

PICTURESQUE GIPPSLAND.**MARLO—THE SNOWY RIVER.**

[BY AESTIC.]

Marlo—an Anglicised native name, as the blacks pronounce it "Murrell-ur," which is as near as it can be spelt in English—is a gently rising bluff at the mouth of the Snowy River, which surrounds the base, very wide, shallow and muddy. On the opposite side there are sand banks, beginning low and flat and gradually rising as they stretch away up the Ninety Mile Beach. An old beacon stands on one, apparently opposite the Marlo Hotel, but really about two miles away, for you have to cross the river, then sail up a backwater for a mile, then a good stiff climb up the sand hummock, and finally scramble through a lot of scrub, with the delightful certainty of carrying away some ticks and the probability of meeting a big black snake any minute. After two or three rests during the process of getting up the hill, you arrive at the top, and then there is the pleasure of mounting the beacon, which is constructed of immense logs—I only went up about twenty feet, not being accustomed to climbing, but I found it to be sufficiently high to get an excellent view. Looking seaward, on the left lies a long stretch of glistening sand, with the waters of the South Pacific gently running up and then running away again, the entrance to the Snowy being noticeable by the breakers looking disturbed, and it is now in a peculiar position and requires great judgement in getting the schooners in. A small steam tug, the Lady of the Lake, is in waiting at the foot of Marlo Hill, and Captain M'Neill, is always to be seen on the look-out on the sands or beacon when any schooner is expected. Further on are seen Cape Ricardo, another length of land and sea, then Cape Connerin, three miles from that an awful reef of rocks, one huge flat rock rising out of the sea like a table. On this the Ridge Park was wrecked, and she ran right up on to it. Mount Raymond and another hill in the near distance, with the Ben mountain that looks like a huge dlah cover, rising between them and behind them. On the right, or inland, one sees the broad Snowy, into which the Broadribb turns just about here, making a very wide expanse of

water, dotted with tiny green islands; another backwater in the same direction takes you to Lake Coringie, further on still to Lake Wat Wat, and as far as you can see a succession of backwaters, lakes, islands, flats on the banks of the river, selectors' houses and farms in various directions, and beyond all the M'Culloch Ranges, lately discovered to possess most fertile land right on to the very top of the mountains, where the tree ferns grow to 40ft high on the summits, and trees and vegetation quite unknown in other parts of Victoria. Many persons are going there now, as it will shortly be thrown open for selection. Mount Ellery can be seen in the far distance, the highest of all, and with a good glass on a clear day the great egg-shaped rock on the top can be discerned. It rises perpendicularly for 60 feet. There is a glorious sense of freedom and freshness about the whole scene that

There is a glorious sense of freedom and freshness about the whole scene that is something to be remembered, especially now when everything is at its greenest and brightest. From Marlo Hotel there are beautiful walks and drives going to different places of interest—rough roads to drive, as may be expected, but most delightful for all that—such as the road to Connerin, about twelve miles along the coast. For the first mile along a thickly shaded track, with a glimpse of the sea occasionally, and bright with wild flowers of every imaginable color, quantities of buchu, a mass of white starry flowers like jasmine, yellow wild hops, purple saraparilla, and scarlet, blue, marine, cream and pink flowers that I do not know the names of. From this we come into an open plain, high above the sea, this plain being covered with heath and white heath, and lots of other flowers, and from here to Connerin it is all hills and valleys, mostly covered with heath and clumps of trees. A Scotchman said it made him think of his native land, as these hills have a purplish shade over them. Cape Connerin is the only rocky place on the Ninety-mile Beach, and the rocks are very peculiarly formed, and look like great slabs of rock laid one over the other, all slanting inwards. One is different, a great round rock, flat on the top, looks just like a small fort. A little further on the rocks are all slate. We had lunch, wandered about and returned to the Marlo Hotel in a dreadful storm of wind and rain, but it made the house seem all the more comfortable, particularly as Mr., Mrs., and Miss Stirling leave nothing undone to make their visitors feel thoroughly at home. After spending ten days there most pleasantly, we started to go back to Orbost. By degrees the road from Marlo to Orbost is most lovely and most dreadful—lovely overhead and on both sides, and dreadful with great holes full of mud underfoot, but Mr Stirling understands driving round the edges of them. Many parts of the road are perfect jungles, the trees grow very high and are wreathed with wild clematis and supple jacks, with trees and several other ferns growing in masses under them. The trees are very beautiful, mostly lilli pilli,

pitiosporum, lightwood, a most beautifully shaped light green tree, while the lilli pilli has a very dark glossy leaf; wild elder bushes also grow plentifully. All the foliage looks quite different to anything about here. We went about six miles up the river, crossed it, and walked through the most beautiful green grass paddocks, the grass being about a foot high, and the cattle and horses so fat and lazy looking. Up the side of a hill, and we are at a farm house, from the front of which the most beautiful view up and down the Snowy River is to be obtained. The house is on a sloping hill above the lovely green flats, which to the west run up like the bed of a river. Another hill near the house rises like a green wooded island, and on the opposite side of this green river bed is another lovely green wooded knoll, a real spot of beauty; then more green flats, varied by ploughed fields, some being ploughed by bullock drawn ploughs, followed by the horse roller. In the next paddock a lot of girls sowing maize, farther away more farm houses.

next paddock a lot of girls sowing maize, farther away more farm houses, the Snowy River winding through more green flats on the other side up to the Broadribb River, flats again, beyond them mountains, one rising above the other until the highest is lost in the clouds. In the soft evening light with the setting sun throwing long shadows and making the misty hills purple, gold and red, the scene of peaceful, homely, and yet grand scenery, can hardly be surpassed. A nice drive brings us back to Orbost, the houses there being surprisingly good and well built. A visit to the Orbost station house, which is most charmingly situated in broad, green paddocks, and surrounded by a garden that makes one think of botanical gardens, so tastefully is it laid out, and a fine vegetable garden in perfect order. Kindness and hospitality here reign supreme, and are most liberally dispensed by the lady and gentleman who have made their home so delightful. The coach drive back to Conninghams did not seem nearly so rough as going. I suppose it was because we had been before and knew the worst. Anyone wishing for a good holiday, plenty of shooting, fishing, snake killing, fern hunting, flower gathering, sea air, country air, boating, driving, riding, scrambling through scrub, walking on sandy beaches, climbing up beacons, and wanting their eating and sleeping powers renewed, cannot do much better than go to the Snowy River.