before the *Duchess of York* reached her destination. The news of Redfern’s obituary proved, however, to be an “exaggeration.” The *Sydney Gazette* of November 22, refuted effectively the persistent rumour of Redfern’s demise in the following sentences:—

We shall ever feel peculiar interest in detecting falsehood and proclaiming truth. For the last ten days a report has been industriously circulated in the colony, of letters having arrived from London via Liverpool, in the *Clydesdale*, purporting to come from Mr. Hosking, formerly a much respected inhabitant of New South Wales, but now a merchant of London, to a friend at Parramatta. The information goes to say that the *Duchess of York* had safely arrived, a circumstance which is correct; that Dr. Redfern died six days before her arrival in the port of London; and that Mr. Hosking had unfortunately failed in business in consequence of his mercantile connection here. Latterly, inattention to truth has been the order of the day in Sydney, and therefore we have been induced to sift many reports to the bottom, fearful of giving insertion to misrepresentations, and found them invariably a catalogue of base and unnecessary calumniations. We are happy to have it in our power most unequivocally to correct those reports, there not being the most remote foundation to foster such ideas as the distempered imagination of some designing men would have the public mind stored with.

Could any “catalogue of base and unnecessary calumniations” be more completely exploded?

#### THE FIRST BANKING INSTITUTION AND THE FIRST DIRECTORS.<sup>1</sup>

Before the year 1817, banks as we know them were unknown in New South Wales. In the very early days of Australian settlement there was no need for them; later, however, when the ubiquitous merchant and trader appeared, the need for a financial institution became imperative. In 1816 a number of “magistrates, principal merchants, and other gentlemen of Sydney,” of whom Redfern was one, met at Mr. Judge Advocate Wylde’s chambers to discuss the best means of establishing a bank.

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1. The story of the genesis of the Bank of New South Wales is well told in Vols. IV. and VI. of the *Journal and Proceedings* of this Society, Information also may be obtained from the *Historical Records of Australia*, Ser. 1, Vol. IX., on p. 219 and elsewhere.

The gentlemen attending the meeting agreed that it was essential that a sterling currency should take place in the colony. How this might be accomplished was then debated. After much discussion, the united wisdom of the meeting decided to establish a bank - the Bank of New South Wales. The original idea was to have a subscription bank with a nominal capital of £20,000, divided into two hundred shares of £100 each. Later, a modified scheme was proposed, dividing the capital into four hundred shares at £50 each. The bank was to be used for loan, discount and deposit. The shares were taken up not as readily as the founders of the bank had anticipated, and the sum of £12,600 only was realised. The management of the bank was to be under the control of seven subscribers, or directors, of whom one was to be termed President of the Bank. The first directors of the Bank of New South Wales were Messrs. D'Arcy Wentworth, John Harris, Robert Jenkins, Thomas Wylde, Alexander Riley, William Redfern, and John Thomas Campbell. Mr. Campbell was unanimously elected as first president.

The bank commenced operations on Tuesday, April 8, 1817, a charter to begin business having been obtained previously from the Governor. The bank was housed at first in a building known then as Mrs. Reibey's cottage in Macquarie Place.

#### Mr. HOWE, Dr. REDFERN, AND A HORSEWHIP.

In the days of our grandfathers the three chief instruments for punishment or correction were the strap, the slipper, and the horsewhip. The first two were used for administration at home; the horsewhip - a sort of high explosive - was reserved for "work in the field." We of the older generation have most of us a vivid recollection of the chastening effect of the application of the slipper and the strap in days of our childhood; but fortunately we are quite ignorant of the charm and magic of the horsewhip. In an admirable paper, under the caption "The Howes and their Press," by J. A. Ferguson, B.A., LL.B., published in the *Journal* of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol. XIII., p. 344, *et seq.*, the



author mentions the fact that Mr. Howe, the editor and printer of the *Sydney Gazette*, was horsewhipped by Mr. Redfern. He, however, gave no account of the cause of the assault or of its sequel, both of which will be here detailed.

On Wednesday, November 23, 1827, there appeared in the columns of Mr. Robert Howe's paper, the *Sydney Gazette*, a paragraph considered by Dr. Redfern to be outrageously scurrilous and personal. With the smart of the wound still acute, he purchased a horsewhip and set out on a retributive expedition. As a matter of fact, the offensive article was just the last of a series of aspersions that had quite exhausted Redfern's patience. Mr. Wentworth, who defended Redfern in the subsequent court case, told the judge the whole story. "Week after week, day after day" said his advocate, "there was another and another dish of scandal on which the defendant was made to figure." Some ill-timed remarks on the asthenic condition of the Bank of New South Wales was the exciting cause of the assault. The institution that had begun operations in 1817 under such favourable auspices had practically finished its career within the short space of ten years. Dissolution seemed imminent. Doubtless, Mr. Howe thought the occasion was opportune for criticising the conduct of the management. Unfortunately for this purpose, he invoked the aid of that most dangerous of vehicles - sarcasm. He fired his charge, the shot struck home, but the wound inflicted was only skin deep, rousing the victim to a condition of uncontrollable fury. Redfern sought Howe's gore. Here is the offending passage:—

Mr. Thomas Baine, J.P., though pressed by the majority of the proprietors to stand for the vacancy in the Direction of the Bank of New South Wales, has declined. For this we are sorry, inasmuch as now Scott, of the *Australian* company, has also determined upon not presenting himself as a candidate, we know not to what quarter the Board will turn for the purpose of completing its number, unless Mr. J. T. Campbell should take compassion upon his brethren and allow himself to be prevailed upon to come in again; but we rather presume that Mr. Campbell even will not consent to the call of his numerous friends, since it is next to certain that the Bank will only live to the 31st of December next. Many of the old Proprietors contemplate the winding

up of the Bank for the purpose of transferring their capital to New Bank, unless those who have rendered themselves unpopular are either willing to resign or else be dismissed. There are only a few of the next year Directors adapted for such an office, wherein confidence, honour, capacity, and impartiality should be considered preeminently requisite. However, the determination on the of Messrs. Raine and Scott, all circumstances considered, do them credit. Some of the proprietors inform us that they will insist upon Mr. Terry taking a seat in the direction with his friend Dr. Redfern. This would be something like a *balance in trade*.

A few hours after the publication of the *Sydney Gazette* on that fateful day, Mr. Howe was riding along George Street on his way from the General Post Office to his home in Charlotte Place. On looking round he saw behind him in the far distance an object, as it were a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, pursuing and overtaking him.

“At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist;  
It moved and moved and took at last  
A certain shape...”

It was unmistakable; it was alarming; it was a gig carrying a very irate Dr. Redfern armed with a heavy brand new horsewhip. Mr. Howe possessed the psychology necessary “to suspect that the doctor was not amicably bent.” Redfern allowed Howe to reach his home before coming into action. This was a strategical error.

When Charlotte Place had been reached, the doctor demanded the explanation of certain statements appearing in the news-sheet, half hoping for an apology; but the printer rather gloried in his vituperations. The gauntlet was flung down! Redfern lost no time in getting to work with the whip, which he used deftly and to some purpose. Half flayed, the aching Howe ran at top speed to the refuge of the kitchen calling for help. Reinforcements soon arrived, and in the unequal contest that followed, Redfern was deprived quickly of his weapon. Undaunted, he still fought with his fists. Ultimately he was forced to retire into the street, bruised, battered, bleeding, and discomfited.

When Howe had recovered his breath sufficiently, he hurried to the police station to lay an information against

his assailant. Redfern was bound over in the sum of £100 and a surety for a similar amount to come up for trial when called upon. The case was mooted before the Court of Quarter Sessions on Monday, January 21, 1828. The defence was a plea of justification. The assault was clearly a case of retribution for a number of aspersions published from time to time in plaintiff's newspaper. Redfern was so ably defended by Mr. W. C. Wentworth that he secured practically a non-suit. The verdict of the jury was "guilty," but they recommended the case to the favourable consideration of the Bench. "On what grounds?" asked the Chairman. The jury then explained that it was from an impression that the defendant had been aggravated by the prosecutor to commit the assault. The Chairman then pronounced the verdict:—"The court, taking into consideration the recommendation of the jury, finds the defendant in the penalty of thirty shillings to the King." Redfern wrote out the cheque, and went on his way rejoicing.<sup>1</sup>

But the incident had a sequel. The doctor met Mrs. Howe in George Street some days later and expressed his sorrow for what had happened.

Mrs. Howe being a commanding woman, broke her umbrella in pieces over the head and shoulders of the doctor, who made a hasty retreat. It was a case of Greek meeting Greek, but the doctor got the worst of it that time.<sup>2</sup>

#### REDFERN: LANDOWNER, GRAZIER, VIGNERON, AND AGRICULTURIST.

There is a suburb of Sydney and a railway station called "Redfern." The original estate from which the suburb derived its name consisted of two properties of seventy and thirty acres respectively. The larger area was a grant from Governor Macquarie; the smaller a portion of the marriage dot of Miss Sarah Wills when she became the wife of the doctor. The position of the

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1. The *Australian* of Wednesday, January 23, 1828, contains the details of the trial.

2. "Dr. Redfern," by "Grand Niece of Robert Howe": Letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* of October 16, 1926.

[MAP INCLUDING REDFERN SUBURB c.1927]

Plan of Land Grants in the Suburbs of Sydney

estate is clearly shown on the excellent plan drawn for me by Mr. J. F. Campbell, L.S., a Fellow of this Society, that accompanies this paper. In addition to this holding, Redfern owned thousands of broad acres at Bathurst, Cowra, the Port Phillip district, and at Airds. His estate in the last named district alone, called Campbell Fields, in honour, of the Governor's lady, contained at least two thousand six hundred and twenty acres. This was his favourite possession. He was introduced to the fair land of Airds on Tuesday, November 6, 1810, when he accompanied Macquarie to Minto on the Governor's first official visit to the "interior of the colony." Doubtless, what he saw and experienced on that occasion - the balmy air of late spring, the green of the cultivated fields, the healthy appetite born of exercise in the pure country air, and the picnicky feeling generally - created in him a desire possess a farm of his own in this district.

Redfern's scientific knowledge of agriculture and his practical application of it made his farm one of the best in the district. To receive from Commissioner Bigge a very flattering testimonial on the condition of his land, Redfern must have spent a great deal of time, thought, labour, and money on the cultivation of Campbell Fields.<sup>1</sup>

1. In the "Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales, by John Thomas Bigge: Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 19 June, 1822, " we read on pages 140, 141 – "Another fertile district, that of Airds, has been occupied, principally by small settlers of the class of emancipated convicts, who are proceeding in the same cause of rapid exhaustion of their lands, without regard to their future means of support... This farm (Redfern's) and two others in the same district belonging to remitted convicts form exceptions to the general observations that have been made respecting their system of cultivation. The farm of Mr. Redfern, though not consisting of good land, has begun to exhibit the improved system of English husbandry, and reflects credit upon the intelligence and spirit with which the expensive operation of clearing the land from trees has been conducted." Again, in that part of the report ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on March 18, 1823, Bigge tells us: "The estates that are in the best state of cultivation and exhibit the greatest improvement are those of Mr. Oxley, Surveyor General, Mr. Cox, Sir John Jamison, Mr. Hannibal MacArthur, Mr. Redfern, Mr. John Macarthur, Mr. Thoresby, and Mr. Howe."

Redfern did not originate the great wool industry of Australia, but he played no inconspicuous part in its development. In 1824, while he was recruiting his health in one of the Atlantic islands, his wife wrote to Earl Bathurst petitioning for certain concessions. The letter tells us much of Redfern's activities, and is to be found in the *Historical Records of Australia*, Ser. 1, Vol. XI, p. 203. It is dated 33 Rockingham Row, Kent Road, London, January 13, 1824, and runs:—

Sheweth that your memorialist's husband, Mr. William Redfern, late of New South Wales, and now temporarily residing at the Island of Madeira for the benefit of his health, is about to return to the colony per ship *Alfred*, now under immediate despatch there permanently to reside. That Mr. Redfern possesses in New South Wales upwards of fourteen hundred (1400) head of horned cattle, four thousand (4000) sheep and several horses. But the quantity of land he possesses (the greater part obtained by purchase) is not nearly sufficient to subsist his herds and flocks. That Mr. Redfern has gone to very considerable expense in the purchase of Merino sheep, which he is about to convey to New South Wales for the purpose of improving and increasing the production of fine wool in that colony. And he has also engaged vine dressers and procured vines at the Island of Madeira at considerable expense to proceed to New South Wales for the purpose of cultivating the vine there. That it is now impossible to procure land by purchase in New South Wales; and as the quantity Mr. Redfern holds is entirely insufficient for the subsistence of his stock of horned cattle and sheep, and in consideration of the expense Mr. Redfern has gone to in procuring and conveying vine dressers, vines and Merino sheep to that colony, your memorialist most respectfully solicits your Lordship to direct that a grant of land may be made to Mr. Redfern in New South Wales. As your memorialist, Mr. Redfern, &c., are to proceed in the ship *Alfred*, to sail in a few days for New South Wales, the favour of an early communication of your Lordship's pleasure is respectfully requested. S. REDFERN.

The Redferns had as shipmates on the *Alfred*, on their return journey to New South Wales, Mr. W. C. Wentworth and Dr. Wardell, two young lawyers destined later to take a conspicuous place in the making of Australian history. It is curious how great issues hang on mere details. The fate of Australia, and especially of New South Wales, depended in a large measure upon the safe arrival of the ship *Alfred* at Sydney in the September of 1824.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Dr. Redfern's house at Campbellfields.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Wine cellar at Campbellfields.

## REDFERN'S PUBLIC SERVICES.

Redfern lived and died before the people of Australia had been granted the privilege of self-government, so had no opportunity of serving his country in the Legislative Council. Nevertheless, his contributions to the advancement of the colony and to the welfare of the people were considerable. His services were as great, as they were varied. He was interested in the work of the Benevolent Society from its inception on May 8, 1813, till he retired from practice many years later. It is of interest to note that that Society was the first of its kind in Australia. It was originally known as "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Benevolence," being created "because, notwithstanding the humanity of the Government in providing hospitals, etc., still, the numerous instances of distress out of reach of this provision continually occur which it becomes the benevolent to mitigate."<sup>1</sup> The Society in its original form and name continued the good work of almsgiving till May 6, 1818, when its title was altered. The institution has been known ever since as the "Benevolent Society of New South Wales." Redfern was appointed to the Committee in 1814. For many years he gave honorary medical service to all the sick and afflicted that came within the scope of the Society's influence. He also contributed liberally to the funds of the institution. In 1818, when this philanthropic society was reconstituted, Redfern's advice and assistance were greatly appreciated. He was a member of the Committee convened in January, 1812, to frame an address to Governor Macquarie.

As an energetic member of the Aborigines' School Committee, he did much to mitigate the sufferings of natives and create in them a desire for the decencies life. In the 'teens of last century as in the 'teens of this, the world was sick and war weary. Disease and destitution were rampant, and very few English homes

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1. "Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly during the Second Session of 1898, with the Various Documents connected therewith, in three volumes." Volume 3 contains the genesis of the Benevolent Society.



were free from the blight of battle. Australia desired to offer practical sympathy to those who had been hard hit. A committee, of which Redfern was one, was formed to carry out the work. The appeal was heartily responded to, and a large sum of money was transferred to England.

It is interesting to make a search of the files of the *Sydney Gazette* of that period. Much that we are apt to think is quite modern appears in the newspapers of one hundred years ago. During the late war, the daily papers were flooded with anagrams, prophecies, jugglings with words and figures - puzzles, the solutions of which, unless given, were like the ways of Providence, past finding out. In the issue of the *Sydney Gazette* of January 27, 1816, there appears a curious and ingenious anagram on the words "Napoleon Bonaparte." Here it is: "Bona Rapta Pone Leno." The translation of this is:- "Plunderer, lay down your spoil." There is nothing new under the sun; sorcery, magic, divination, and witchcraft come from a dim and distant past.

The columns of the same newspaper of February 3, 1816, contain "the names of persons in New South Wales who have subscribed to the "Relief of Sufferers at the Memorial and Glorious Battle of Waterloo." In this list, amongst the names of those who had given with a free hand appears that of William Redfern. With the other land owners, Redfern attended a public meeting on January 23, 1819, to consider the question of sending a petition to His Majesty's Government on matters concerning the colony.

On more than one occasion he was President of the Anniversary Dinner. Redfern devoted much time and labour to have removed the disabilities the emancipists had to endure. In the year 1817, the King's Bench gave a ruling that a Governor's pardon had the force of a pardon issued under the sign manual only, leaving the emancipist in the eyes of the law a "convict attained" still, "without power to maintain personal actions or acquire, retain or transmit property." Until this decision had become effective, it had been understood that the Governor's pardon had had the same force as a pardon

issued under the great seal of England, that made the individual free indeed, with all the privileges of which he had been deprived as a convict restored. This decision came into force in New South Wales in April, 1820, causing a considerable amount of apprehension amongst those to whom it referred. A meeting of emancipated colonists was convened for January 27, 1821, to discuss the best means of dealing with the dramatic situation that had arisen. At this meeting William Redfern was chosen chairman. After much discussion, those present decided to send the chairman and secretary, Mr. Edward Eagar, to England<sup>1</sup> as representatives, of the victimized section of the community, with a petition to be presented to the proper authorities. The advocacy of the delegates, supported as it was by a recommendation from Commissioner Bigge, was entirely satisfactory. The New South Wales Act of 1823 was passed. That Act included a provision declaring all pardons already granted to have the force of pardons issued under the great seal, but prospective pardons to be operative within the colony only.

Redfern had been absent from England for twenty years when he returned to it as an emancipist delegate. From that time on his residence in New South Wales was intermittent.

#### REDFERN RETIRES FROM PRACTICE.

After his return to New South Wales in 1824, Redfern did not practise medicine seriously. He was in his forties, had amassed a competence, and had other interests. His vines, vine dressers, his Merino sheep and horned cattle all required supervision. He found he could not attend properly to an exacting medical practice and at the same time engage in scientific farming. One or the other had to be discarded. Medicine was relinquished. He shut his office door finally at the end of August, 1826. The *Sydney Gazette* of September 6, 1826, has quite a lot to say about this crisis. It tells us:-

Dr. Redfern, we understand, intends returning to his estate at Campbell Field in the course of a few days. The doctor has

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1. They sailed for England in the ship *Duchess of York* on October 25, 1821.

been so long accustomed to a rural life and for such a number of years unused to the elaborate practice of his profession that he finds it difficult to renew such busy cares. We are sorry for this resolution of the doctor's, inasmuch as the town and neighbourhood of the metropolis have already been powerfully assisted by his attention, and many poor patients who have been in the habit of visiting Macquarie Place daily since his residence in town will sensibly feel the abrupt contemplated departure, which we should like to see abandoned. Of Dr. Redfern's skill there can be but one opinion, since his most inveterate enemies are reluctantly obliged to do him that justice. His methods, or his manner, let it be called by what term our readers please, may not be so winning or seductive as might be wished, but then his experience, his skill and his practice in our judgment make ample amends for any apparent absence of overflowing politeness. We should not have volunteered to offer so much, only we like to render justice to everyone that falls in our way; and were we to say less it is not likely that we should state the truth. Though we join with the tide of public opinion as regards a distinguished candidate for medical fame, and ever will continue foremost in awarding our humble tribute of commendation both in public and private life to that universally respected gentleman; nevertheless we are impelled, from motives that can easily be explained, if necessary, thus publicly to give an opinion of Dr. Redfern's professional merits. In public life he might depend, if on nothing more substantial, upon our editorial support were he to continue in practice; and even in retirement he will be one of those who may always calculate on our best wishes. If we were like the doctor, independent of the world, we also should be glad to seek repose from the ceaseless perplexities of public life; though there are men amongst us so attached to public life and enamoured of its charms that they would rather part with the independence they possess, and which they might enjoy, than relinquish the drudgery of pre-eminent misery.

Redfern left New South Wales finally two years later.

#### REDFERN'S MARRIAGE AND DEATH.

William Redfern married Miss Sara Wills on March 4, 1811. From the little we know of their married life, we have every reason to believe that she was an excellent chum, companion, and help-meet. There were two sons born to them - William Lachlan Macquarie Redfern, whose birthday was July 27, 1819; and Joseph Foveaux Redfern. The second son was born in 1823, and died on April 11, 1830. William survived. He was at school in Edinburgh at the time of his father's death. Later, he married and had several children.

Dr. Redfern died at Edinburgh, Scotland, where he had been living for some years, in July, 1833. No details as to the cause of his death are available. Possibly the hardships endured in his youth and early manhood were contributing causes. When his call came he was not an old man - about fifty-five years of age. The newspapers of the time made eulogistic references to the doctor's passing. From the *Australian* of December 27, 1833, the following notice is culled:-

By *The Brothers*, Captain Towns, the melancholy intelligence has been received of the death of William Redfern Esq., M.D., which happened at Edinburgh late in July last. Mrs. Redfern, who left this port on the 10th March by the *Norfolk* to join the doctor, unfortunately did not reach London till two days after his interment. We are, however, happy to be able to state that Mrs. Redfern, up to the departure of *The Brothers*, enjoyed a good state of health. The long stay of the doctor in Europe was occasioned by a paternal affection for his only child, a son (now in his fifteenth year), whose education he superintended at Edinburgh. As a medical man the abilities of Dr. Redfern were highly respected, and as a private individual those who were connected with him by ties of blood deeply lament a firm, liberal and affectionate friend.

#### MACQUARIE AND REDFERN.

One of the most admirable traits in the character of Macquarie was the staunchness of his friendship to Redfern. He jeopardised even his own chances of preferment in defence of his friend. His advocacy of Redfern's claims to the position of Principal Colonial Surgeon of the colony, and the appointment of his protégé to the magistracy, brought him into serious conflict with Commissioner J. T. Bigge. Of that fight - a fight in which he had to face "fearful odds" - Macquarie carried the scars till his dying day. And this affection for the doctor was not due merely to the fact that his friend was an emancipist; Redfern was a man of worth, possessing attributes that attracted people in every station in life. Redfern had been "discovered" by Colonel Foveaux years before Macquarie came to New South Wales. It was the testimonial of the Colonel that began a friendship between the Governor and the Assistant Colonial Surgeon

that lasted without interruption till the death of the older man in 1824.

Redfern, on his part, was not unmindful of his chief's favours; his loyalty and devotion to duty never failed. In the eyes of the Governor, Redfern was a man of many parts and a man of integrity - a great reputation to be sustained only by hard work and circumspection. During the whole term of Macquarie's administration, Redfern was medical adviser to Government House. He accompanied the Governor on all his official visits to the interior of the colony and elsewhere. In 1815 he crossed the Blue Mountains with Macquarie on the first vice-regal visit to Bathurst. To the members of the Central Northern Medical Association, it is of interest to know that Redfern was in Newcastle in 1818, when his chief laid the foundation stone of Macquarie Pier, now known as the breakwater. Both Macquarie and Redfern returned to England in 1821. Possibly, they renewed their friendship on the other side of the world where, amidst the seductive delights of rural England or the more rugged beauties of Scotland, they could give and receive hospitality free from the critical eye and gossiping tongue of the military caste of New South Wales.

When the ex-Governor died three years later, there can be little doubt that had he been in England at that time, one of the sincerest mourners at the obsequies would have been Redfern.

#### CONCLUSION.

Life in New South Wales when Redfern first arrived could not be called, by any manner of means, idyllic. The mother colony was then only thirteen years old, and primitive conditions still survived. Nature, "red in tooth and claw," against which the earlier settlers had to wage a continuous war, was being conquered, but very slowly. The first two Governors, Phillip and Hunter, had returned to England. Phillip had made his administration notable by his enduring courage and amazing gifts of organisation. Possibly, it was his prophetic vision that sustained him time and again when the life of the infant colony seemed destined to extinction.

John White, the first Principal Colonial Surgeon, did not share Phillips' optimism. Indeed his outlook decidedly pessimistic. White's testimonial to New South Wales at that time was "a country and place so forbidding and so hateful as only to merit execration and curses." He also spoke of "my fate and that of my fellow sufferers." A considerable amount of exploration work had been accomplished during the first decade, but the occupied British possessions in Australia for a number of years consisted of only a small area bounded by Port Stephens on the north, Port Hacking on the south, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, and by the impenetrable barrier of the Blue Mountains in the west. Mount Twiss, fifty-four miles from the coast, reached by Dawes on December 14, 1789, was the western limit. The rest of the continent was as dark as the "Egyptian night." In 1813 expansion to the west of the Blue Mountains became possible by the epoch making work of Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth.

Redfern lived during the rule of Six Governors, beginning with King and ending with Bourke, and witnessed the evolution of New South Wales from a mere gaol to a decent well ordered colony. In 1801 there was no Press - free or censored. The first newspaper, the *Sydney Gazette*, made its appearance on March 5, 1803. The first financial institution, the Bank of New South Wales, began operations in 1817. The first steamship, the *Sophia Jane*, arrived in Sydney on May 14, 1831. The arrival of this ship caused as much excitement at the time as did the arrival of Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith by aeroplane nearly one hundred years later. In the 'twenties of last century, education received serious attention. The Sydney Grammar School, the career of which was very chequered till 1854, was founded in 1825. Two King's Schools, one in Parramatta and the other in Sydney, were instituted in 1832. The Sydney University was not founded, however, till some years later.

The Botanic Gardens has a very ancient Australian history. One of the first acts of Arthur Phillip was to clear some ground for a farm and garden. The land round the cove immediately east of Sydney Cove, called

Farm Cove, was chosen for the purpose. But it was not until June 13, 1816, that the place was formally set apart as the Botanic Garden. The "Wishing Tree," a large Norfolk Island pine known to thousands of visitors to the gardens, was transferred from the garden at Government House to its present location by Governor Macquarie in the same year.

No more will be said. To produce an ample, exhaustive and complete catalogue of Australian events during the lifetime of William Redfern is not the intention of this article; sufficient, however, has been said to demonstrate how remarkably and quickly the colony grew, expanded and developed in a few years. Charles Darwin, the father of many modern biological specialities, was astonished at what he saw in Australia when he visited these shores in H.M.S. *Beagle* in 1836.

#### CHARACTER OF REDFERN.

Redfern was a bluff, hearty, British sailor. He was very human, and no human is perfect. But if he were not a perfect saint, neither was he a perfect sinner. Virtues he had - probably more than most men of which one was his intense loyalty. There can be no doubt about his loyalty to the King and constituted authority. During the Bligh rebellion, Redfern stood by the Governor. At the time when the insurgents were at the very gates of Government House, he was with the Governor's family on an errand of mercy.<sup>1</sup> It was his loyalty to and sympathy for his unfortunate shipmates that lost him his liberty and nearly cost him his life. Redfern was not one of those of whom Australia has any reason to be ashamed. It Fate and Fortune were unkind to him in his youth, with the passage of the years they made amends. In this new land an important suburb of Sydney perpetuates his name. By force of character and the buoyant spirit of optimism he successfully came through a fiery furnace that would have shipwrecked the life and scorched the soul of many a man. That he was

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1.Redfern was attending Mrs. Putland, the Governor's daughter, when the soldiers entered Government House to arrest Bligh.

a skilful and well informed surgeon we have ample proof: even Commissioner Bigge<sup>1</sup> testified to his knowledge and talents. He was given to philanthropy. By personal service and in other ways he was a tower of strength to the Benevolent Society in the tender years of its infancy. Macquarie's estimate of Redfern's character is worth repeating<sup>2</sup>:—

There are a few families who have not availed themselves of his services. His duty in the General Hospital has been laborious and most certainly fulfilled with a degree of promptitude and attention not to be exceeded. I have heard of many poor persons dismissed from the hospital thank him for their recovery, but have never known a patient to complain of his neglect.

Redfern's bedside manner was not perfect; possibly this was due to his early career in the Navy; but he had the skill and that quality of character that carries conviction and inspires confidence - compensations that more than balance honeyed phrases or flattering remarks.

Redfern was a good Australian pioneer. With brain and brawn and hard cash he sought the good and glory of his adopted country. Men like the pioneers who fought a hard fight, and won through, deserve our homage. Redfern is dead, but while he was yet alive those who knew him best were always ready to declare that whatever might be said against the emancipists as a class, one of them, at least, could "bear without abuse the grand old name of gentleman" - Redfern.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

I desire to express my cordial appreciation of the kindness and help of Mr. Hugh Wright, the Mitchell Librarian, and his staff; of Mr. J. F. Campbell, who devoted much time and trouble in preparing the plan of the original Redfern estate; of Captain J. H. Watson, of the Royal Australian Historical Society, for the loan of lantern slides, etc.; of Mr. R. H. Antill, of Jarvisfield, Picton (a grand-nephew of Dr. Redfern), for family information; of Mrs. Shaw and Mr. Powell, members of the Royal Australian

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1. "Mr Redfern's skill was acknowledged, and that, aided by great assiduity and good natural talents, he had overcome the want of early study and experience" - Commissioner J. T. Bigge on Dr. Redfern: Bigge's Report.

2. Letter to the Right Honourable Viscount Sidmonth.



Historical Society, for photographs of Dr. Redfern and his house at Campbellfields; of the Research Officer at the Public Library; and of Mr. H. Selkirk, who from time to time gave valuable information that would not have been received otherwise. The *Australian Encyclopedia* (Angus & Robertson) has been of considerable assistance. The other authorities have been noted in their proper place.

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**William Redfern, the First Australian Medical Graduate.**

**A POSTSCRIPTUM**

By NORMAN J .DUNLOP, B.A., B.Sc., MB., Ch.M. (Fellow).

Through the researches of A. A. Scot Skirving, Esq., F.R.C.S., of Edinburgh, Scotland, and the courtesy of his brother, Dr. Robert Scot Skirving, of this city, it is now possible to state where all that is mortal of William Redfern rests. The records in the Edinburgh Registrar-General's Office have been searched, and a notice has been found in the records of the Calton Burying Ground that tells us that William Redfern, aged fifty-eight years, formerly a surgeon living at 18 Lothian Street, Edinburgh, was buried in the New Ground in a grave purchased for his executors by Mr. David Walker. The cause of death is not stated. This entry is dated July 23, 1833. The "New" Calton Cemetery is called so in distraction to the "Old" Calton Burying Ground, which had reached saturation point before Redfern died. Both cemeteries are south of Calton Hill. It is of interest to note that the Old Calton Cemetery contains the memorial to William Skirving and his companions. Although the cemetery in which he was interred can be named with certainty, the exact spot where Redfern was buried is unknown. Had there been a headstone containing a legend, Dr. Archie Scot Skirving, would have had it photographed.

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