

INTRUDERS IN THE BUSH

THE AUSTRALIAN QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Edited by

JOHN CARROLL

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3. Ned Kelly, a Folk Hero

Angus McIntyre

Ned Kelly, (1855–80), that 'loud-mouthed, law-breaking, swaggering, son of an Irish convict' stood head and shoulders above the other bushrangers. Partly, this was because the selectors of north-eastern Victoria, discerning a theme of social protest in his actions, viewed him more as a noble robber or Robin Hood than as a common criminal. But Kelly was not the only bushranger to occupy such a role. Matthew Brady enjoyed a similar position among the Vandemonian agriculturalists as did Ben Hall in the case of the Wheogo's small landowners. Yet, Ned defined this role in a far more grandiose fashion than the other two. For while it is true that all three of them bailed up towns at one time or another, it is also true that only Ned Kelly appeared in armour at a shoot-out with the police.²

This grandiosity also manifested itself in other forms. Ned issued threats against the authorities so dire in their implications that they clearly implied an elevated conception of his powers. Moreover, he regarded other people as important only insofar as they confirmed this self-image, and sometimes even viewed them as likenesses or extensions of himself. He frequently boasted about his various skills, such as his horsemanship, and occasionally showed them off. Such exhibitionism was not always so soundly based.

The Fitzpatrick Affair

On 15 April 1878, an incident occurred, which in the opinion of the 1881 Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Victorian Police, precipitated the outbreak of the Kelly Gang. This was the attempt by Constable Fitzpatrick to arrest Ned's younger brother, Dan, at his mother's hut at Eleven Mile Creek near Greta on a charge of horse stealing. A fracas ensued. Later that night, Fitzpatrick turned up in Benalla with what he claimed was a bullet wound in the wrist which, he said, had been inflicted on him by Ned Kelly. On the strength of this and related claims by Fitzpatrick, warrants were issued against Ned Kelly for shooting with intent to murder, and against Dan Kelly, Mrs Kelly, her neighbour, Williamson, and son-in-law, Skillion, for aiding and abetting this shooting.

When the police arrived to enforce these warrants, the Kelly brothers were nowhere to be found. They had to be content, therefore, with the arrest of Mrs Kelly, Skillion, and Williamson. One month later, on 17 May, Mrs Kelly was granted bail. Then, on 9 October, at the Beechworth Assizes, a jury found Mrs Kelly and the two men guilty of the abovementioned charges. On 14 October, the presiding judge, Sir Redmond Barry, sentenced her to three years jail and Skillion and Williamson to six years each.

It was a harsh judgment. At least, that was the opinion of Mr Alfred Wyatt, a police magistrate. In his evidence before the 1881 Royal Commission, he stated: 'I thought the sentence upon that old woman, Mrs Kelly, a very severe one.' As to Ned's feelings about his mother's sentence, there is one ominous clue. Mrs Kelly told a fellow prisoner, named Williams, in the jail at Beechworth 'that they [Ned and Dan] would play up, that there would be murder now'. Also, a relative and an acquaintance of Ned's—Quinn and Isaiah ('Wild') Wright—offered to bring in the Kelly brothers if Mrs Kelly was allowed to go free. Mr Alfred Wyatt, to whom the offer was made by Quinn, told the Royal Commission: 'Quinn's and Wright's feeling was that it would be better for the men themselves to be brought in. It was not a feeling of treachery towards them, but that they could not hold

out, and that it was better for them themselves to bring them in.' Presumably, they feared what would happen if the police tried to bring them in.³

Stringybark Creek

On the morning of 25 October 1878, Sergeant Kennedy and Constables Lonigan, Scanlan, and McIntyre, dressed in plain clothes, set out from Mansfield to do just that. Like Ned, they were of Irish Catholic descent, with the exception of McIntyre who was an Ulsterman. That night, they camped at Stringybark Creek near Mt Wombat.

The following morning, Kennedy and Scanlan set out to scout around the area. McIntyre and Lonigan remained at the camp site. A little after five o'clock in the afternoon, some voices in the bush cried out: 'Bail up! Hold up your hands!' McIntyre turned around and saw four men, two of whom he later recognized as the Kelly brothers, covering Lonigan and himself with guns. He raised his hands. Lonigan reached for his revolver while slipping down for cover behind the log on which he had been sitting. He then took aim over the top of the log but was shot through the head by Ned Kelly. He fell to the ground, exclaiming: 'Oh Christ I am shot.' A few minutes later he died. 'Keep your hands up! Keep your hands up!' Ned warned McIntyre.

Then Ned and Dan and the two other men entered the camp. They searched McIntyre and removed the firearms from the policeman's tent. Dan produced a pair of handcuffs. 'We will put these on the Bugger,' he said. McIntyre appealed to Ned who turned to Dan: 'All right, don't put them on him.' 'This,' he added, tapping his rifle, 'is better than handcuffs.' Turning to McIntyre, he warned: 'Mind you don't try to go away, because if you do, I will shoot you, if I had to track you to the police station to shoot you there.' This was an extraordinary stance for Kelly to adopt. McIntyre was the only witness to Lonigan's shooting. Apparently, Ned's grandiose idea of himself led him to believe that he would be able to do just as he threatened, namely, track McIntyre down and shoot him.

Ned then boasted to McIntyre about his firearm: 'This is a curious old gun,' he said, 'for a man to carry about the country with him.' 'It is. Perhaps it is better than it looks,' McIntyre obliged. 'You might say that,' Kelly said. 'I will back it against any gun in the country. I can shoot a kangaroo at 100 yards with every shot from it.' Afterwards, when it looked as if McIntyre was about to jump Ned, the latter warned him off with still another boast: 'You had better not mate because if you do you will soon find your match for you know there are not three men in the police force a match for me.'

On this occasion, Ned's boasts were consistent with his ability for he was, in fact, a crack shot and something of a prize fighter. Formidable as his talents were, however, they could not always match the vainglory of his inflated self-image for, in the final analysis, this view of himself was—as the Glenrowan affair will make clear—unrealistic.

It was now between half past five and six o'clock. The other two policemen were expected back at the camp any minute. Ned ordered McIntyre to persuade them to surrender. 'We don't want their lives, only their horses and firearms,' he said. When Kennedy and Scanlan appeared, McIntyre stepped towards them. He said to Kennedy: 'Oh sergeant you had better dismount and surrender for you are surrounded.' At the same time, Kelly shouted: 'Bail up! hold up your hands!' Evidently, Kennedy thought McIntyre was joking. Scanlan, grasping the true situation, unslung his rifle, threw himself from the saddle and took a step or two towards a tree, when he was shot. Kennedy, quickly disabused of his error, had by this time dismounted on the off side of his horse and returned fire. McIntyre caught hold of Kennedy's horse, mounted it and escaped. Ned then exchanged shots with Kennedy, eventually killing him.⁴

Euroa Bank Robbery

Six weeks after the Stringybark shootings, on Monday, 8 December 1878, Ned and Dan Kelly and their two companions,

all now outlawed by the Victorian government, bailed up Younghusband's Station, 4 miles north-east of Euroa. On this occasion, Ned went incognito for the most part in order, it seems, to set the stage for the attention grabbing unveiling of his true identity. However, he did not withhold his name from James Gloster, a hawker, whom he stuck up at the station on the Monday evening. 'I am Ned Kelly,' he said, 'the son of Red Kelly and a better man never stood in two shoes.' This strident declaration was one of Ned's few references to his father in these years.

Of his mother, he always had much more to say, usually of an effusive nature. According to James Gloster, he told the people whom he bailed up at Younghusband's 'that his mother had seen better days and had struggled up with a large family and he felt very keenly her being sent to jail with a baby at the breast by the perjured statement of Fitzpatrick'. It is apparent from this statement that Ned's attitude towards his mother was one of deep reverence. Something of its extravagant, sentimental quality became evident when Mr McDougall told Ned that the watch which he had taken from him was a keepsake from his mother. '. . . [Ned] shivered and said, "No; we'll never take that" and he returned it, taking, however, a watch from Mr Macauley instead.'

Kelly added, Gloster claimed, 'that if his mother did not get justice and was released soon he would possibly overturn the train'. The child-like anger evident in this statement suggests, perhaps, that such threats by Ned and the inflated sense of himself on which they were based, had roots, far deeper than the Fitzpatrick affair, in his early childhood experience.

His antipathy to the police, on the other hand, seems to have been a direct consequence of the way in which they treated his mother. On this point, the Royal Commissioners stated that the 'alleged severity of the punishment inflicted upon the mother of the outlaws has been the subject of comment in the course of the inquiry, and Captain Standish [the police commissioner] considers that it formed one of the many causes which assisted to bring about the Kelly outrages'. James Gloster reached a

similar conclusion to Standish. He declared: 'the impression left on me was that he [Ned Kelly] shot the police through revengeful feelings against those who swore in the case against his mother'.

On the Tuesday afternoon, the Kelly brothers and one of their Stringybark accomplices went into Euroa in order to rob the National Bank. The other accomplice stayed behind to guard the people who had been stuck up at the station over the previous twenty-four hours. Having robbed the bank of over £2000 and the mortgage deeds of local selectors, Ned returned to Younghusband's, bringing with him the bank manager, his wife, Mrs Scott, her mother, seven children, and two servants. Mrs Scott's mother had been very nervous at first, but Ned calmed her by saying: 'Don't be frightened, nothing will happen to you. I have a mother of my own.'

Ned, Dan, and their two companions then prepared to leave. Before doing so, however, they showed off before their captives. Mr McDougall described the situation: 'Having then mounted on their horses (three of which were bays, and that ridden by Edward Kelly an iron grey—all being good animals, and in excellent condition), the men began to ride up and down in a boastful and braggadocio fashion.' Ned then issued a parting threat to his prisoners, as self-inflated as his earlier very similar threat to McIntyre. "If one of you leaves this spot," he said, "within three hours I will shoot that man dead. You can't any of you escape me in this country; I can track you anywhere, and I'll keep my word."

After the Euroa raid the police were able to identify the Kelly brothers' two accomplices. They were Steve Hart and Joe Byrne. The four of them—soon known as the Kelly Gang—were selectors' sons who had all served jail sentences for stock theft or related offences.⁵

The Cameron Letter

The day after the Euroa bank robbery, the wife of a station hand at Younghusband's, Mrs Fitzgerald, posted a letter which Ned

Kelly had entrusted to her. It was addressed to Mr Cameron, MLA, and subsequently became known as the Cameron Letter. In it, Kelly criticized Whitty and Burns, two squatters, for mistreating the 'poor men of the district'. Also, he argued that the shooting of Lonigan, Scanlan, and Kennedy 'cannot be called wilful murder for I was compelled to shoot them in my own defence or lie down like a cur and die'. And he again made reference to Mrs Kelly having been sent to jail with a baby at the breast.

This sentimental attitude towards his mother coloured his language. He claimed, for example, that his mother, his brother-in-law, Skillion, and his neighbour, Williamson, were as 'innocent as the child unborn' of having committed any offences against Fitzpatrick. Also, he described the police, whom he accused of terrorizing his younger brothers and sisters, as never having had 'any relation or a mother or must have forgot them'.

Ned concluded the letter with a monstrous threat. He wrote:

... but I wish to give timely warning that if my people do not get justice and those innocents released from prison and the Police wear their uniforms I shall be forced to seek revenge of everything of the human race for the future.

With no offence (remember your railroads) and a sweet goodbye

from

EDWARD KELLY
a forced outlaw^b

The Jerilderie Raid

Although such an elevated self-conception may, and in the case of Ned Kelly eventually did, drive its owner towards impossible goals, it can also act as a spur to singular achievements. It is, perhaps, in this light that one should assess the extraordinarily successful raid on the town of Jerilderie in southern New South

Wales by Ned and his gang. At midnight on Saturday, 8 February 1879, just two months after the Euroa robbery, they stuck up Constables Richards and Devine at the Jerilderie police barracks and imprisoned them there. In the morning, Dan Kelly, in policeman's uniform, accompanied Mrs Devine while she carried out her usual Sunday task of preparing the courthouse for mass.

On the Monday, Joe Byrne, also in policeman's uniform, had two of the gang's horses shod at the expense of the New South Wales police force. About 10 a.m. Ned and Dan took Constable Richards with them to the Royal Mail Hotel. Richards introduced his captors to Cox, the landlord. Ned said they wanted rooms at the hotel as they intended to rob the Bank of New South Wales next door. Byrne rode to the back of the hotel and entered the bank through the rear door. He introduced himself to Mr Living, the teller, as Kelly, pointed a gun at him and ordered him to hand over his firearms. Later, Ned entered the bank and helped Joe rob it of about £2000 and, as at Euroa, of mortgage documents.

About two o'clock that afternoon Joe Byrne stuck up Mr Jefferson, the telegraph master. 'I am Kelly, walk inside,' he said, using the same form of introduction that he had used earlier in the day with Living. Obviously, it made sense for Joe to introduce himself by the name of the gang's best known member. Nevertheless, one may properly wonder whether Byrne also viewed himself if not as Kelly then as an extension of him and—more pertinent to our purposes—whether Ned viewed him in this way. Douglas Stewart thinks he did. His play, *Ned Kelly*, contains the following exchange:

LIVING: Your assistant here said he was Kelly when he held me up.

NED: Did you, Joe?

He is Ned Kelly; he's the brains I plan with,
And Dan and Steve, with the guns out there in the pub,
Are the boots and fists I fight with.
You're Ned Kelly (shouting) Jump!

(Living starts). There you are, you jump just as my hand jumps when I tell it to.

One thing at least is certain. Joe revered Ned. In a letter to his friend Aaron Sherritt, dated 26 June 1879, he wrote: 'Neddy and I have come to the conclusion to get you to join us. I was advised to turn traitor, but I said I would die at Ned's side first.' Clearly, the Kelly Gang was held together by the personal prestige of its leader.

While he was in Jerilderie, Kelly tried to get a letter printed in the local newspaper. After he had failed to find its proprietor, he entrusted the manuscript to Living, saying: 'Get it printed, it's a bit of my life.' Living replied: 'All right, I'll see it's done.' Instead, however, he handed the manuscript over to the police upon his arrival in Melbourne on Tuesday, 11 February. It has subsequently become known as the Jerilderie Letter.⁷

The Jerilderie Letter

In this letter Ned dwelled for a second time on the malfeasance of Whitty and Burns and the shootings at Stringybark Creek. Moreover, he again made his by now familiar reference to Mrs Kelly as 'the mother of twelve children one an infant on her breast'. And again this sentimental attitude towards his mother influenced his language. He wrote, for example, that 'a Policeman is a disgrace to his country [Ireland] not alone to the mother that suckled him'.

The Jerilderie Letter, like its predecessor, also contains some monstrous threats. Particularly striking was his threat to outlaw persons helping the police and his promise to reward those who assisted him to capture such people, implying as it does that his writ was as extensive and as legitimate as that of the Colony of Victoria. The language in which he delivered the threat was a bizarre parody of official government style:

... any person aiding or harbouring or assisting the Police in any way whatever or employing any person whom they know to be a detective

or cad or those who would be so deprived as to take blood money will be outlawed and declared unfit to be allowed human burial [sic] their property either consumed or confiscated and them theirs and all belonging to them exterminated off the face of the earth, the enemy I cannot catch myself I shall give a payable reward for . . .

Another threat concludes the letter:

I give fair warning to all those who has reason to fear me to sell out and give £10 out of every hundred towards the widow and orphan fund and do not attempt to reside in Victoria but as short a time as possible after reading this notice, neglect this and abide by the consequences, which shall be worse than the rust in the wheat in Victoria or the druth of a dry season to the grasshoppers in New South Wales I do not wish to give the order full force without giving timely warning but I am a widows son outlawed and my orders must be obeyed.⁸

It is noteworthy that of all the people Ned might have singled out for his concern on this occasion, he chose those people who most resembled his mother and himself, namely, widows and orphans. This suggests that his relationships with others were essentially self-centred. This impression is reinforced when it is recalled that he probably regarded Joe Byrne and, perhaps, others close to him, as continuations of himself. These, then, are examples of that other manifestation of Ned's grandiose self-image, namely, his tendency to regard others as extensions or likenesses of himself. Finally, Ned's reference to himself in the last sentence as 'a widow's son outlawed whose orders must be obeyed' suggests a link between his exalted commands on the one hand and his relationship with his mother on the other.

Glenrowan

Within months of the Jerilderie affair, songs celebrating Ned Kelly began to appear. He had already become a legend. And, extraordinary as it may sound, one of the legendary qualities friends and sympathizers assigned to him was invulnerability.

For example, Aaron Sherritt, a childhood friend of Joe Byrne turned police informer, told Superintendent Hare:

I can beat all the others; I am a better man than Joe Byrne, and I am a better man than Dan Kelly, and I am a better man than Steve Hart. I can lick those two youngsters to fits; I have always beaten Joe, but I look upon Ned Kelly as an extraordinary man; there is no man in the world like him, he is superhuman. . . . I look upon him as invulnerable, you can do nothing with him.

According to Hare:

. . . that was the opinion of all his agents; nearly every one in the district thought him invincible. When the police had a row with any of the sympathizers they would always finish off by saying 'I will tell Ned about you; he will make it hot for you some day', never speaking about the others [in the gang] at all.

Douglas Stewart expresses well this view of Ned by having Joe Byrne say: 'He [Ned] talks of wearing armour next time he tackles the traps, but he doesn't need it.'

A year after the Jerilderie raid, the Kelly gang had all but exhausted their funds. Some of their sympathizers apparently suggested that the gang should rob another bank. Then, in May 1880, the police received a letter from one of their secret agents indicating that something was afoot—something decidedly unusual. The letter read in part:

Nothing definite re the diseased stock of this locality. . . . Missing portions of cultivators described as jackets are now being worked, and fit splendidly. Tested previous to using, and proof at 10 yards. . . . A break out may be anticipated, as feed is getting very scarce.

'Diseased stock' was a code word for the outlaws. And 'missing portions of cultivators' referred to a number of mould boards which had been stolen from ploughs in the neighbourhood of Greta and Oxley earlier in the year. They had now, according to

the letter, been turned into armoured jackets which were bullet proof at 10 yards.

A short time after the receipt of this letter, Superintendent Hare received further news that 'the outlaws are going to do something that will not only astonish Australia, but the whole world'. The information came from Joe's mother, Mrs Byrne. It appeared that Ned Kelly was going to try and give substance to the view of himself as invulnerable.

On the evening of Saturday, 26 June, Joe Byrne, accompanied by Dan Kelly, shot Aaron Sherritt dead in his hut near Beechworth. Superintendents Hare and Sadlier received news of the murder in Benalla on the Sunday afternoon. They immediately arranged for the dispatch of black trackers to Beechworth by special train. They also decided to run a pilot engine ahead of the special between Benalla and Beechworth for, apart from Kelly's ominous reference to the railroads in the Cameron letter, the police in Benalla had received information from some of their agents that the Kellys intended to blow up a train.

The Kelly Gang had planned on a train carrying police and black trackers proceeding to Beechworth. They had not bargained, however, on the use of a pilot engine. Indeed, early on that Sunday morning, Ned Kelly and Steve Hart forced some railway labourers at gun point to break the line immediately north east of the town of Glenrowan. Ned told one of the workers: 'I expect a train from Benalla with a lot of police and blackfellows, and I am going to kill all the —'

After the break was made, Ned and Steve not only secured the fettlers but also bailed up the inhabitants of Glenrowan and held them captive in Mrs Jones's hotel. There, Thomas Curnow talked to Joe Byrne and Dan Kelly who had ridden overnight from Beechworth. He expressed surprise that they had stuck up Glenrowan. Joe and Dan replied that they had come there to wreck a special train of inspectors, police, and black trackers which would pass through Glenrowan to take up their trail. They had torn up the line at a dangerous part, they said, and were going to send the train and its occupants to hell.

Curnow was appalled. He determined to gain the gang's confidence in the hope that they would allow him to go home, in which case he planned to alert the Benalla police. He told Ned and Dan that one of the other prisoners, Mr Stanistreet, the station master, had a revolver in his possession. 'They thanked me,' Curnow wrote, 'and I perceived that I had in a great measure obtained their confidence by telling them this.' About dusk, Curnow asked Ned to allow him and his family to go home. He added that Ned had no reason to fear him as he was with him heart and soul. Kelly replied: 'I know that, and can see it.' Finally, between eleven and midnight, Ned told Curnow that he and his family could go home. 'Go quietly to bed, and not to dream too loud', he directed them. But Curnow ran down to the railway line on the south west or Benalla side of Glenrowan just in time to signal the pilot engine, which was preceding the special police train, to stop. He informed the guard that the line was pulled up a short distance north-east of the town and that the Kelly Gang was in Glenrowan.

The pilot engine and the police train proceeded slowly to the Glenrowan railway station. The local constable, who had just escaped from the Kellys, told Superintendent Hare that the outlaws were in Mrs Jones's hotel. The police made a dash in that direction. When they were about fifteen paces away from the hotel, Hare saw a man standing in an exposed position on the verandah. He was quickly joined by three others. It was the outlaws who, now clad in their armour, appeared to regard themselves as invulnerable. They opened fire on the police. Hare was shot in the wrist. But he was still able to join the other police in returning the fire. In the middle of this firing, or soon after it stopped, one of the outlaws cried out: 'Fire away, you —; you can do us no harm.' But, of course, the armour could not render them invulnerable. It is not surprising, therefore, that Ned Kelly was soon hurt with bullet wounds in the hand and foot.

Indeed, far from making the Kelly Gang invulnerable, the armour appeared even unable to measure up to more modest goals. For example, Senior Constable Johnston claimed that the

outlaws 'could not get proper sight by the weight of armour'. He also stated that it would have been safer for the police to rush the outlaws 'with the armour on than off'. And, if Constable Phillips is to be believed, then he actually overheard Joe Byrne say to Ned Kelly at the rear of the hotel: 'Well, it's your fault; I always said this bloody armour would bring us to grief.' It seems plausible, therefore, that Ned's decision to wear the armour sprang from a personal need rather than a rational consideration of its utility. This need, it was suggested above, was to substantiate the claims which had been made about his invulnerability.

Not long after the first clash with the police, Ned Kelly left the hotel by the back and selected his horse, which he led away into the bush at the rear. On the way he apparently dropped his rifle and the skull cap which he wore inside his iron headpiece. He tried, it seems, to take off his armour but was unable to do so. Then he attempted to break through the police cordon in order to rejoin his comrades in the hotel.

What followed moved even the Royal Commissioners to eloquence:

As the tall figure of the outlaw, encased in iron, appeared in the indistinct light of the dawn, the police for a time were somewhat disconcerted. To some it seemed like an apparition; others thought it was a black man who had donned a nail can for a joke, but as the shots from Martini-Henry rifles, at short range, were found to have no effect, the sensation created seemed to have been akin to superstitious awe. One man described it as the 'devil', another as the 'bunyip'. Ned Kelly advanced until within a stone's throw of the hotel, when, in the vernacular of the bush, he defied the police, and called on the other members of the gang to come out of the hotel and assist him.

Sergeant Steele finally brought Ned down with a shot which hit him beneath his armoured covering. He then rushed forward and grappled with him. Others ran to his assistance and, together, they removed Kelly's armour and carried him to the railway station.

It was later learned that Joe Byrne had been shot dead early in the morning while toasting the gang's prosperity at the bar of the hotel. And Dan and Steve, it seems, took off their armour and committed suicide later in the day. This action suggests that they could not envisage themselves apart from Ned. Like Joe, conceivably, they viewed themselves as extensions of him. The date was Monday, 28 June 1880. It was a little over two years since the arrest of Mrs Kelly.⁹

Murder Trial

Ned Kelly's trial commenced in the Central Criminal Court in Melbourne on 18 October 1880. The presiding judge was Mr Justice Sir Redmond Barry, who had previously sentenced Mrs Kelly to three years imprisonment. After an adjournment, the trial resumed on 28 October. The following evening, the jury found Ned guilty of the wilful murder of Thomas Lonigan. Barry then sentenced the prisoner to death, ending with the usual words: 'May the Lord have mercy on your soul.' 'I will go a little further than that,' Kelly replied, 'and say I will see you there where I go.' He was hanged in the Melbourne jail on 11 November. Twelve days later, Sir Redmond Barry died.¹⁰

Conclusion

It was Ned's grandiose style of behaviour which explains his appeal, for once he aspired to invulnerability he became the hero of the small farmers of north-eastern Victoria, vulnerable men enduring hardship and often failure as selectors, while blaming the squatters for their plight. But Kelly's popularity, like that of other noble robbers, was by no means confined to his native environment. The citizens of Melbourne, although unaffected by the selectors' particular grievances, also found sustenance in Kelly's grand defiance, or so it would seem judging by the fact that 700 people waited outside the Melbourne jail for a glimpse of him when he was transferred there after the Glenrowan shoot-out. And 8000 people, meeting at the Hippodrome on 5 November, passed a resolution calling for his

reprieve. Moreover, a petition to the same effect attracted 32 000 signatures. And even today, people far removed from the world of the selectors and colonial Melbourne, but who have acquired the forms of subservience appropriate to the twentieth century, continue to draw strength from Ned's story. He has become a folk hero.¹¹