

It were also Joe Byrne that begun the display of flashy riding prior to our departure we showed them what Wild Colonial Boys could do we demonstrated riding the like of which were never seen before we galloped laying longways on our horses' spines our feet at their tails and our noses in their necks and sometimes reclining with our feet upon the neck.

And lo they did applaud us with their eyes bright their faces red bank managers & overseers & ex policemen they stood in the scorching sun and cheered us that were a development we never hoped before.

PARCEL 11

His life at 25 years of age

BROWN WRAPPING PAPER CUT TO 40 ROUGH PAGES (4" X 8" APPROX.), THEN CRUDELY BOUND WITH TWINE. TITLE PAGE HAS A LARGE HOLE ALONG THE GUTTER NOT AFFECTING ANY TEXT.

The author acknowledges the gang's notoriety is growing at the very time that the newspapers refuse to publish Kelly and Byrne's letters. A misunderstanding between Kelly and Mary Hearn, and a suggestion that the police and postal authorities conspired to prevent the delivery of important letters. Also contains a newspaper clipping from The Jerilderie Gazette reporting the gang's daring capture of that town, together with Kelly's detailed explanation of his motives. In both tone and handwriting these latter pages of the parcel attest to the outlaw's growing anger that he should be denied a national audience.

The government were filled with men of alleged dignity and high distinction so it were a severe embarrassment they lacked the brains to arrest a gang of men so meanly educated. The papers reported Steve Hart's nose were hooked or Dan Kelly had a squint but this could not diminish the fact the government had lost control of an entire slice of territory and they could not account for that to themselves or others.

It were the police who come up with the explanation of our great popularity. According to them there was thousands of Kelly sympathisers throughout the North East and this were why no one could arrest us. We was being fed and hidden by a great army of friends.

As you know this were my ambition but at this stage I were still widely known as the Mansfield Murderer and far from popular. We done Euroa on December 11th. On the 4th of Jan. the police arrested 21 men on no other charge than that they knew Ned Kelly or was related to him or had shared a cell in prison. Some of them imprisoned was my real friends including Wild Wright & some I only ever spoke to at a family wedding others had stopped being my friends after Stringybark Creek for instance Jack McMonigle he had sent word he did not wish to see my face now I were a murderer. But then poor Jack discovered what it were to be slandered & perjured & he were handcuffed & herded on to Benalla railway station & shoved into a box car like he were nothing but a daggy sheep to be transported up the hill to Beechworth Gaol & held there on remand. The entire colony cd. see this were unfair we was being ruled by warders there were no more justice than in the days of yore.

No word yet from Cameron MLA tho he must by now of read 2 letters a rough one from me & an educated one from Joe. Through January the harvest were continuing but on 21 farms the men was absent from their labour thus did the police earn themselves lasting enemies while making us enduring friends. Now the Kelly Gang become Agricultural Labourers and many is the haystack we built. As Dan were now a rich man he

complained bitterly about his servitude but through the long hot days of early Feb. I made sure we all done our share. In these 2 mo. we established permanent welcomes throughout the North East we had more holes than the Moyhu rabbits.

I had hoped to net £10,000 from Euroa but the actual amount were £2,260 this were still a mighty sum I give this currency to Joe Byrne thanking him for his friendship & loyalty I told him I were not his warder he cd. go to America or anywhere he liked.

Joe lay his hand upon my shoulder he said I were his Capt until death & he give me back the currency saying he might take just £65 so his mother cd. settle a bill & another £20 so Aaron cd. pay the government the rent on his selection. When he said this I were ashamed I ever thought him less than what he were.

£1,975 remained to us. Money enough for dresses for the girls new saddles for our mates we was happy to get Jimmy Gloster out of debt and reward B. Gould for other services. Mrs Griffiths a widow were able to bring back her daughter who had been compelled to work as a servant in Tasmania. When we had alleviated these & other hardships we still had £1,423 a fortune except we now had the personal responsibility to liberate not only my mother but them additional 21 men in prison. We engaged Mr Zinke in their defence.

The Victorian police was naturally v. free in offering blood money it were not only A. Sherritt we permitted to accept their bribes. We cd. look down from the Warby Ranges and see the plumes of dust rising off the plains and know the police was actors in a drama writ by me.

Mary had witnessed us come back to camp after the robbery our open shirts ballooned behind us our weary horses splashed by creek crossing matted with dust & sweat & torn by prickly scrub but we was all triumphant. Steve Hart kissed Mary on the cheek Joe Byrne picked her up & swung her round & round & told her that her husband were a General now he were the greatest adjectival man alive.

When the newspapers wrote Ned Kelly were handsome I took no notice of their puffery I were waiting on for the news from Cameron although MLAs must be busy men I knew our letters must aid his case

in Parliament. I were not so simple as to think I wd. be excused my crime but every day I were prepared to hear my mother had been set free.

I paid very close attention to the newspapers but it were your ma who purchased the scrapbook I suppose you have it in your possession now it is a most distinctive green with a stamp on the inside to say it were made by Parson's Printery in Benalla. In this Mary soon began to paste reports from far & wide she would not tolerate a lie or error but must correct it in the margin some news she also copied out by hand doubtless imagining that volume in a bookshelf in a distant happy time.

WILD WRIGHT (to Judge Wyatt): YOU WILL NOT GET THE KELLYS UNTIL PARLIAMENT MEETS AND MRS KELLY IS LET GO AND FITZPATRICK LAGGED IN HER PLACE.

JUDGE WYATT (remanding Wright once more): I AM SORRY I WOULD GIVE YOU FAIR PLAY IF I COULD.

I need give you no evidence that your mother were our 1st and best supporter ahead even of my own brave sisters. It were she who hid our money who dug it up when it were being decided who would receive what amount she were very particular we should use it wisely counting the notes & coins into an envelope so people was given what they needed no more no less.

I were waiting for the Parliament to meet but much else occupied our minds and bodies now very busy with both harvest & police we was moving constantly from place to place. In all this your ma were not abandoned by the Kellys she will tell you if you ask her that she went with Kate and Maggie into Benalla where they bought themselves handkerchiefs & scarves they did not care to explain to the shopgirl why they should pay with handfuls of sixpences.

Them girls was most resourceful no trap could follow if they did not wish it so on a hot clear day 3 weeks after the Euroa robbery Mary & Kate drove up in a spring cart to the back of Kilfeera & there found me camping comfortably on 15 Mile Creek. Kate unloaded corn beef & tea & sugar while your mother come to me down by the creek a great pile of newspapers bundled in her arms. Her face were covered with a veil to keep away the flies I could not see her eyes or mouth.

The Parliament?

For answer she lifted the veil to kiss me.

The letter?

That Cameron has received your letter said she it is all reported as you'll see. But her manner were strained and once I opened up the papers I soon learned all the editors had been shown my letter by Cameron but NOT ONE WOULD PRINT MY ACTUAL WORDS instead they was like snotty narrow shouldered schoolteachers each one giving their opinion on my prose & character. Throwing their garbage to the ground I were v. angry to be called a CLEVER ILLITERATE PERSON by that rag THE MELBOURNE ARGUS another paper said I were filled with MORBID VANITY this were a gross offence against justice the colony being ruled like Beechworth Gaol. I kicked the papers apart and would of ripped them with gunshot were it not for fear of revealing our location to the traps.

Mary took my hand & kissed it she held my face and stared deep into my eyes. Dear said she it don't matter no more.

She led my hands down onto her stomach. Said she Our baby will read your letter dear.

But I were in a rage she could not comfort me my words had been stolen from my very throat.

Your mother asked would I like a nice walk which should of surprised me for she didnt like the heat but in truth I were not paying great attention to your mother but stewing in my own juice and plotting what revenge I would take upon them higher ups who so oppressed us all.

I'll stick up an adjectival printery I said I'll print the adjectival thing myself.

She took my arm then together we walked the hill the grass brown & glassy beneath our feet.

You neednt stick nothing up no more you have got all that you require. Except justice.

You have me she said laying her head against my shoulder why could that not be enough? You have me & yr. baby & you have your friends & more than £1,000.

I said she did not reckon the expense of being an outlaw. We walked

further up the hill till we found a single gum tree and there sat down in its thin shade watching a wedgetail eagle circling in the sky above.

I explained to her the money would soon be spent it would not be cheap to have my mother released from Melbourne Gaol.

But now you can give your mother what any mother wants for her child.

And what might that be?

His safety.

You aint saying I should run away?

The best deed you can do your mother is to go as far as you can from harm's way.

You don't know me said I & were very offended she should think me such a selfish coward.

Is it true do you really love her more than me?

It aint the same.

They won't never let her free Ned you must accept that no matter how you love her. She were convicted in a court of law.

I told her she did not know of whom she spoke she could not imagine the hardships Ellen Kelly had endured.

She will not die in gaol but you will perish if you remain in the colony.

If they won't release her I will take her then by force.

But you promised to buy our passage once the bank were robbed.

I cannot abandon my mother Mary you know that.

Then what of me?

What of you?

I have waited for you to rob the bank but I will not wait to watch you die.

Don't cry please Mary.

I am not crying I will not cry. We have £1,000 and we must use it as we both agreed.

You have misunderstood me.

No when your mother is released she can join us in California and I will care for her forever I will wait on her & make her broth even if she spits on me & calls me a tart. When she is an old lady I will be her nurse

& slave but I will not remain here & wait for them to murder you I cannot do it.

But they cannot catch me Mary they can't even find their way along the public highway.

You promised me.

You are my life entire said I but now her face were closed like doors I could not open no matter how hard I hammered. They will print my letter then you will see what happens the Australians will not tolerate a mother be gaoled for no offence.

No one will ever print your letter she shouted.

Then like I said I will print the adjectival thing myself. But she were already walking down the hill.

Come back I cried but she did not turn her head held high she seemed a girl no longer but a stranger cruel & proud. I squatted on the dry summer grass for that moment when she wd. relent. I glimpsed her pretty white ankle as she climbed through McBean's barbed wire fence then she disappeared into the scrub and when Kate drove the spring cart round from behind a stand of wattles your mother were in it and I called out her name but it were caught on the wind and blown back in my throat.

I did not know she abandoned me till the week had passed my sister Maggie discovered £200 in £5 and £10 notes amongst the dregs of the last supper there were no clue if the remainder were still buried or if Mary had took it with her. She were the only one that knew its hiding place.

Hell's curse to her. This I thought and worse besides it does not mean I did not love her the very light of my life were stolen away my baby vanished but I remained at my station that is the agony of the Captain if rats is tearing at his guts still must he secure the freedom of his mother and all them men in gaol. I fought with everyone I were in torment from all sides then next week a telegram were sent care of Kate from Port Melbourne WILL WAIT 5 DAYS 23 NOTT STREET.

The air in the North East were hot & still as a baker's oven the white

ants flying around my beard crawling in my ears & up my nose I were the monitor once more making fresh ink from McCracken's powder nothing give me no relief but the ceaseless labour with my pen I wrote 30 pages to your mother explaining why I could not yet depart they was dispatched by post to 23 Nott Street.

The threatened 5 days come and went I could not bear to be inside my skin. The boys was filled with pity but when night come they was weary from hard days working in the shadeless paddocks they snored like bullockies in the stinking hot nights I wrote another letter 58 pages long this one for the attention of the government if I were ignorant & unlettered as is claimed then so be it but I made known the earliest days of my life showing the history of the police and their mistreatment of my family.

My letter to Mary were returned ADDRESSEE UNKNOWN the police done this I know my mail were tampered with. On the same day come a tearful letter from Nott Street she was in torment not having heard from me she were sailing to San Francisco. To Hell with all traps I hate them. Everything I had they took from me.

On the 7th of February 1879 the Kelly Gang rode to Jerilderie to renew our cash reserves from the coffers of the Bank of New South Wales. My 58 pages to the government was secured around my body by a sash so even if I were shot dead no one could be confused as to what my corpse would say if it could speak.

It would be hard to find so much as a Chinaman who has not heard how the Kellys controlled Jerilderie for an entire weekend. Personally I read in 6 different newspaper accounts that we planned it better than a military campaign. Well it is no good having a dog & barking too so I will stick this one cutting down for you but please imagine my feelings during the events here described. My 58 pages was pinching & cutting me I could feel them words being tattoed onto my living skin.

The Jerilderie Gazette
Feb. 16, 1879

THE KELLYS AT JERILDERIE

It appeared that Ned and Dan Kelly called on Saturday night at Mrs Davidson's Woolpack Inn, where they had a great many drinks. Ned Kelly entered into conversation very freely with the barmaid, informing her that they had come from the backblocks of the Lachlan. They asked a number of questions of the barmaid respecting Jerilderie. Ultimately the conversation turned on the Kellys. When the strangers asked what did the people in Jerilderie say about the Kellys they were informed that the Jerilderie people thought them very brave. The barmaid sang, by way of amusement, "The Kellys have made another escape." After several more drinks the Kellys engaged two beds, and said they would take a ride into Jerilderie and return again.

THE ATTACK

After midnight on Saturday the police barracks were surrounded by Ned Kelly, Dan Kelly, Hart and Byrne. One of the gang shouted

out — "Police! Police! Get up, there is a great row at Davidson's Hotel." Constable Richards, who was sleeping in a room at the rear, got up and went in the direction of the sound. In the meantime Constable Devine had got on his trousers and opened the front door. The two police were then confronted by Kelly, presenting two revolvers saying, "Hands up, I'm Kelly," and in an instant the other outlaws came up with their revolvers.

The two policemen being secured, they were guarded by two of the gang while the other two compelled Mrs Devine to go with them (in her night-dress) and show them where the arms etc. were stored. They kept strict watch till morning, when they locked the police in the cells, and kept sentry over the premises on Saturday and Sunday night.

On Sunday morning Mass was celebrated at the Courthouse, distant 100 yards from the barracks, and as it is usual on these occasions for Mrs Devine to get the Courthouse ready for the service, about 10 a.m. she did so, but was accompanied by Dan Kelly.

During Sunday the blinds of the barracks were all down. The two Kellys dressed out in police uniform, and during the day frequently walked from the barracks to the stable.

During the time the police were locked up Ned Kelly conversed freely with Devine about the shooting of the three Constables, and stated that Kennedy fought to the last, but he denied he cut off his ear. Kelly asked Devine if there was a printer in the town; that he wanted to see him very particularly, as he wanted him to print hand-bills and a history of his life. Kelly also read to Mrs Devine several pages of what he wanted printed, but Mrs Devine could not remember anything about it on Tuesday.

Kelly also told Devine that he intended shooting him and Richards,

(I would never kill them but it were essential they obey)

but Mrs Devine begged them off. Ned Kelly said that if Devine had not left the force in a month he would return and shoot him.

On Sunday night Edward

Kelly again rode up to Davidson's Hotel where he had a great many drinks,

(If 2 be a great number then he does not lie)

and entered freely into conversation with the barmaid. He stopped at the hotel until midnight, when he returned to the barracks. During Sunday night two of the gang would sleep while the other two kept watch, and so on until morning.

On Sunday the revolvers were cleaned, every bullet being extracted and the weapons carefully reloaded for the dangerous work of the next day, which, we are glad to say, terminated without loss of life. Early on Monday morning Byrne brought two horses to be shod, and Hart bought some meat in the butcher's shop. A little later Byrne went into one of the shops and bought a number of articles.

THE SURPRISE

No one in the town had the slightest idea that the Kellys were in Jerilderie. Several persons saw Ned and Dan Kelly, dressed in

police uniform, in company with Constable Richards, coming down the town about 11 a.m. on Monday, but had not the slightest idea they were the Kellys. They were taken for fresh police, and certainly from their outward appearance they looked to all intents and purposes like Constables, more especially since they were seen with Constable Richards.

The townspeople could not realise the idea that the Kellys were here until they saw the telegraph poles being cut down, and Ned Kelly walking into the front of the Telegraph Office, revolver in hand.

Shortly after 11 a.m. Ned and Dan Kelly, with Constable Richards, entered the Royal Mail Hotel. Poor Richards was compelled to introduce the Kellys to Cox, the landlord of the hotel, and Ned Kelly explained that he wanted the bar parlour for a few hours, as he was going to rob the bank and intended to fill the room with any townspeople who happened along. The astonished Mr Cox himself was the first prisoner placed in the room, and

for the next hour everybody who came to the hotel was marched into the same room till it was crowded. Then Byrne was despatched to the bank to fetch over the staff of that institution.

BANK TELLER LYVING'S NARRATIVE

About 10 minutes past twelve on Monday morning I was sitting at my desk in the bank when I heard footsteps approaching me from the direction of the back door. I at first took no notice, thinking it was the manager, Mr Tarleton. The footsteps continued approaching, when I turned round on the office stool and noticed a man. I immediately accosted the fellow, who looked rather stupid, as if he had been drinking.

(He were stone cold sober of course he were acting the part)

On asking him who he was and what right he had to enter the bank by the back way, he levelled a revolver at me, answered that he was Kelly, and ordered me to bail up. The fellow, who afterwards turned out to be Byrne, ordered me to deliver up what firearms I had.

Young Rankin then came in and Byrne ordered us both to come with him to Cox's Hotel. Here we met Ned Kelly who asked for Mr Tarleton. We then went back to the bank but could not find the manager in his room.

Ned Kelly then said to me, "You had better go and find him." I then searched and found the manager in his bath. I said to him, "We are stuck up; the Kellys are here, and the police are also stuck up."

Byrne then got Hart and left him in charge of the manager, who was subsequently taken over to the room where all the others were kept prisoner.

Ned Kelly then took me to the bank. He said, "You must have £10,000 in the bank here". I then handed him the teller's cash, amounting to £691.

Kelly asked if we had more money, and was answered "No."

Now the bank were robbed but this were not the main purpose of my visit I come to Jerilderie determined to have 500 copies of my letter printed this would be a great profit to Mr Gill the editor of the JERILDERIE GAZETTE.

Up to that day Gill's only importance were to make public the price of cows in calf and so called GENERAL SERVANTS I come to elevate him

Kelly then obtained the teller's revolver, and again requested more money. He then found the treasury drawer and insisted on it being opened. One of the keys was given to him, but the manager had the second key and so he could not open it.

Byrne then wanted to break it open with a sledgehammer, but Kelly brought the manager from the Royal Mail Hotel and demanded the key. The drawer was thus opened and the sum of £1,450 was taken out and placed in a bag.

Kelly then took down a large deed box. He then expressed his intention of burning all the books in the office. The whole party then went into the Royal Mail Hotel. Daniel Kelly was in the hotel, and Ned Kelly took two of the prisoners out to the back of the hotel and burnt three or four of the bank books.

to a higher calling. HE WOULD PRINT THE TRUTH THEN MY MOTHER WOULD BE RELEASED FROM GAOL. As soon as Ellen Kelly were reunited with her 9 mo. old babe I would be free to follow Mary Hearn and once I found her I would never let her out of my sight again I would walk on hot coals or cross the River Styx if need be I would cry a go and leave the banks & government alone.

By far my most important business in Jerilderie were to seek out Mr Gill so once the bank were safely robbed I retired into the strongroom to change out of my policeman's uniform. When lacing my boots I heard men's voices in the banking chamber they was crying Who is there and so I come to educate them. I were most amused to see a fat old pig he must of weighed 18 stone. At his side were a long thin streak of bird manure he had a bald head his bony chin $\frac{1}{2}$ hid beneath a large moustache.

I am Ned Kelly said I then watched the power of fame suck both men's eyes until they bulged identically. I raised my revolver and the fat cove turned to run I called I would shoot him in the arse his prize possession. The fat one baulked the thin one bolted but as the telegraph lines was cut I were not very much concerned.

I bet you is a Justice of the Peace I said to the remaining prisoner I would lay 100 quid on it.

I have that honour Sir.

And your mate Jack Spratt is a JP as well?

No Sir.

What is he?

O that is Mr Gill the editor of our newspaper.

The only man in Jerilderie I wanted and he were now escaping up the centre of the dusty road. I am going to shoot you I told the J.P. I were v. angry & chased him back into the pub.

Joe Byrne then quickly trailed me out into the hot and empty street but Gill was already vanished. Joe were eff and ess he were most annoyed on my behalf.

Thats where the b----d is hiding Ned.

He indicated a wide verandaed building its nose were sticking out into the street where it did not belong. The sign said JERILDERIE

GAZETTE we went straight to it but it were a ship abandoned the skipper & sailors taken to the boats. On the bridge we found racks of type alongside a shining black patent press.

Damn it Captain we will print it ourselves.

Since Mary's departure Joe were steady as a rock he had a wooden box of yen pok which he smoked in fair to moderate quantity there were nothing he would not do to assist. Said he Don't you worry mate I'll get that teller from the bank he reckons that he's got the School Certificate.

5 minutes later he escorted Mr Lyving into my presence I ordered him to set my letter into type. He were of a tall & manly build but when he took the compositor's board from Joe his hand were shaking he peered blindly at the slugs of type and I understood he could not read them back to front no more than I could.

Don't get yourself upset I'll find the adjectival printer.

Joe Byrne departed the township on horseback he knew the importance of the document. I held my gun on Mr Lyving spelling out the required letters so he could find them faster but it were no good he were a dunce. The clock struck 4 with no more than 20 words having been completed. I were upset I confess it and I was loudly persuading the teller to increase his labour when a plain trim woman arrived at the flywire door. Behind her stood Joseph Byrne red as a perch the sweat dripping off his nose.

I got the wife said he.

Mrs Gill come through the door when she saw Mr Lyving she sucked in her breath and clucked her tongue.

I said I wished a urgent job of printing done.

She didnt hear me but begun to rouse on poor Lyving saying her husband would be in an awful temper when he heard he been fiddling with his fonts.

Mrs Gill said I.

It takes a 5 yr. apprenticeship to learn to set the forms.

Mrs Gill we need a urgent job of printing done.

Then tell him leave the fonts alone said she. If you give me the copy my husband will print it for you when he returns.

I don't have a copy its the only one.

It is called the copy even if there are no others now give it to me please for I have a cake in the oven and it will burn if I am long away. What is the name asked she picking up a receipt book off the counter.

It is Ned Kelly.

Whether she were deaf or daft I do not know but my name had no effect on her. How many pages are there Mr Kelly?

58.

Locating a stub of pencil she licked it. Received from Edward Kelly said she 58 pages of copy.

She were very diligent I will say that for her she had to know how I wished the pamphlets stitched & bound all this wrote on the receipt. She said she would require a 5 pound deposit so I give it to her and she wrote down that I had.

Now said she you must give me the copy.

I could not believe it said Joe Byrne the Captain gives her all his pages. It were bail up your money or your life so the old bitch robs Ned Kelly and he give her all his golden pages.

That were Joe to a T he never saw no good in anyone.

The Jerilderie Gazette
Feb. 16, 1879

THE KELLY GANG'S DEPARTURE FROM JERILDERIE

Prior to his departure, Kelly went into McDougal's Hotel. At this time the bar was crowded with strangers. Where they came from, and where they went afterwards, no-one knows, but there cannot be any doubt that the gang was assisted here on Monday by their "sympathisers".

At the hotel Kelly shouted and

paid for drinks. He said that he had a great many friends — and if anyone tried to shoot him it would be quickly revealed who was on his side. He said "Anyone could shoot me, but if a shot was fired, the people of Jerilderie would swim in their own blood."

On taking leave, Kelly removed two bottles of brandy, which he paid for. Before he mounted his horse he said he would take his own life before he would allow the police to shoot him. He added that he was not afraid to die at any

time, that all that he had on his conscience was the shooting — in self defence — of three unicorns. A short time after this Kelly got on his horse, and with Hart galloped off, singing "Hurrah for the good old times of Morgan and Ben Hall!" the strangers giving a cheer.

The outlaws went on the

Deniliquin Road a short distance, but suddenly wheeled around in the direction of Wiannamurra, joining Byrne and Dan Kelly about a mile from town, the last two men having charge of the money taken from the bank — which was securely fixed on a spare horse.

2 weeks later I come to collect what were due & owing Jerilderie were dark as we walked the horses along an echoing lane between a grain merchant and the GAZETTE building. If there were a police guard at the GAZETTE he had gone to bed so Joe and me stood in our saddles & climbed on the veranda roof. Twice my spurs clattered on the tin roof but Mr Gill & his Missus didnt wake until the blue flare of Joe Byrne's lucifer shone through their lids.

Its him said Mrs Gill he's in.

By then I had my gun against her husband's bony skull he werent going to run off this time.

Give me your gun Mr Gill.

Gill pulled at the sheets like reins.

No gun said he.

I retrieved the police issue whistle from the nail beside the bed. Hand over the adjectival gun I'm sure they give you one.

His bony jaw were set his eyes was bulging it were his wife who reached beneath his pillow & the husband watched with angry eyes as she delivered a Webley revolver into my care.

Gill blurted he had not printed my document.

Then you shall do it now said I and stuck the Webley in my belt.

I cannot God help me its not my fault.

Mr Kelly said the snubnosed woman here is your £5 please take it back.

Listen Missus you get your old man out of bed and tell him to print my letter or I will spread him like dung in a paddock.

O have mercy Mr Kelly we give your letter to the police.

I were stricken wordless Joe Byrne spoke in my place You are very effing brave Missus do you understand how brave you are? She shook her head watching fearfully as Joe Byrne drew the curtains shut.

Do you know how long it took our Captain to write that letter how he laboured to put the facts down right?

The government has possession of it now she cried aint that who you wrote it for Mr Kelly? It has gone where you intended it I'm sure.

Joe turned up the wick on the lantern and with the bare room now brightly illuminated there were no disguising the fury in his eyes. This were a poisoned man his bowels was set hard as black cement and Mr Gill now understood there were no shield between himself and punishment he folded his hands in his lap waiting for the worst.

Doubtless he considered himself a brave fellow to face the Kelly Gang but he were a coward to his trade as printer he were honour bound from ancient time to let the truth be told but instead he give it to its enemy. He were stupid as the government itself if he thought I could be stopped so easy.

Ned said Joe you was a fool to trust these people.

O no Sir no he werent Mrs Gill begun to cry to beg me not to kill them I told her if she read my letter she would know I were no murderer. As for her husband he were no more than a child breaking a spider web and the same web will be spun again tomorrow I could not be silenced.

I imagined myself v. calm but Joe later told me the pupils of my eyes had turned an unholy red. Goodnight said I or so I'm told then turned and walked out of the window.

That night the Kelly Gang made camp by light of rain & lightning strikes and while the boys lay quiet as dogs wrapped up in their coats I sat with my backside in a puddle my oilskin above my candle & my paper.

I begun again they could not prevent it. I were the terror of the government being brung to life in the cauldron of the night.

PARCEL 12

Conception and construction of armour

BROWN WRAPPING ROUGHLY CUT INTO 30 BLOUGH PAGES (4" X 8" APPROX.), BUT UNLIKE PARCEL 11 THESE REMAIN UNBOUND. CONSIDERABLY TORN AND STAINED. TEXT MOSTLY DRAFTED IN LEAD PENCIL BUT SOME IN BLUE INK.

A belated celebration of his daughter's birth. Winter in the high country of the Great Divide. The lineage of the Kelly armour is proven to be modern rather than mediaeval. An account of how the armour was made.

It is one thing to toil with your pen another thing entire to do it while you fight a war. In the autumn of 1879 I tried to once more write the 58 sheets stolen from me by the Gills I tore up pages then begun again by flooded creek by light of moon and when I had made such a mess my brain were addled I returned to this splashed & speckled history you now hold in your hand.

I had boasted I were a spider they could not stop me spinning but that were in February and by the end of March I had to admit I could not repeat what I previously done. My Jerilderie Letter were lost forever.

My daughter if I make mistakes of grammar now do not think yourself grander than your father but bear in mind the circumstances of composition in the autumn of 1879 Supt Hare & Detective Ward was always on our heels also those black trackers from Queensland was murderous demons they already butchered many men before they caught the scent of us.

April passed then come the chilly rains of May we rode at night & slept by day all the while enduring such inconvenience as diarrhoea fever thrown shoes faintheartedness the flattery of spies & known informers.

The June frost were early but there were still no word from Mary Hearn and Ellen Kelly were still interred inside her sunless cell no matter what vow I took. Ned Kelly were the most feared & famous outlaw in the colony but I cd. not get my mother an inch closer to her freedom.

I had abandoned the letter to the government. I would of give up this very history too but I knew I would lose you if I stopped writing you would vanish and be swallowed by the maw. I see it now I were $\frac{1}{2}$ mad but each day I wrote so you wd. read my words and I wrote to get you born.

By the 2nd week of June I knew you must be arrived but no word come there was only frost & silence the southerly winds brought the lonely chill off the mountains at Bright & Mount Beauty. Dan caught

bronchitis I lay my pen aside at last and bound up the pages in a parcel. When I tied the ribbon a great sadness entered like a worm into my heart.

On June 20th of 1879 we come to collect our supplies as previously arranged riding down from the bush to the back of the village of Strathbogie as we followed the frosty cowpads down towards the shanty I had the sight of a young woman running across the wintry white she were dressed in a black coat a bright blue hat and as she run she waved.

Have you noticed how fair weather brings ill news? This were a beautiful bright morning with all the paddock sparkling with frost the butcher birds lined up on the fence their pretty singing filled me with foreboding.

Telegram cried my sister Kate.

I trotted to her side her nose & ears was red but her bright green eyes was shining she were not afraid. Telegram she cried again then give it to me.

It is addressed to you Kate.

Yes but its for you.

My hands was freezing the paper v. warm for it had lately been steamed open then glued back the paste were still not dry. What is it?

Read Ned read the thing.

DAM AND FILLY AT PASTURE IN SAN FRANCISCO FEED IS PLENTIFUL.

It is her?

It is indeed.

My daughter it were you. You was born. You was in a foreign land but safe at your mother's breast I roared like a bull my breath burst forth & froze in that clean Australian air. Galloping in a circle round the paddock then a figure 8 I stood astride the mare one legged my pistols in my hands and all the boys stared they thought their moody Captain were finally insane.

He is a da called Kate.

Then what a show of riding they put on to welcome you and what a knees up promptly followed even if the porridge were still bubbling in the shanty pot.

The Kellys are here. Barefoot boys ran through the frost a girl on a Timor pony set off to bring the word these was our friends. Our hard won money flowed like wheat from a broken bag.

The police was in all the hills & towns about but the country were not theirs they had not the least notion of the celebration which now spread like yellow gorse across the hills. Joe Byrne sang Rose O'Connell and his great baritone echoed out across the paddocks even the daggy sheep even the wall eyed donkey heard that you was born. Steve danced a jig in the middle of the track he were nimble & pretty as a pony. Dan were quickly drunk he wrote your name upon his hand then swore an oath to sail and bring you back to where you did belong.

These was your own own people girl I mean the good people of Greta & Moyhu & Euroa & Benalla who come drifting down the track all through the morn & afternoon & night. How was they told of your birth did the bush telegraph alert them I do not know only that they come the men the women with babies at their breast shivering kiddies with cotton coats their eyes slitted against the wind. They arrived in broken carts & drays they was of that type THE BENALLA ENSIGN named the most frightful class of people they couldnt afford to leave their cows & pigs but they done so because we was them and they was us and we had showed the world what convict blood could do. We proved there were no taint we was of true bone blood and beauty born.

Through the dusk & icy starbright night them visitors continued to rise from the earth like winter oats their cold faces was soon pressed through doorway and window and even when the grog wore out they wd. not leave they come to touch my sleeve or clap my back they hitched great logs to their horses' tails to drag them out beside the track. 6 fires these was your birthday candles shining in 200 eyes.

There was spies amongst them that we must accept even the best merino must have its dung & dags but I wd. be no more muzzled by spies than by cowards like Mr Gill. The words must be said and say them I did beneath the dazzling Milky Way the skies spilled like broken crystal across the heavens. Upon a bullock dray I stood I never planned my speech or understood its consequences and when it was done I didnt even remember what I said except the government must deliver the innocent from

gaol or else I were provoked to show some colonial stratagem. I had no idea what that might be but spoke the truth it would be worse than the rust in the wheat in Victoria or the druth of a dry season to the grasshoppers of New South Wales.

The spies & fizegigs heard me they shook in their traitor's boots. 2 days later the police struck again arresting my old mate Tom Lloyd the newspapers called him my loyal lieutenant and for that lofty crime he too were remanded to Beechworth Gaol.

Having once more brung down the wrath of the traps on our supporters I thought it wisest to disappear from their districts for a short while.

Taking Aaron Sherritt for a scout we journeyed to the shepherd's hut up on the Bogong High Plains you will recall I said the walls was papered with words and pictures from THE ILLUSTRATED AUSTRALIAN NEWS they was tattered like old skin and very yellow often gnawed on by the mice.

Aaron stayed for 2 nights flattering me that I were of colossal strength and I should be the ruler of the colony etc. he had a gormless wheedling smile he were more annoying than the rats inside the walls I were v. pleased when he returned to his selection.

Soon there were heavy snow and our different scouts was sometimes unable to provision us and we was therefore reduced to eating a beloved horse but for a while we remained safe from the attentions of the world.

It were during them winter storms we begun studying the paper on the walls my LORNA DOONE was long ago ruined in the Murray so there were not a great deal else to read but the news of 18 yr. before. The previous incumbent must of been a Yankee every page he pasted were about their Civil War I were often disappointed to find the outcome of a battle eaten by a mouse. I read from the floor to 6 ft. of height then constructed a kind of hurdle so as to get up under the rafters I come across the badly damaged likeness of a ship called the Virginia the southerners had clad it all with iron there were another ship the Monitor its bridge were like a tower forged of steel $1/2$ in. thick an ironclad monster with a pair of 11 in. guns like the nostrils on a face. O that a man might

smith himself into a warship of that pattern he could sail it to the gates of Beechworth & Melbourne Gaols. Blast down the doors. Smash the walls apart. No munition could injure him or tear his flesh he would be an engine like Great Cuchulainn in his war chariot they say it bristled with points of iron and narrow blades with hooks & straps & loops & cords.

Steve Hart come to read beside me on the hurdle I told him this is what them Mollys should of worn yes this were the very seamstress he needed for his dresses. He were very taken by the fancy but Joe were out of opium he lay brooding on his cot and didnt hear me.

Are you sick old man?

Joe just rubbed at his legs but when Dan joined us upon the hurdle he suddenly had a great sarcastic spasm asking how we knew we was so effing safe to stand there reading.

I reminded him there were 2 ft. of snow outside.

He swung himself out of the crib and pulled on his boots he said we was all simpletons we had no idea of the forces brung against us.

Steve made some mild remark for which Joe pulled him off the hurdle and offered to break his teeth and soon after he got on his horse and rode away.

5 days later he returned his nose bright red from the cold his beard covered with frost & icicles. He wished to speak in private but I said he could speak freely before Steve and Dan so he begun to curse me saying I were the village idiot easily gammoned by Fitzpatrick or Harry Power or any knave who smiled at me. I was betrayed he said and did not know it.

And who is the traitor?

Perhaps its me he said. His eyelids was almost shut but there were such a fury visible he looked $1/2$ mad. Perhaps I have been offered my life in exchange for yours.

Who could offer that?

Superintendent Hare.

You talked to him he nabbed you?

Not directly.

Aaron is the go between?

Joe sat down heavily upon the hurdle his face seized in his hands. O Jesus Ned he moaned I'm sick he looked up at me with his bloodshot eyes the icicles & frost was melting his beard were matted like a sorry dog.

Aaron sets out with the police tomorrow night.

Sets out for where?

He swayed so far back upon the hurdle I reached out to steady him but he chopped my hand angrily aside.

For here said he.

There was silence in the hut as we all saw what had occurred.

You done the right thing mate.

O I wish to God I were not your adjectival mate he cried I don't want what lies ahead.

Dan were sitting in front of the fire with his back to us but now he stood his bright eyes shining from his dirty face this were a boy no longer but a Kelly burnt and hardened by the fates.

Shut your hole he said you are our mate we won't let you suffer.

I seen the future said Joe every adjectival night I see the things that happen in my dreams.

It aint you thats going to suffer its effing Sherritt he's a dead man now.

You wouldnt understand you mongrel he's my mate he's trying to save my life.

Shutup I snapped at them I were the Captain and it were time to cease this endless bicker. Removing a piece of paper from my britches I lay it before Joe's poisoned eyes.

What is it he asked and turned it upside down.

It is the pattern for the ironclad man.

Who is he asks Joe.

He is you said I he is a warrior he cannot die.

It were Steve Hart who pointed out that the necessary material grew plentifully upon the land it might be as easily plucked as the pippins in Mrs Danaher's orchard. He asked the riddle what strange crop is it that

a poor man can harvest from the paddocks of the Greta district the fruit is steel $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick.

The answer were the mouldboards of the farmer's ploughs.

So while the traitor Sherritt led Hare & Nicolson to the empty hut on the Bogong High Plains our mate Joe Byrne come with us back down to Greta he were sworn loyal till the death but I seen a better future now and there were no death involved.

As soon as we was in our home district I ordered Steve & Dan bring in the crop of steel that may sound easy if you never wandered round a $\frac{1}{2}$ ploughed paddock on a rainy night. Thus did the dragon collect its scales each morning more iron were lying in the muddy shallows of the Eleven Mile Creek.

On my mother's own selection I made the templates for the 1st ironclad suit I used fresh peeled stringybark just as women use the paper for a dress. I promised Joe he would not die and I made the 1st template to protect his sturdy body cutting the sheets of bark to allow his big arms play then I fashioned a flange to give protection at the shoulder.

This won't never work said he.

Joe were sick so I didnt mind his complaints I used a lump of charcoal like a tailor uses chalk I traced the shape of a mouldboard it would take 2 cultivators to make the chestplate 2 more for the back. For his head I made a fort like the turret of the Monitor I made a thin crack so he might observe the destruction of his enemy no gun could hurt his tortured heart.

By the time this 1st exemplar had been decided we had 7 mouldboards collected so the girls loaded 6 cwt. of charcoal onto a dray then delivered it behind Bald Hills. Here we set up our forge beside a little creek for anvil needing no more than the river gum we lay across the stream its cool water washing the timber all the while.

The British Empire has steam & factories & thousands come to toil each day carrying out its orders it cannot imagine what we colonials have in store. We required no steam only a heavy hammer a chisel a punch also 3 pr. of tongs which we easily forged ourselves. The most difficult element were the labour it required all 4 of us and a full day from dawn to dusk. It were hot as Hell & twice as thirsty our bare arms and chests was tortured

by pinprick burns each time we hammered the scale flew up as thick as grasshoppers and when day's end come we was freckled with small wounds but we had achieved our 1st Monitor and while the crows squalled & the parrots looped their lacy flight across the brittle paddocks we lowered 1 cwt. of wet steel onto Joe's shoulders.

It won't work he said but I placed the helmet on his head and it fit him perfectly.

The 3 of us stood back in silent veneration as the Soldier of Future Time turned his back to walk with steady tread there were a slight squeak from the cockplate swinging from its wires did ever such machine of war tread upon the earth before? It marched slowly & silently to the rise a mighty black shadow painted against the pale evening sky we seen its inky arm rise & point directly at his head.

There were a powder flash a loud retort the turret jolted sideways by the blow. Joe Byrne had shot himself in the head he fell onto his knees and as we run up the hill his hands lifted the helmet and in the last cold light I could see his eyes.

Shutup he said.

I stood before him speechless.

Shutup he said shutup it works I grant you.

Joe were a very tough nut but not the only one next day I ordered Maggie and Kate to bring additional recruits. The British Empire had supplied me with no shortage of candidates these was men who had had their leases denied for no other crime than being our friends men forced to plant wheat then ruined by the rust men mangled upon the triangle of Van Diemen's Land men with sons in gaol men who witnessed their hard won land taken up by squatters men perjured against and falsely gaoled men weary of constant impounding on & on each day without relent. Maggie & Kate led these troops to secret places and once they had swore their oath upon my Bible we showed them why they need no longer tremble before the law. We wasnt men with pikes no more and would not repeat the tragedies of Vinegar Hill or the Eureka Stockade.

Throughout the spring & summer certain farmers did secretly construct their ironclads in the quiet gullies of the North East you might

hear the lyre bird imitating the ching ching ching of the hammer striking blows. Them suits was made and buried in the soil awaiting resurrection.

I wished only to be a citizen I had tried to speak but the mongrels stole my tongue when I asked for justice they give me none. In the autumn of 1880 I were forced to compose the following coffin letter 7 of us sat round a rough table we manufactured 60 copies which Maggie and Kate mailed to farmers and others including Aaron Sherritt.

ORDER EFFECTIVE NORTH EASTERN VICTORIA IN THE TERRITORY BORDERED BY THE MURRAY RIVER IN THE NORTH ALBURY BRIGHT MOUNT BUFFALO AND MANSFIELD TO THE EAST THE GREAT DIVIDING RANGE TO THE SOUTH WESTERN BOUNDARY MADE BY THE ONE JOINING ECHUCA AND SEYMOUR.

Any person residing in the above territory who aids or harbours or assists the police in any way whatever or employs any person whom they know to be a detective or cad also those who would be so depraved as to take blood money will be outlawed and declared unfit to be allowed human burial. Their property will be either consumed or confiscated and them and all belonging to them exterminated off the face of the earth. The enemy I cannot catch myself I will give a payable reward for. I wish them men who joined the Stock Protection Society to withdraw their money and give as much more to the widows and orphans and poor of Greta district where I spent and will spend again many a happy day fearless free and bold.

I give fair warning to all those who has reason to fear me to sell out and give £10 out of every £100 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 depart forever. 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 of New South Wales.

I DO NOT WISH TO GIVE THE ORDER FULL FORCE WITHOUT GIVING TIMELY WARNING BUT I AM A WIDOW'S SON OUTLAWED AND MUST BE OBEYED.

EDWARD KELLY

We all assisted in making fair copies of the letters but it were only Steve who drew each coffin very particular it were a well honed skill of his.

Sometimes he added a picture of a bleeding knife sometimes a skull & skeleton.

Joe Byrne however would have none of these things added to Aaron Sherritt's letter he took it away by himself and I cannot know what he added exactly but when he were finished I seen he covered the whole other side he had a lovely hand he were famous for it even as a child. Joe & Aaron was friends from earliest time they sat side by side in desks at the Woolshed School they fought Chinamen together they duffed cattle they was locked in cells they lain together by the campfire like dogs under the vast & ancient sky. I observed how carefully he blotted the words and how finely he addressed the envelope but never read them words and only after it were posted did I get any inkling of the threat contained therein.

Aaron will leave now said Joe you mark my words.

O I don't think so.

O yairs he aint stupid I have told him we will be compelled to kill him if he don't depart.

Several weeks passed then Dan come back into camp one night he announced he had intelligence that Aaron were sleeping in the caves above Joe's mother's hut he were sharing quarters with a party of police.

Well I'll be damned said Joe he must not of received my letter.

O he cannot shutup about your letter everyone in the Woolshed Valley can recite it word for word.

Then why aint he departed?

When Dan answered I am sure he spoke the truth it is not the kind of thing he would make up.

Aaron says he plans to shoot you and eff you before your body has grown cold.

Then he is a dead man said Joe Byrne he has just decided.

PARCEL 13

His life at 26 years of age

7 PAGES (12" X 14" APPROX.) ALL BEING THE REVERSE SIDE OF ADVERTISING FLIERS FOR A HORSE AUCTION HELD BY GEO. FISHER & SONS, WANGARATTA, ON 7 MAY 1880. ACIDIC PAPER NOW IN VERY FRAGILE CONDITION. ENTIRELY IN LEAD PENCIL. THE SMALL HAND BETRAYING SOME URGENCY IN COMPOSITION, BUT THIS PARCEL IS MOST REMARKABLE FOR THE TWO ROUGHLY EXCISED PAGES OF HENRYV ATTACHED BY RUSTY PINS TO PAGES 6 AND 7.

A frank account of the murder of Aaron Sherritt and Kelly's correct assumption that the police would respond post haste. Details concerning the occupation of Mrs Jones' hotel at Glenrowan and the kidnapping of the schoolteacher Curnow. On page 7 the manuscript is abruptly terminated.

I did not wish Aaron Sherritt's death though he were a traitor he would of seen me hanged as soon as look at me. For Joe Byrne it were a different matter the root were deep & violent I cd. no more touch it than his beating heart.

On a winter's night the moon were full a red haired German by the name Anton Wick come walking home a 1/2 mi. from Sherritt's hut he were apprehended by 2 large men they was Joe Byrne & Dan Kelly their chests much increased in girth by the heavy armour hidden underneath their oilskin coats. Wick knew Joe all his life but he were of alarming size now his face were painted black he had become a machine of war. Dan Kelly put the bracelet on Wick ordering him to come & knock on Sherritt's door.

Wick warned there was police inside the hut.

We do not give an eff were the reply.

Wick stumbled along the track his hands behind his back Joe Byrne said nothing Dan knocked upon the door.

Its Wick open up.

What do you want?

I am lost. This were a weak excuse as Wick lived so close he could of seen his hut from Aaron's roof.

You silly mongrel. Aaron Sherritt come into the night and saw the twin holes of the shotgun his oldest friend were holding in his hand.

Who else is there he called and while them brave policemen cowered beneath the bed Aaron heard the small cry issue from Joe's lips it was very quiet an exhalation the noise a boy will make when caned upon the hand. It were almost the last thing he heard.

Moonlight shone on the centaurs Dan Kelly & Joe Byrne their iron helmets were strapped to their saddles as they galloped down the centre

of the public road straight through the Beechworth Chinese Camp where Joe purchased a little of what he fancied it looked like nothing more than waxy brown plum jam.

The same cold moonlight shone in the bush behind Glenrowan where me & Steve Hart was helping each other into our ironclad suits it also shone in Marvellous Melbourne flooding through the high window of my mother's cell.

At Domain Road the bare branches of the English trees made shadows thin as handwriting upon the Commissioner's walls. This historic night were so bright even if Commissioner Standish had extinguished every lamp nothing could escape my intelligence he were my creature now I knew his heathen rug his billiards table I knew the smell & appearance of his friends and when the Constable come knocking on the Commissioner's door I did not have to be there to know what the message said.

The Kellys have struck they murdered Aaron Sherritt our informer.

The Commissioner thought he were the servant of Her Majesty the Queen but he were my puppet on a string he ordered the Special Train as I desired he summoned the black trackers and called for Hare & Nicolson who thought themselves famous as the capturers of Harry Power they never imagined they would be captives in a drama devised by me.

At about the hour the police horses was brought from Richmond Depot to the railway yards me & Steve Hart was attending to our stratagem at the township of Glenrowan we was rousing the plate layers James Reardon & Dennis Sullivan from their tents beside the line.

I informed them that through abuse & tyranny the police had forfeited the right to the land also therefore the rails upon it. We escorted them along the track and through the Gap and where the rail curved we ordered them to remove 2 lengths of rail which they done with great reluctance. The rails was thrown down the steep embankment with 9 red gum sleepers still attached.

Last night I seen my dear old mother in a dream who knows how such things happen her cell were so clear I could of drawn a map there was 2 grey prison blankets folded neatly on the shelf a Bible and prayer

book on a rickety white table. Mother sat waiting for me on her crib her palliasse were folded as required.

You come for me she said yes I said they are forced to give you up. I seen how she had suffered this last year her eyes had retreated her lips was eaten from within her hands so large & knotted you could see her nerves like baling twine beneath her glassy skin. I see Mr Irving finally made you the monitor she smiled. Looking down at myself I seen the ink on my hands & up my arms it were bleeding down my shirt & moleskins.

I spilled it I said tho I did not remember having done so I were surprised that I must be back at Avenel Common School. You put that sash on she said do you hear me. It were 7 ft. long & fringed with gold I had nothing to be ashamed of Mother and me walked side by side along the catwalk I looked down to the ground floor where there were much smoke and destruction many policemen was lying dead.

The front gate of Melbourne Gaol were shattered and in its opening were that ironclad Monitor its 11 in. gun pointing up the nave of the prison but the sea were lapping across my boots all Russell Street were washed away.

Beside the railway line at Glenrowan is a little pub run by Mrs Jones it is in her best room where I now sit on the eve of battle. Our ironclads is stacked against the wall 3 of them in burnished metal the 4th is Steve Hart's painted with black & orange flowers in a pattern of his own invention. The walls are whitewashed hessian the ceiling calico the table I write on is made from cedar it wd. suit Napoleon himself.

Beyond a thin partition is my hostages most of them will be revealed tomorrow as my volunteers. There is another category of prisoner I refer to Police Constable Bracken & Stationmaster Stanistreet they have that self righteous look that is common in men like warders who will never be fined or imprisoned or dismissed from their positions in the colony. I were at the railway crossing on Saturday afternoon when a 3rd hostage come towards me. He didnt know yet he were a hostage but he were identifiable as such from a great distance with his darting eyes and his beard so soft & blond it wd. be better on the head of a doll.

And you must be the schoolmaster said I when he drew his buggy up beside me at the railway gates.

How did you know:

O I wd. recognise you anywhere I thought you are that prim & superior fellow my mother must stand before in her threadbare dress she must beg to have me educated.

He knew me without introduction I could see he were fascinated to look so close into my eyes. He descended willingly from his sulky he were a cripple he walked with his heel high when he seen me looking at his one thick boot he held my gaze.

My name is Curnow said he his pale blue eyes was shining like a girl's.

In his left hand he were carrying a thick book I took it from him and seen it were the plays of Shakespeare.

Do you object to a man reading he asked.

O I sometimes read a book myself said I then asked him were this one any good.

O yes he laughed as if I wd. never know what of I spoke I were an oaf in muddy boots tracking across some oriental rug. O yes it is very good I cd. of slapped him for his insolence instead I ordered Dan escort him into custody at Mrs Jones' hotel.

Later I were back here in my quarters writing as quickly as I cd. there were a knock upon the door and lo it were the little cripple with his book I told him he might enter. His big bright eyes looked everywhere about him taking in the ironclads but it were my inkwell that he lingered on the most.

I see I interrupt you at your labours.

His face were so strange & proud his head too large upon his narrow shoulders where it wobbled side to side as though all his mighty thoughts was a weight too great to carry.

I asked which play he were reading.

It is about an English King he said but as he spoke he looked at all my papers spread across the desk and he were almost cross eyed with curiosity as if he seen a dog standing on his hind legs and talking.

Mr Kelly you give the appearance of an author.

I did not answer it werent his business.

He craned his neck towards me. Is it a history you write?

I said THE ARGUS called me a clever ignoramus I were sure a schoolteacher would hold the same opinion.

Mr Kelly said he there is a novel called LORNA DOONE I don't suppose you know it.

The name jolted me back to the Killawarra sawmill and that gift from Joe Byrne. Shutup and listen he had said.

I told the teacher I read it twice and wd. of read it a 3rd time but my copy turned to mush when we crossed the Ovens River.

I read a lot about you Mr Kelly but I never heard you was a scholar. Let me remind you how LORNA DOONE sets out. Then the strange little cove balanced himself on his crippled crooked legs and held his book of Shakespeare across his heart and closed his eyes and from his great head he dragged out the following words of R.D. Blackmore. AND THEY WHAT LIGHT upon this book should bear in mind not only that I write to clear our parish from ill fame but also that I am nothing more than a plain unlettered man not read in foreign languages as a gentleman might be nor gifted with long words save what I have won from the Bible or master William Shakespeare whom in the face of common opinion I do value highly.

Curnow opened his eyes and smiled at me.

IN SHORT he quoted I am an ignoramus but pretty well for a yeoman.

Then speaking in a more normal voice he said Mr Kelly it is no bad thing to be an ignoramus for if Mr Blackmore is an ignoramus then you and I wd. wish to be one too. And at this the fellow folded his big white hands in front of him and shifted the weight of his head to the other side of his shoulder.

Let me read your history Mr Kelly he begged.

It is too rough.

It is history Mr Kelly it should always be a little rough that way we know it is the truth. He continued in this vein and finally I relented of a page. It were many a long year since I stood before a schoolteacher & even tho I had 3 guns stuck in my belt & had the power to take away his life it were v. queer. He read the page then lay it gently upon the table and I waited in some temper for his judgment.

It is very damned good said he.

It is rough I know.

It is most bracing & engaging given the smallest of improvements it could be made into something no Professor would ever think to criticise.

I said I knew the fault were with the parsing.

Parsing pah cried he it is a simple matter if you let me assist.

We do not have the time mate.

It would take no time Mr Kelly no time at all.

There's 500 adjectival pages.

I could do it in a night said he if I were in my house with my books about me.

Then Joe Byrne entered & I ordered the teacher to depart Joe asked what the eff I were doing talking to that fizgig for he had taken a fierce set against him from the start.

O he is for us anyway he is a cripple he can't do us no harm.

Jesus Ned aint you the one who give his copy to that cow in Jerilderie said he & in the lantern light I seen his awful eyes.

You need another pipe old man?

No and your brother is drinking too much already he said everyone is adjectival boozing what will happen if the train comes now? Its too late I can feel something has gone wrong.

Another knock upon the door it were that schoolteacher once more he put his finger to his lip & hopped towards me.

Situation you should know Mr Kelly he whispered.

Eff off you spy said Joe thrusting his Webley in his soft white neck.

The teacher turned his velvety eyes upon me I ordered Joe withdraw his weapon then Curnow held a finger to his pretty lips. Mr Stanistreet has a gun. I fear he will use it on you.

Thus did the strange little insect prove his friendship tho Joe Byrne's hard & suspicious cast of mind werent bending. I said eff off he said and pushed our informant out into the bar returning alone in a moment with a new pistol in his hand. So were the stationmaster's Colt confiscated but Joe give the teacher no credit. He told me for my information that his ironclad were no good it already cut & blistered him upon the horse he were damned if he wd. fight in it for he couldnt see to shoot straight.

Then so help me God poor old Joe begun to weep he said it were wrong to murder he wd. go to Hell for certain.

Suddenly I noticed it were v. quiet out in the bar they was listening. Tapping my finger to my lip I whispered the hostages should be encouraged to perform some entertainments.

Joe blew his nose and turned away. As I walked out into the bar he were staring out the window his own face looked back at him its black eyes full of dark & fearful imaginings.

As Mr Zinke wd. say time is of the essence daughter please excuse this scrawl.

The hop legged teacher call'd I shd. let him visit his home to fetch his special shoes he cd. not dance w/out them.

I joked that I wd. never let him escape so easy.

O I do not wish to miss this night he sd. then he put down his book & come to sit beside me. He were handsome & repulsive I cd. not take my eyes off him.

He — Most people think the police have it coming to them.

Me — You are a v. uncommon schoolteacher Mr Curnow.

He — O I'm sure you know my opinions are quite usual in the colony.

I let him off the dancing but once he propped his twisted self against the bar I order'd all shd. sing a song including himself.

1st Mrs Jones' little boy sang Colleen Das Cruitha Na Mo & then Steve sang The Rising of the Moon & then the voices join'd 1 x 1 even our volunteers on the hills cd. hear them as they watch'd the shining railway line.

Next I commanded the teacher he must stand & sing a song to class. He were such a proud strange creature every eye went to him he hobbled to the centre of the room standing with his hip juttet queerly out to hold his big book steady.

He — I have no song.

The people — Sing sing.

He — But here is a little something suitable for the occasion.

To my horror he ripped 2 pages from his lovely book & then declaimed

from them aloud he were a little milksop but when he recited he were reveal'd to be pure currency.

Here is the very words he spoke I pin them to the page as tore directly from his book.

he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse.
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a' tiptoe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall see this day, and live old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say, "Tomorrow is Saint Crispian."
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say, "These wounds I had on Crispin's day."
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.

I do not know where that deep voice came from for the teacher's normal manner were light as a reed bt. now he read to us his eyes afire his face that of a soldier by my side so did the priests rise up beside the common people in times of yore.

Those what listened sat on floor or table they wasnt well schooled it werent their fault but many cd. not write their names. Their clothes was worn the smell of the pigpen & the cow yd. was both present but their eyes burn'd with the necessary fire.

Constable Bracken were scowling but amongst the other faces there were astonishment for even if the meaning were not clear they cd. see a man of learning might compare us to a King & when in the middle of the poem

Dan & Joe come back in from the night then all eyes went reverently to those armour'd men. Them boys was noble of true Australian coin.

This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon St Crispin's day.

When he finish'd there were a moment of silence & then Mrs Jones let out a great hooray & all the men was clapping & whistling & the little cripple were alight I pick'd him up & sat him on the bar he give me the 2 pages from his book.

He — A souvenir of battle.

Me — But you will do wt. you promised?

He — Regarding your history? O I couldnt do it here Mr Kelly. I wd. need to take it to my house. I wd. need my books about me.

He waits. No time

The Siege at Glenrowan

Thomas Curnow had entered the dragon's lair, the benighted heart of everything rank and ignorant. He had danced with the devil himself and he had flattered him and out-witted him as successfully as the hero of any fairy tale, and now he carried the proof, the trophy, the rank untidy nest of paper beneath his arm. These stained

"manuscripts" were disgusting to his touch and his very skin shrank from their conceit and ignorance and yet he was a man already triumphant. He had ripped out the creature's bloody heart and he would damn him now to hell.

He hurried towards his buggy. His legs would not work, they had never worked. He could not dance or run. He could only hop and

limp and when he did so quickly, like this, it sent shooting pains up into his thighs and buttocks. He hurried through the cold clear eucalyptus night and as he came around the south east corner of Mrs Jones' hotel he overheard his character discussed.

That teacher is a liar, he heard Joe Byrne cry. — He is a ----- fizgig. Let me pink the -----, Ned.

Shut-up, said Dan. I hear a whistle.

Shut-up, said Steve Hart. It's coming.

Dear God, let not the train come yet. Curnow dare not hurry and therefore took his horse and buggy home at a slow and easy pace. There were mobs of men sitting amongst the dark trees, he felt them watch him, felt their dull and resentful unlettered eyes. Dear God, let them not murder him.

At his cottage behind the schoolhouse he tapped on the door but his wife would not withdraw the bolt.

For God's sake, woman, let me in. It's me, your husband.

Once she had admitted him she did not wish to let him go. She clung to him and wept.

No, no, Thomas, they will kill you.

Good Lord, Jean, there are hundreds of policemen on their way to death.

What will happen to me? she cried.

It was then he heard the whistle of the train, and he thrust the rat's nest of papers into her arms. He snatched up a candle and his wife's red scarf.

He ran as best he could, down the gully beside the schoolhouse, then up the embankment to the railway line which had always been there waiting for him. And there it was, the head-lamp of the locomotive, the rails gleaming like destiny itself.

The entire colony was cowed by Ned Kelly but Thomas Curnow lit the candle, and while the frail flame flickered in the hostile air he held the red scarf in front of it and he stood in plain clear view of whomever would take his life.

The locomotive loomed, all steam and steel, and as the brakes screamed and the steam gushed he screwed up his face waiting for the bullet in his spine.

What is it? called the guard. The Kellys, he cried.

And he had done it. It was history now. In a few minutes the train would return to the station and disgorge its living cargo of thirty men and twenty horses. He had saved them all. As he hurried home to his cottage the noise at the station was terrific, men shouting, horses rearing and plunging from the vans. Thomas Curnow heard them as he knocked urgently on his cottage door and was admitted by his tearful wife.

☆☆☆

In the confined space of Mrs Jones' best room the members of the Kelly Gang now donned their armour, clanging chests, bumping heads, gouging Mrs Jones' cedar table as they searched for carbines, pistols, ammunition. Of the so-called hostages only one took this easy opportunity to escape and by the time Ned Kelly came back into the bar to extinguish the lanterns and douse the blazing fire, the long-bodied short-legged Constable Bracken was sprinting through the bush. He fell down the ditch and scrambled up the other side, then he hurdled the fence

which separated the shanty from the railway line.

Bracken rushed out of the darkness. — The Kellys, they're here.

He was bug-eyed, unshaven, out of breath. He pushed his way onto the crowded chaotic platform but the Melbourne police did not know him, and they were occupied with unloading fretful horses. No-one would pay him any attention.

Meanwhile Ned Kelly stumbled through a different crowd, inside the darkened shanty. He found the hallway, then the skillion. He emerged into the night air, walking with the slow dream-like gait which was the necessary consequence of the one hundred and twelve pounds of armour hidden beneath his long oilskin coat. His grey mare was waiting and he mounted with some very considerable difficulty and then ambled his horse two hundred yards down the track towards Glenrowan station. The police paid the curious horseman no more attention than they paid to Bracken, whose plaintive voice could be heard amidst the

confusion of men and horses.

Where is the senior officer?
Where is he?

Ned waited until Bracken had finally found Superintendent Hare, then he turned back to the shanty.

☆☆☆

As the police climbed the fence between the hotel and the railway line, three ironclad men awaited them in the dark shadow of the front veranda. The tallest of them, Joe Byrne, raised his rifle.

This ----- armour. I cannot ----- sight my rifle.

Shut-up, they'll hear you.

The police hurried through the open bushland not bothering to take cover. At the point where Superintendent Hare finally paused, there was nothing separating the two parties but a small revolving iron gate. They were thirty yards apart.

Where is Ned? Dan Kelly whispered.

I'm here, boys. The older Kelly took up his place in the centre of the veranda and raised his Colt revolving rifle.

And here's your grandmother with her big iron nose. So saying, he fired.

Immediately, Hare fell.

Good gracious! he cried. I am hit the very first shot!

And then the cold night was suddenly ablaze with gunfire. The gang held back in the deep shadow of the veranda, all except Ned Kelly who stepped out into the moonlight and took steady aim.

Fire away, you ----- dogs. You can't hurt us.

No sooner had he said this than a Martini-Henry bullet smashed through his left arm. He grunted, turned, and then he felt the second shot rip like a saw-blade through his foot. He turned and retreated to the hotel.

☆☆☆

In the first minute the police fired sixty bullets and in the following half hour they held their fire for no man or woman, child or outlaw, and when they did finally relent for a moment the night air was rent with a high dreadful shrieking. They had shot the boy who had sung "Colleen das cruitha na mo".

Thomas Curnow, sitting at his desk four hundred yards away, put his hands across his ears.

What is that? his wife asked.
Nothing, nothing, go to bed.

Oh dear God, what have you done? Those poor hostages.

They're not hostages, said Curnow, they are there because they're with the Kellys. They're as bad as bandits.

But now she was the one trying to go out the door, already tying the red scarf around her neck.

It's a child, she said. Are they shooting children now?

Thomas Curnow limped across the room, and angrily pulling the scarf away from her, he burned her neck and she cried out with pain.

God help you, girl, don't you see, everyone is for the Kellys? You were born here, Jean. Have you no idea what class of person you are dealing with?

You coward, she cried. They're shooting children.

Me a coward? Oh dear Lord, who have I married? A coward is it? Then who saved those policemen while you were weeping in your bed? Go to your room.

What's that?

Shut the curtain, it is a Chinese rocket. It is some kind of signal from the Kellys. You had better

pray there are enough police to win the day.

Another fusillade echoed round the valley and she came to him and took his hands.

Oh Tom, what have you done?
What I have done, he said, is become a hero.

☆☆☆

For a day and night the shanty had been a lively jolly place, but it was not suitable as a fortress. The outer walls were one board thick, the inner ones no more than paper and hessian, so now the hotel offered no more protection than a Sunday dress. The bullets penetrated so easily and so often that those inside could do no more than lie upon the floor and pray.

When Ned Kelly limped back inside it was pitch black and the air was sour with cold wet smoke. The air was rent with the screams of young Jack Jones. Hell itself could not be worse.

Ned, stop them. They're murdering us!

I will.

He walked once more to the front door and was greeted with twenty rounds.

I'm hit, cried a voice in the back room. God save us all.

Jack Jones shrieked, the bullet had broken his hip bone and penetrated deep into his gut. A man pushed forward in the dark, the howling boy in his arms.

Get out, Kelly, damn you, let me through.

Ned Kelly stepped aside.

It was the labourer, McHugh, and he stood in the open door holding a white handkerchief in his left hand while he grasped the injured child in his right.

Don't fire, you mongrels, it's a child.

Help me, cried Jack Jones.

The place is full of women and children! Stop firing!

There was one more shot but then silence, and McHugh walked out the door. Mrs Jones followed. Immediately two shots rang out and she slumped to her knees, her hand to her head.

I'm shot! she cried.

But it was only a graze, and she was able to crawl back along the floor and lie behind her bar and there she remained, whimpering for her child.

No-one spoke to Ned Kelly in

this time but he did not need to have his responsibility pointed out. He could not protect these people against the police, nor could he protect himself. It seemed there was no machine ever invented that could protect these people from the forces God had placed upon the earth.

Is that you, Ned? cried a voice from the hallway.

Is that you, Joe? Come here.

Come here be damned. What are you doing there?

Come here and load my rifle. I'm cooked.

So am I. Dear God, I think my leg is broken.

As Ned walked towards the voice he could feel the blood pooling in his boot.

Leg be damned, Joe, you've got the use of your arms. Come with me and load my rifle, come on, load for me! I'll pink the -----! Hare is finished. We'll soon finish the rest.

We've done these poor ----- an awful harm.

Well, we ain't lost yet.

Joe Byrne did not answer.

Where are you? Ned began to kneel and then his leg collapsed,

he fell heavily. Immediately he began to crawl forward, scraping the heavy steel cock-plate noisily along the floor. — Here, load my rifle. Joe?

With his good right hand he found Joe Byrne's hand but it was limp and bloody as a freshly skinned beast.

Joe?

He pulled himself closer and propped himself against the wall. In the darkness he located his friend's nose and mouth, then placed his hand across them. The beard was soft and wet, the lips were warm against the palm but all that fretful breath was still.

Oh Joe, I'm so sorry, old man.

Another hail of bullets ripped through the dark hotel, splintering wood and breaking glass and causing the hostages to raise their voices in shouts of anger.

Shoot them, Ned. Stop the -----!

I will, I will.

He wrenched himself violently to his feet and stumbled back along the hallway into the bar.

Dan? Steve?

He opened the door to the front room where he had, a short time

before, confidently laboured on his history. At that time he would see his child again. At that time he would release his mother. At that time these people would occupy their own land without fear or favour, but now the world was a filthy mire and mess.

Dan?

They're gone, said a voice in the darkness.

Not shot?

Your brother and his mate have left us. You must stop them cops, mate, you have to stop them now for they are murdering us.

I will.

He stumbled out the back door and into the early dawn.

Intending to draw the police fire onto himself, he mounted his horse, although with considerable difficulty. As he rode down the police flank, he heard gunfire from the front veranda. He twisted painfully in the saddle and then he realised Dan had not left at all. He and Steve Hart were standing side by side on the veranda of the shanty blazing wildly at their foes.

He had no strength. His left arm was useless. He began to swing down out of the stirrup but

fell hard onto the ground. He walked painfully towards his brother, no longer deigning to take cover or hide himself. He hammered the butt of his revolver against his chest to let Dan hear him coming to the rescue.

I am the ----- Monitor, my boys.

But he was not the Monitor, he was a man of skin and shattered bone with blood squelching in his boot. The Martini-Henry bullets slammed against him and he was jolted and jarred, his head slammed sideways, yet he would not stop.

You shoot children, you ----- dogs. You can't shoot me.

He fired, but he could not see to aim. He roared and raised his revolver and struck it against his chest, the blows ringing with the distinctiveness of a blacksmith's hammer in the morning air.

Dan! Come with me, Dan. I am the ----- Monitor.

But between him and Dan there was a small round policeman in a tweed hat standing quietly beside a tree. It was plump little toads like him who had fed off the Kellys for ever. He might as well

have been Hall or Flood or Fitzpatrick, they had become the same.

Ned fired. Then the man dropped on one knee, raised his rifle and fired two shots in quick succession.

Ned never heard the rifle fire but the first blow hit his right leg and he was on the ground before he felt the deeper sharper pain of the second hit.

My legs, you mongrel!

And then they were on him like a pack of dingoes. They ripped him, kicked him, cried that they would shoot him dead, and even while their boots thudded on his armoured chest he saw his little brother standing on the veranda. He was a Kelly, he would never run.

☆☆☆

Ned Kelly would be spared the sight of Dan's empty useless armour which was raked from the ashes of Jones Hotel on Monday afternoon. It was his sisters, Kate and Maggie, who would be left to fight the police for possession of the two black and bubbled bodies which had been found lying side by side in the burnt-out hotel.

"The scene at Greta, when the charred remains of Hart and Dan Kelly were carried by their friends, was perfectly indescribable," reported *The Benalla Ensign*. "The people seemed to flock from the gum trees. They were some of the worst-looking people that I ever saw in all my life."

☆☆☆

Thomas Curnow, meanwhile, was escorted by six policemen directly from his cottage to the Special Train and from there he was taken to Melbourne, where government protection was provided him and his wife for four more months. This was curious treatment for a hero, and he was called a hero more than once, although less frequently and less enthusiastically than he might have reasonably expected.

If this lack of lasting recognition disappointed him, he never revealed it directly, although the

Twelve page pamphlet in the collection of the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Contains elements in common with the handwritten account in the Melbourne Library (V.L. 10453). The author identified solely by the initials S.C. Printer: Thomas Warriner & Sons, Melbourne, 1955, the year following Thomas Curnow's death.

continuing, ever-growing adoration of the Kelly Gang could always engage his passions.

What is it about we Australians, eh? he demanded. What is wrong with us? Do we not have a Jefferson? A Disraeli? Might not we find someone better to admire than a horse-thief and a murderer? Must we always make such an embarrassing spectacle of ourselves?

In private, his relationship with Ned Kelly was more complicated, and the souvenir he carried from Glenrowan seems to have made its own private demands upon his sympathy. The evidence provided by the manuscript suggests that in the years after the Siege of Glenrowan he continued to labour obsessively over the construction of the dead man's sentences, and it was he who made those small grey pencil marks with which the original manuscript is decorated.

Death of Edward Kelly

Colonel Rede, the Sheriff for the Central Bailiwick, was attended by Mr Ellis, the Under-Sheriff, and presented himself at the door of the condemned cell punctually at 10 o'clock to demand the body of Edward Kelly in order to carry out the awful sentence of death. Mr. Castieau, the Governor of Melbourne Gaol, had some little time previously visited the prisoner, and seen his irons knocked off; and the necessary warrant being presented by the Sheriff, he tapped at the door, and the prisoner was made acquainted with the fearful fact that his last hour had arrived. All this time Upjohn, the hangman, who was officiating in this horrible capacity for the first time, had remained unseen; but upon the door of Kelly's cell being opened, the signal was given and he emerged from the condemned cell opposite, now occupied by his first victim. He stepped across the scaffold quietly and, as he did so, quietly turned his head and looked down upon the spectators, revealing a fearfully repulsive countenance.

The hangman is an old man about 70 years of age, but

broad-shouldered and burly. As he was serving a sentence when he volunteered for this dreadful office, and as that sentence is still unexpired, he is closely shaved and cropped, and wears the prison dress. Thick bristles of a pure white stick up all over his crown and provide him a ghastly appearance. He has heavy features altogether, the nose perhaps being the most striking and ugly.

As this was Upjohn's first attempt at hanging, Dr Barker was present alongside the drop, to see that the knot was placed in the right position. Upjohn disappeared into the condemned cell, and proceeded to pinion Kelly with a strong broad leather belt. The prisoner, however, remarked, "You need not pinion me," but was, of course, told that it was indispensable.

Preceded by the crucifix, which was held up before him by the officiating priests, Kelly was then led onto the platform. He had not been shaved or cropped, but was in prison clothes. He seemed calm and collected, but paler than usual, although this effect might have been produced by the white cap

placed over his head, but not yet drawn down over his face. As he stepped on the drop, he remarked in a low tone, "Such is life".

The hangman then proceeded to adjust the rope, the Deans in the meantime reading the prayer proper to the Catholic Church on such occasions. The prisoner winced slightly at the first touch of the rope, but quickly recovered himself and moved his head in order to facilitate the work of Upjohn in fixing the knot properly. No sooner was the knot fixed than, without the prisoner being afforded a chance of saying anything more, the signal was given; and the hangman, pulling down the cap, stepped back and, withdrawing the bolt, had done his work.

At the same instant, the mortal remains of Ned Kelly were swinging some eight feet below where he had been previously

standing. At first it appeared as if death had been instantaneous, for there was for a second or two only the usual shudder that passes through the frame of hanged men; but then the legs were drawn up for some distance, and then fell suddenly again. This movement was repeated several times, but finally all motion ceased, and at the end of four minutes all was over, and Edward Kelly had gone to a higher tribunal to answer for his faults and crimes. The body was allowed to remain hanging the usual time, and the formal inquest was afterwards held. The outlaw had requested that his mother might be released from Melbourne Gaol and his body handed over for burial in consecrated ground. Neither of these requests were granted, and the remains were buried within the precincts of the gaol.

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Carey, Peter 1943—

NOVELS

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