

10. FIERY RECKONINGS



Mountain devil (Lambertia formosa)

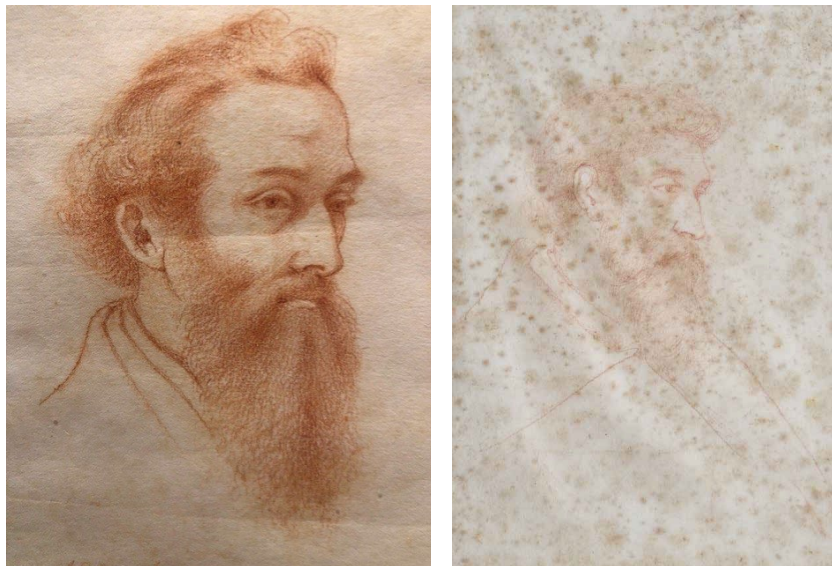
There was a terrible bushfire on the North Shore in the summer of 1850. References to the ‘Fire King’ and the crowds which gathered at the Quay to watch the blaze come from the newspaper coverage, which also described it as the worst fire to afflict the colony thus far. The papers did engage in a lengthy debate about the causes of the fire. I do not know how Aesi and Martha were affected but the details of the destruction of other houses and farms come from newspaper accounts. I drew upon my own experiences of growing up in the Yarra Valley as well as contemporary accounts of bushfires which were raging through NSW at the time I was writing this chapter in late 2019. I was living around the Eastern Beaches of Sydney at this period, and during my daily walks on the beach was shocked to encounter charred logs wash up on the beach as well as a shore lined with grey ash for weeks afterwards.

I don’t know the names of the Ironsides’ servants, but as Hannah was the name of the servant employed by the St Rivers in *Jane Eyre*, and was reluctant to let Jane into the cottage but then took care of her, I have used this to subtly signal the well-known ambivalence of domestic servants within the Australian context. I named Obediah after Obed West, a Sussex farmer who was transported in 1801 and

had a son of the same name who went onto write ‘Reflections on Old Sydney & Colonial Days’, which includes details about Mary and John Redman, Aesi’s grandparents. In Obed’s account of ‘Old Sydney’, he recalls Redman, the town gaoler, was the brother of James Redman, and both men were marines who went off to Norfolk Island for a spell before James returned to England with the cantankerous Major Ross and John Redman, returned to Sydney, to try his luck, first as a landowner and then as part of the Nights watch.

There are two surviving portraits by Aesi which may be sketches of James Ironside. One appears to be dated 1860, rather than 1850, and is still in the possession of the Ironside Family. The other, badly damaged image, has also been composed with red crayon and is held in a private collection associated with the Redman Family, suggesting it probably would have returned to Sydney in the Ironsides’ trunk in 1870, after the death of both women. For some time, I assumed the date on this portrait was 1850 and consequently constructed the scene in which Aesi produced this portrait of her father while he is visiting Burton Lodge in 1850 after the bushfire. Such a visit is possible given the newspaper records confirm the lease was in his name, and, as the property belonged to Sir Burton, the judge who presided over the second Myall Creek trial, the respectable auctioneer would no doubt have been concerned about his family, his reputation as well as any costs associated with property damage. This well-preserved sketch (below left) has been handed down through the Ironside Family descendants from Aesi’s stepbrother, Frederick J Ironside, who family members recall, hung it above his bed. Although it is commonly thought to be a sketch of James Ironside, there are several anomalies which challenge this. Firstly, if the date is 1860, when Aesi was experimenting with red crayon, as per her sketches of the Wentworth daughters, also dated 1860, we know Aesi was in Rome. As there is no record of James Ironside leaving the colonies at this period, let alone visiting his wife and daughter abroad, it seems unlikely Aesi composed this work from an actual sitting. It is, however, possible that she drew upon the less complete sketch (below right) to compose a more complete work which she then sent home to her father. Alternatively, this sketch may be of James’ brother, John Ironside, who lived in Edinburgh and different parts of

Perthshire between the 1820s and 1860s. There certainly is a fleeting reference to Aesi and Martha visiting ‘her uncle in Scotland’ in the 1860s. If this work depicts John Ironside, it is possible that Aesi or even John, then sent it to James Ironside in Sydney as a gift. If so, the two images may, in fact, not depict the same person but the two Ironside brothers, James and John Ironside. A letter from James to John dated 24 August 1825, written by James during his time in Van Diemen’s Land suggests the two brothers were close. The two men were the sons of George Ironside (1771-1829) and Helen Walker (1774-1829) and grew up in the small village of King Edward Town in Aberdeenshire. James’ 1825 letter suggests he was disappointed with Hobart, with its abundance of bushrangers and sheep stealing and people’ from ‘Banff and Aberdeenshire’.



One of two portraits Adelaide made of her father, the Scottish émigré James Ironside. A broker and auctioneer, James began a new family with a free woman named Ellen Oke after separating from Martha. (Ironside family collection)

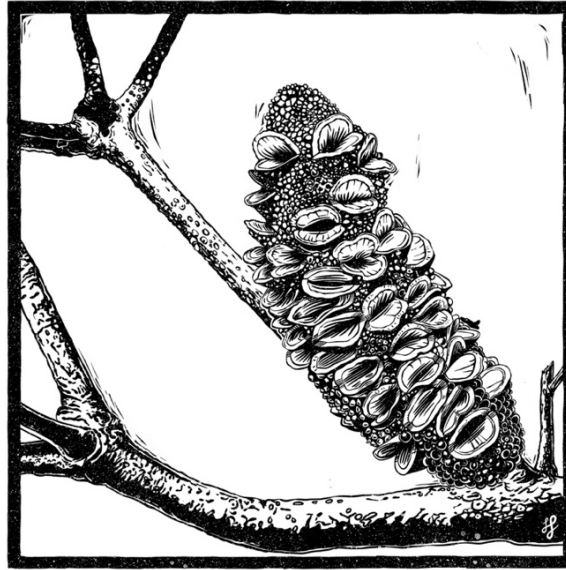
All details relating to the return of Dr Lang and his declarations are taken from newspaper sources, his prolific writing and two biographies. My understanding of the native-born and their patriotic attitudes is gleaned from two decades of research commencing with my Masters thesis on the explorer, Hamilton Hume, followed by my PhD thesis. The book I produced from this, *The Convict’s Daughter*,

was concerned with another native-born contemporary of Adelaide's named Mary Ann Gill. I have also drawn on the scholarship of John Molony, Portia Robinson, Ben Jones, and others.

<p style="text-align: center;">THE RECENT BUSH FIRES.</p> <p>WE are not, to-day, about to furnish the history of these late occurrences. We are not intending to philosophize upon atmospheric or meteorological phenomena. We propose scarcely to throw out a speculation or a conjecture as to the probability of the origin of Bush Fires, further than suits our purpose. We leave the extraordinary fact, as to the coincidence of large tracts of country being simultaneously affected by conflagration, at very distant points of latitude and longitude, to those who have more leisure than ourselves for the interrogation of nature. Whether it be the stockman's pipe, or the bullock-dray fire, or the wilful incendiarism of kangaroo-hunting aborigines, or whether it be the fragments of glass bottles, which act as so many lenses, that are assumed as the cause why the bush is frequently exposed to the destructive element, is beside our object.</p> <p>We wish rather to say a word or two on the effects than on the causes of these calamities; on the moral rather than on the physical state of the question, and on some points connected with it, which are apt to be left out of consideration by the observer.</p> <p>It is but a week or two ago, that the inhabitants of this city were alarmed or gratified by the awful but brilliant display which was exhibited to them by the blazing heights of the North Shore. Numbers of its denizens called out of their houses to see the fire, doubtless retired to them, without a thought upon the wretchedness which that brilliant and beautiful scene produced. They regarded it, perhaps, as they would the Beal fire of the Celt, or the signals of smugglers or repealers. It was a beautiful spectacle—and that was all. Not a thought, perhaps, arose as to the destruction of life, except as to the hope that the snakes, guanas, and <i>hoc genus omne</i> of reptiles would be swept away; or respecting property, beyond a feeble exclamation of cold and contemptuous pity.</p> <p>Yet it must be acknowledged, that a Bush Fire is, if a common, not an unmeaning spectacle. It deals in death and desolation, and foreshadows something infinitely worse, when this "round globe which we inhabit" will be swallowed up in the billows of the universal food of fire.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dies illa! dies illa! Sæcūm fervet in favilla!</p> <p>The homestead, rich in culture; the orchard, glowing with the promise of future fruitage; the rustic dwelling; the horse; the cow; the faithful prisoner watching in his kennel; these are the victims on which the Fire king fastens his insatiable grasp. And where beneath the rays of the morning sun all was full of life, and gladness, and joy, ere the curtain of night has fallen upon the landscape, there is nothing but gloom, and blackness, and smoke, and the calcined trunk or the withered leaves of the forest.</p> <p>Such a contrast has been recently presented to the eye of the visitor, within a few miles of the crowded streets and well-furnished dwellings of the metropolis. And every incident alluded to above may be seen in all its fearful reality.</p> <p>We would moralize a little thereon.</p> <p>In looking over the ground which was the scene of destruction, we came to certain spots where the fire had been so fierce that nothing remained to attest the former existence of a dwelling but the heaps of charcoal, the oxydized nails, the molten glass, the half-blistered earthenware, the curled saw, or other similar relics of the abode of the civilised labourer. Here and there the half-burned feathers of the domestic fowl—or the roasted body of a horse—or the groaning of the dog that escaped a similar roasting only to be deprived of the use of his feet, attested how fearful the ravages had been.</p> <p>We once saw in the days of our youth the relics of <i>Old Drury</i>; we have trodden among the battle-burned beams of Hougoumont; we have seen the blackened walls and roofs of houses that have withstood the assaults of shell and rocket, but we have never seen anything more frightful than some patches of the bush which we recently visited in order to ascertain the amount of damage.</p> <p>If one of the conjectures hazarded above be allowable, then we may see that the moral of the case is connected with a circumstance, which, when first mentioned by the late Sir GEORGE GIPPS created considerable merriment and offence—viz., the fact that the bush is strewed with bottles; and it may, in many cases, be anything but problematical, that the hiding of a case bottle by a drunken</p>
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Sydney Morning Herald, 9 Feb 1850, 2.

11. THE PHOENIX STIRS



Old man banksia, or wattun'goori in D'harawal (Banksia serrata)

My descriptions of how the environment around Burton Lodge recovered after bushfire are based upon conversations with Mark Schuster, Strategic Bushfire Office, Ku-Ring-gai Council, who helped me familiarize myself with the North Shore and identify many of Adelaide's wildflowers. I also met with horticulturalists at Mt Annan Botanic Garden and the Sydney Botanic Garden. Lang's biographers and the Australian Dictionary of Biography confirm that Stenhouse was his solicitor. Ann Marie Jordan's biography suggests Stenhouse was shy and uncomfortable around women, as well as a great admirer of the writer Thomas De Quincey who he had befriended while managing his estate. De Quincey's famous literary work, *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, was much admired by Stenhouse who recommended it to others in his literary circle, including Deniehy.

Earl Grey, the Colonial Office, and the Legislative Council were well and truly lining up against the doctor and using his notorious financial befuddlements and debts largely associated with his many immigration schemes to discredit his radical vision. For a more in-depth understanding of the Anti-transportation movement and its impact upon colonial politics and identity see Peter Cochrane, Ann

Curthoys and Babette Smith. In 2019, and after considerable scouring and with assistance from archivists at the State Library of NSW and State Records of NSW Rosemary Sempell from the Parliamentary archives I found the ladies petition which Lady Stephens produced to demonstrate the sense of outrage felt by over 9000 'respectable female inhabitants of Sydney'. This was the first female-only petition in Australia, with the exception of a document signed by a handful of women in 1846 also in opposition to the resumption of transportation.

Two of the Lang's sons died while the family were abroad between 1846 to 1850. Mrs. Lang also gave birth to a girl during this time who quickly became the doctor's favourite. There are numerous references from contemporaries which indicate that Martha spoke both Italian and French and ensured that Aesi was likewise proficient in both. Aesi's Commodity Book includes poems she has transcribed from both languages. There are also several references to her learning German from Mathias Goethe, one of Dr Lang's Lutheran recruits who taught at The Australian College during this period.

The Black Dog Hotel on Gloucester Street was said to be Daniel Deniehy's favourite pub and while I can't confirm if he drank the Blast Me Skull Off, that vile concoction of tobacco, spirits laudanum and cayenne pepper was certainly on the menu with the orders that no one should light a pipe nearby, lest the pub explode.

Dr Lang's lectures gave three lectures on the topics of the Australian League, the universal franchise and a 'grand political union of the Australian colonies', the third of which was held at Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts and I have quoted from the newspapers verbatim, but while there was apparently a respectable crowd present, I don't know if this included the Ironsides and Mrs. Lang, but at this period Scottish Presbyterian sermons were known to be long and discursive and encourage a degree of dialogue, in which female congregationalists were sometimes active interlocutors. Given Adelaide's personality, it seems likely that she would have engaged thus. There are only a few clues as to Aesi's attitude to the so-called women's question. The most striking of these is an exchange with

Caroline Clark from the 1860s in which the two women discuss Aesi's ambitions for launching her work in London, during the London International Exhibition of 1862. 'I know', says Aesi to Caroline, that you will 'join with me in working to elevate our sex and "hoist the colours of our dear country"'. The last phrase is in quotation marks because Aesi is quoting her friend's previous letter, which makes a reference to Aesi's banner presentation from 1855. Many female artists from this period, including those Aesi met in Italy and England from 1855 onwards, became involved in women's associational life via artistic and political organisations. As did Aesi, but when she approached then president, Sir Charles Eastlake on the topic it appears to have caused a rift which she then had to repair, at some personal effort.

DR. LANG'S THIRD LECTURE.

Dr. LANG's third lecture was delivered at the School of Arts, on Tuesday night, to a numerous and highly respectable audience, who warmly applauded the lecturer on his appearing in the rooms. He began by stating that it appeared he had been under a slight misapprehension in stating in his last lecture that natives of the Colony could not be appointed to any situation when the emoluments were above £100; that, he understood, referred to situations in the Custom House; and that the Governor could appoint to situations in other departments when the salaries may amount to £150, or perhaps £200 a year. But this correction was quite immaterial to his argument. Why were not all the situations in the Colony open to the ambition of the studious and ingenuous youth of the Colony. That was one of the sources of the great prosperity of America; all their offices were elective and open for the competition of all, including even that of Governor. It was that exclusion from all hope of advancement that condemned to insignificance and failure our educational institutions on the one hand, and to comparative insignificance our Colonial youth on the other: causing them to expend their energies in such time-killing occupations as boat racing, horse racing, and cricketing. (Laughter.) They could not imagine how the minds of young men were acted upon by the influence of example, and if they had here a good example to follow— he meant such as was afforded in free communities— our colonial youth would speedily and faithfully follow it. He would give them an instance in point: a native of this Colony who had been for some time past in Scotland, at one of the Universities of that country, was at college when an event instructing to the youthful mind took place at the University of Glasgow, at which he was a student; it was the election of the Lord Rector. That election takes place on the universal suffrage principle. There were always selected for such occasions, as candidates, men of the highest eminence in their country, who had distinguished themselves either in literature or in politics; and the two on that occasion were both very eminent men: the one, Colonel Muir, member of Parliament, the author of several works on Greek literature; and the other, the Right Honourable Thomas Barington Macaulay, the gentleman whose testimony in favour of the Colonies the lecturer had quoted to his audience on Tuesday evening last. Colonel Muir was the Tory candidate, and engaged the affections of the Professors, and that part of the students who adhered to his views; but the liberal portion of the students were strongly disposed in favour of Macaulay. The election in the University of Glasgow takes place in the same way as has always been the practice at the Universities of Paris and Bologna, all the members being divided into what are called four nations, which are named according to the places of residence of the students, and although all vote indiscriminately it is the nations that decide the election, and not the individual votes. The nation to which students from foreign parts belong is one of the smallest, and therefore one of the most important; and the student to whom he referred was, on the occasion alluded to, in favour of the liberal candidate, Mr. Macaulay; but he happened at the time to be dangerously ill, and confined to his room. A deputation of his fellow students, however, who were also on the same

People's Advocate and NSW Vindicator, 27 Apr
1850, 4.

12. PETITIONS, PARASOLS & PARADE GROUNDS



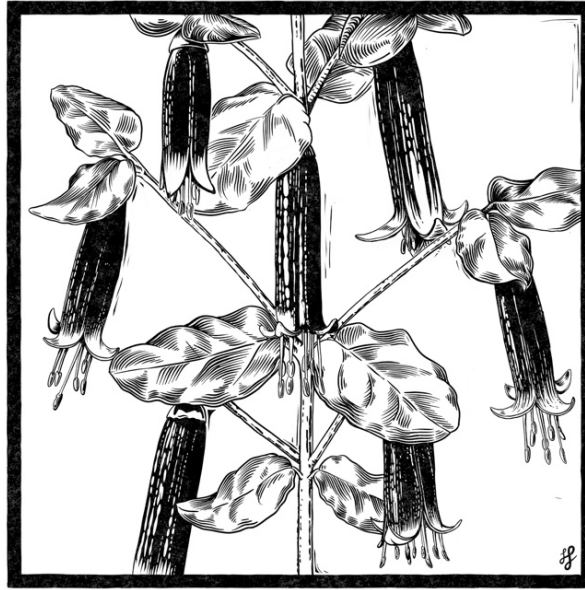
Native rose, or Sydney rose (Boronia serrulata)

This account of the parade ground protest including the weather, is drawn from the newspapers and Peter Cochrane's *Colonial Ambition*. I do not know if the Ironsides and Dibbs attended, but Dr Lang's speech certainly referred to replacing the Union Jack with a new Australian flag of freedom and is paraphrased from the papers. In 2019, thanks to the assistance of several archivists, including Rosemary Sempell, I found the hitherto missing petition from Sydney's female inhabitants which confirms that Martha and Aesi had signed this, directly below Reverend Clarke's wife and daughters. Just as the scene concerned with Caroline and Aesi's questions about the female franchise at the School of Art is speculative, so are these responses from her family, as described by Martha in this chapter.

In 1900, George Dibbs published his recollections of being involved in the 'early colonial volunteers', included a reference to the Ironsides being family friends as well as a reference to Alright's affections for Aesi and the fact that she produced a portrait of Alright (yet to be found). Laudanum and Lavender drops and Hellebore were all sold at Ambrose Foss's apothecary. Correspondence in the Ironside Papers confirm Nicholson's interest in Adelaide's career and that Miss Blaxland actively supported Aesi's attempts to have her

wildflower folio published. I have speculated that the stirring reference Dr Lang made to a new Australian flag inspired Aesi to design her banner for the Volunteer Corps. However, in George Dibbs' 1900 letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* also suggests that 'the preparation of the banner' was also thanks to the 'influence of a young ensign of the corps'. Whatever the stimulants, the newspapers suggest that Aesi's presentation in 1855 soon inspired other women to also make and present banners to other Voluntary Corps established during the Crimean War.

13. A PEEP INTO FUTURITY



Portland belle, or native fuchsia (Correa reflexa)

Confessions of a creative historian: I have drawn upon a swathe of archival and contextual research to inform my imagination so I could take poetic liberties and conjure the rise of spiritualism in this chapter. Although, I did not find any records indicating that Aesi (nor any other woman) ever attended the gatherings at Stenhouse's library, it was, Annmarie Jordan notes in *The Stenhouse Circle*, 'the acknowledged centre of literary Sydney'. It is, nonetheless, likely that Aesi and Stenhouse were acquainted as both were close associates of Dr Lang and attendees at his kirk. Of course, Aesi was also acquainted with Daniel Deniehy, who worked for Stenhouse during this period and remained close to him until his death. Jordan draws upon the recollections of attendees at Stenhouse's gatherings to describe the atmosphere at Waterview House. 'It was a comfortable wooden bungalow on 15-acre block' and 'the garden ran down to Johnson's Bay with 'a spectacular view'. The library may have been more established by the end of the 1850s, for Stenhouse moved into this property sometime in late 1851 or early 1852. Nonetheless, the library was, in Stenhouse's own words 'made beautiful, fitted up with 'new shelves, mirror, Morocco chairs', while 'every available space from ceiling to the floor' was lined with books. During literary

gatherings, the room would be ‘redolent with tobacco-smoke’ thanks to ‘the strange assortment of men’ drawn to Stenhouse because they ‘sought fortune and fame with their pens’.

Richard Rowe, a journalist and tutor who arrived in Australia from England in 1853, began attending Stenhouse’s gatherings in 1856 and recalled ‘literary friends talking transcendentalism — unsubstantial as the smoke of the cigars we puff Every third word beginning with a Capital’. In his article ‘Confessions of a Drunkard’, a direct reference to de Quincey’s *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, Rowe recalls how Stenhouse rescued him from a drinking bout which culminated in a stint in prison. Stenhouse bailed Rowe out and left him in his library to dry out. Rowe recalls his ‘friend’s nest, ‘veiled round with verdure. The walls are hid [sic] with books — old, rich and rare, modern and sparking — my host’s most musical meandering flow of talk. Ripe scholarship ... delicate sensibility ... Close by the open window a pear-tree ... ‘ I have drawn on these and other sources to evoke these scenes.

Other noted attendees include Sheridan Moore and Henry Halloran. Moore, featured left below, albeit some thirty years after this fictional confection, was an Irishman of letters who taught classics, modern languages, geography and science various institutions. While his own writing was prolific, Moore was highly critical of the self-conscious nationalist poetry of Charles Harpur and therefore not particularly popular with ardent native-born admirers such as Daniel Deniehy and Adelaide Ironside, who both published poems in praise of their native bard.

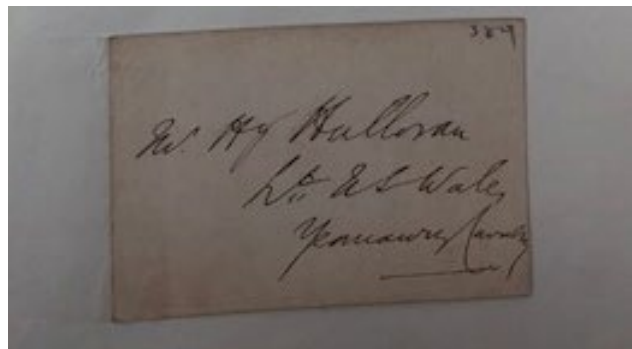
CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD.

Could the youth to whom the flavour of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will—to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it,

Richard Rowe narrates his ‘Confessions of a Drunkard’,
Freeman’s Journal 14 May 1853, 6.



Left: Joseph Moore, by American & Australasian Photographic Company, c.1888.
Right: Henry Halloran, State Library NSW.



Calling card from Henry Halloran, in the Ironside Papers SL NSW.

Henry Halloran was born in Cape Town and migrated to NSW in 1822. He later became another literary aspirant who attended Stenhouse's gatherings in the 1850s. Halloran made good on his dream, and in addition to working as a clerk in the NSW public service, he published several books of verse. One of his poems published in the newspaper was devoted to Aesi's banner presentation to the Voluntary Corps, of which he was a member. This poem and the above calling card in the Ironside papers suggests there may have been a closer connection than can be confirmed between them.

There is no evidence of this colonial literary circle ever referring to themselves as 'the Brotherhood of the Likeminded', although this term was used by the group of New England authors, philosophers and politicians more commonly known as the Transcendental Club

who gathered with famous American figures such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller in the first half of the nineteenth century. Many sources, including the content of lectures delivered by Daniel Deniehy on literary subjects at the Mechanics' School of Arts confirm familiarity with American writers and that Deniehy in particular, admired Margaret Fuller's work. I depict the colonial party commencing their experiments by exchanging quotes from Emerson's 1841 essay, 'The Over-Soul':

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul.

As historians of nineteenth-century spiritualism observe, this movement was influenced by many factors, including ancient but active folk traditions as well as German, Scottish and American transcendentalism, often popular among dissenting faiths such as the Quakers and Methods, and, to a lesser extent, Presbyterians. Such dissenting faiths often recognised the moral and spiritual authority of women in ways denied within the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions. Many dissenting women were active, even charismatic lay preachers and also considered potent mediums of 'the spirit'. I have woven in a reference to Bloody Bear the Mohawk from Lord Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* as a growing sense of unease and outrage regarding the treatment of First Nation and African Americans compelled certain sectors of society in settler-colonies like Australia and America to seek contact with restless or unresolved souls who had suffered from colonial invasion or slavery.

Later, we shall also see how the Spiritualist movement intersected with both the Women's movement and forms of alternative medicine. The

experiments featured in this chapter are based on my research into the Spiritualist movement which was ignited in the late 1840s when the three Fox sisters from Rochester, (one of the Burned-Out areas of New York), claimed to have heard rapping noises coming from a peddler who had been murdered in the basement of their house. Within months the sisters were conducting public séances attended by large crowds and famous figures. An agent then took the sisters to London where they ignited the rapping craze and became famous mediums. Thanks to the Fox sisters many believed that dark-haired virginal girls, such as Aesi, were the most powerful conduits for and communicators with the spirit world.



"Mrs. Fish and the Misses Fox: The Original Mediums of the Mysterious Noises at Rochester Western, N.Y (from left to right: Margaret, Catherine, and Leah), were a trio of spiritualists in the mid-nineteenth century. Lithograph after a daguerreotype by Appleby, Rochester, NY, 1852.

The key and wax experiment was common in Scotland, while the newspapers of this time describe many strange accounts of hypnotic experiments variously entitled 'electrobiology' or 'mesmerism'. One account describes men dancing, another a man squawking like a chicken, two illiterate factory girls singing Swedish ballads and another a woman picking flowers and giving them to audience members. While Ouija boards were not popular until the last decade of the nineteenth century, by the 1850s Spiritualists already had numerous old and new techniques for communication ranging from reading wax and water, scrying crystal balls, automatic writing, rapping and using a planchette, which offers a way of highlighting certain words already published on a page.

Although the Elyard brothers' interests were painterly than literary, Sam was educated at Dr Lang's Australian College where, the Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB) believes he 'showed talent as a portrait painter'. This may be so as Sam was employed as the Drawing Master there for a spell, studied under Conrad Martens and also exhibited his work at the 1847 Fine Arts Exhibition previously featured. It is therefore likely that the Elyards were known to Stenhouse through his connection with Dr Lang. The description of the portrait Sam Elyard produced of Aesi is based upon a small remaining fragment reproduced within *Wild Love*, which is held in the Mitchell Library (State Library of NSW). This is accompanied by a note that speculates that the unsigned watercolour 'A Seated robed figure (woman)', acquired in 1978, is Adelaide Eliza Scott Ironside.

The ADB also notes that Sam 'became mentally disturbed' in the 1840s, and underwent 'a form of marriage' with 'an alleged prostitute' during a drug delirium in 1849. His brother intervened, assisted with the annulment of the marriage and may have also placed Sam in the local Asylum for a period.

In the scene between Martha and Mary Redman, the latter makes reference to Scottish traditions associated with second sight associated with the *bruadarach* (a dreamer or visionary) and the *Fiosaiche* (fessa-cher)--who is literally one who knows. Again, I do not know if Mary Redman would have known such things, but the Ironside Papers contain many clues which suggest that Aesi was

familiar with certain magic and witching traditions specific to Scotland, and as Martha was known to disapprove of these, it seems possible that Aesi learned these from her grandmother, who the archive confirms had been a hawker for a spell. Although medical ideas associated with the Humours were falling out of fashion in the 1850s, there were still some who preferred the old wisdoms over new scientific ideas, and it is reasonable that someone of Mary Redman's age and background still drew on these notions.

Throughout this period, New South Wales accepted thousands of Irish girls as refugees of the famine, many of whom were housed in the Hyde Park Barracks. Their presence in this Protestant colony was particularly controversial and they were often scorned for being malnourished, poorly dressed and illiterate.

14.

THE STUNNER AT THE SOIREE



Fringe lily, or fringed violet (Thysanotus juncifolius)

According to Deniehy's biographer, A.E. Martin, he and Dalley did attend Sir Stephen's soiree on Anniversary Day 1852. There, Deniehy met and immediately fell in love with Miss Adelaide Elizabeth Hoalls, whose first initials were indeed the same as Aesi's. Although Martha did teach the piano and both the Australian Waltz and Aboriginal Mother were well known colonial songs, I do not know if she and Aesi attended this event. The 1880s Redman v. Redman will dispute confirms that Uncle John not only went to the goldfields but also made enough money to live interdependently for some time after he returned to Sydney. As many native-born men, including the bushranger Ben Hall, wore red shirts and ponchos to express their solidarity with the popular Italian general and Republican, Giuseppe Garibaldi, I have dressed John Redman accordingly. Although records confirm he was a dog lover, the various names of his pets, Governor Bark Bark (for Governor Bourke) and Dunmore (for John Dunmore Lang) are fictional. Details about Mary Redman's beryl and water stones are based upon research into various ancient practices as well as later spiritualist manuals. Both the tin

box into which Aesi conceals her grandmother's gift and the miscellany within, were inspired by that still in the possession of the Ironside descendants, although I don't know if this ever belonged to the Ironsides.



Private Collection.

Although I do not know if Mary Redman was familiar with these ideas, they were well-known at the time and informed botanic healing and floriography. According to the *Spirit of the Woods*, for example, which may be the first published example of floriography ascribed to Australian native flowers, the doctrine of signatures associated with the native sarsaparilla, *hardenbergia violacea*, comes from its capacity to creep and climb like a 'a busy body'. My depiction of the two men and Aesi's attitude to Dalley have been shaped by Deniehy's description of himself/Twank and Dalley/Tiptop in Deniehy's 1860 satire *How I became Attorney-General of New Baratania*.

I never think of Little Tiptop without remembering that fleshly little Cupid, so strange a figure in one of Ruben's rubicund pictures, for his lymphatic colourless hue ... Tiptop, it was thought, slept with a cigar betwixt his lips ... Tiptop was born one of Nature's gentlemen—mind, manners, even the lad's voice—a mind, indeed with so much instinctive grace and brilliancy, so much tact, as, to my thinking, to manifest genius, and originally of a charming nature. ... There was a little chap in the Assembly—the young dog was very properly put out last time—named Twank. Twank, sirs, had been Tiptop's bosom friend and companion ...

Twank had been an object of Tiptop's early admiration, before Tiptop found out that he himself overtopped the earthen idols of his youth. Twank was an attorney, a literary man, something of a spouter – the little devil certainly had the tongue of a scorpion, when he chose to be, what I suppose one must term, sarcastic. He was a strange animal, Twank, but a determined one. ... It struck me that Tiptop always worshipped rising stars; and as Twank's orb, however luminous, didn't seem to go up, Tiptop got tired of believing in him.

Dr Lang did steal out of the colony like a thief in the night to avoid paying bills. The tin box and miscellany within are still in the possession of the Ironside descendants but I don't know if these belonged to either woman. Many Australian wildflowers do bloom prolifically in the years immediately after a bush fire.

15. THE SWORD AND THE STONE



Grey spider flower, or warra garria in D'harawal (Grevillea buxifolia)

Deniehy's biographers recount rumours about Miss Hoall's identity as well as the sudden nature of their elopement, including the fact the bride was in such a state that she mis-signed her name on the marriage certificate at St Mary's Roman Catholic Church before the Reverend Gourbeillon as 'Hall' instead of 'Hoalls'. 'Love in a Cottage', is a poem published by Deniehy in 1847 and with its reference to 'brown old wattles' and 'bright-winged parrots' evokes something of the colonial Romanticism which probably endeared Deniehy to Aesi:

A cottage small be mine, with porch
Enwreathed with ivy green,
And brightsome flowers with dew-filled bells,
'Mid brown old wattles seen.

And one to wait at shut of eve,
With eyes as fountain clear.

And braided hair, and simple dress,
My homeward step to hear.

On summer eves to sing old songs,
And talk o'er early vows.
While stars look down like angels' eyes
Amid the leafy boughs.

When Spring flowers peep from flossy cells.
And bright-winged parrots call,
In forest paths be ours to rove
Till purple evenings fall.

The curtains closed, by taper clear
To read some page divine,
On winter nights, the hearth beside,
Her soft, warm hand in mine.

And so to guide through busy life,
Like some small brook alone,
That winds its way 'mid grassy knolls,
Its music all its own.

Alas, the new Mr and Mrs Deniehy were not to go through 'busy life' in such peaceful repose for long. Goethe and his *Theory of Colours* were highly influential among artists at this period, and it would be surprising if Aesi was not familiar with both. Given how adept Aesi was at languages, it is reasonable that her classes with Reverend Matthias Goethe equipped her with the sufficient skills to read Goethe in his native tongue. Books such as *The Art of Sketching Flowers from Nature* by R Willett Lucas, Professor of perspective drawing and painting, became extremely popular after the 1851 London Exhibition as new innovations in art materials, the colour of paints and easy ways of transporting them were displayed there, promptly inspiring a new generation of female watercolourists, such as Aesi, to venture outdoors.

The strange visions and phrases described in this chapter come directly from Aesi's poetry, including her two poems about the Prussian explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt. *Bell's Life* was a newspaper devoted to the colony's sporting set and it did publish a mocking review of her dirge on Leichhardt. Aesi's 1852 poem 'Song', is the only work Aesi did not publish. As this is dated 1852, the year of Deniehy's elopement, Aesi's first biographer, Jill Poulton, speculated that it was an expression of her unrequited love for her newly married friend. I have conceived of the relationship between Aesi and Deniehy in more Victorian terms which I sense are in keeping with Aesi's spiritual and intellectual inclinations and therefore interpret her 'Song' about 'wild love; as an expression of many enthusiastic and ambivalent feelings which she channels through the romantic story of Corinne who did 'follow' her beloved from Italy to England.

While most of Deniehy's lectures were syndicated across numerous papers, his lecture on Female Genius was only reported in *The People's Advocate* thanks to 'a Friend of Oral instruction' who kept notes and sent these to the newspaper. It is tempting to speculate that this disinterest was a reflection of a general antipathy towards topics concerned with women and their abilities which a female note-taker was intent upon remedying.

Little Mary Lang did die of inflamed gums at this time.

With the exception of two letters written in 1853, the historical record associated with the Ironsides is generally concerned with and produced during their time abroad from 1855 onwards. The exception to this is a letter in Dr Lang's papers from Aesi to Mrs Lang in 1853, thanking her for visiting Burton Lodge on Anniversary Day [26 January] that year with her children, Oscar their dog and Professor Somerville. In this letter Aesi also asks Mrs Lang to convey rather perverse thanks to Professor Somerville for his poem to the queen.

To Professor Somerville how shall I express the interest I feel in his beautiful poem! May I beg of you to present my respectful thanks; and tell him how delighted I should be to see at "Burton Lodge", that writer of such classic lines. They are truly loyal: And although I cannot sympathise with the

admiration of Royalty I can fully appreciate the imaginative and refined mind of the Poet.

Mrs Lang was clearly amused, for she then wrote to her husband recounting this response, before describing Aesi as a warrior who would done a steed to fight with Dr Lang for the freedom of their country (her underlining).

In my last letter I think I mentioned we had all been over at the North Shore at the Ironsides - ... we spent a most delightful day not with the regatta ... but in Mrs Ironside's drawing room interesting some very drawings, crayons, paintings, poetry and prose;. Her drawings are exquisite, indeed all we saw was beautifully executed.

The Children were infinitely amused all the day we left home immediately after an early breakfast The children played and gambolled all day, jumping in and out of the drawing room windows and the garden is laden with all sorts of fruits and the rarest of Indian plants and flowers. We returned home in good time between six and seven but not to return to you, which certainly detracted a little from our pleasure. The regatta was slowly fading away and had been gay and interesting to all those interested ... Professor Somerville said it much surpassed the anniversary of American independence... I brought with me some specimens of Miss Ironside's drawings I have showed them to many and all who have seen them have never seen a thing to come up to them - the touches are so beautifully delicate.

Professor Somerville said that he should not say how much he admired them and could only express his feelings of interest by presenting through myself with a poem which he composed to Queen Victoria ... I had the pleasure of receiving two poems - one for Miss I and the other for myself which I forwarded to her and she wrote in reply that although she was so delighted ... she could not sympathise. I shall just give you her own words 'To Professor Somerville how shall I express the interest I feel in his beautiful poem! ... Although I cannot sympathise in the admiration of royalty I can fully appreciate the imaginative and refined mind of the poetry.' So much for our Professor of the Australian College. Miss I is quite a hero! She would indeed done a suit of mail her and with her steed and take her stand

tomorrow for the Freedom and Independence of her native land; having you of course to wield the sceptre of liberty for our great Australian Land.

In my evocation of the actual day the Langs and Professor Somerville visited Burton Lodge in early 1853, I have included their North Shore neighbour, Reverend William B Clark, as multiple sources indicate he was one of the first to encourage Aesi to go to Europe for further training. There is no record of him attending this event. Like many of her age, Aesi admired Virgil and not only sketched his tomb but also published a poem entitled *The Tomb of Virgil*.



Adelaide Ironside, 'Virgil's Tomb', *Commonplace Book*, Private Collection.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

VIRGIL'S TOMB!

By ADELAIDE E. SCOTT IRONSIDE.

Tomb of Virgil, sacred fane!
 When the day is on the wane,
 And the bee with laded wings
 Round me fresh sweet odour flings,
 Old enchantments rich are thine
 Round the soul-dreams to entwine,
 Memories fraught with classic tie
 In thy death-bound stillness lie,
 And thy sacred precincts wear,
 All the antique Italian air.
 Shade of Virgil! when the flower
 Parthenope's fields embower,
 To the wild wind sweetly murmurs,
 Telling of the olden summers
 That in Arcadia's sunny bow'rs
 Deck'd thy head with tinted flowers,
 Deeming thee earth's child of song,
 Thro' the ages far and long—
 Fancy then with magic lightness
 Brings thee in Elysian brightness,
 Singing o'er thy wondrous words
 To a harp of Phantom chords!
 All things with reverence love thee
 Wild flow'rs, wild trees, stars above thee,
 Child immortal! thoughts of thee!
 Ever in my dreams will be—
 Dreams of beauty brightly blended
 With the lone paths Petrarch wended
 When he planted near thy tomb
 A laurel—emblem of the bloom
 In thy poems;—high thoughts bringing
 From the skies, with deep tones ringing,
 Of the brilliant webbed tales
 Of the olden hills and vales:—
 Brilliant, as the sun-set dyes
 On the rich Italian skies—
 When their golden gleams illumine
 Sainted shrine and church of gloom!
 Electric, as the living fire
 Wrung from Etna's burning heart—
 When the lava torrents start
 Molten from her eyes of fire!
 Bounding kids like thine of yore
 Love to roam thy chambers o'er,
 For thy sake a young leaf nipping,
 O'er the worn stones gaily tripping!

'Virgil's Tomb!', published in *People's Advocate and NSW Vindicator*, 14 Apr 1853.

16.

TRICOLOUR



Pine donkey orchid (Diuris tricolor)

This chapter is set between 1853 and 1854, the period when Aesi published more than twenty poems in *The People's Advocate* as well as one in *The Empire*, later syndicated to the *Leicestershire Mercury*. As I show in this chapter, Aesi engaged with diverse styles and topics ranging from Dr Lang's new book, *The Freedom and Independence of the Golden Lands of Australia and the Australian League*, to Wentworth's constitution bill, Daniel Webster, an American politician to a dirge devoted to the Duke of Wellington. Romantic themes were also advanced in poems dedicated to the explorers Columbus and Ludwig Leichhardt, a Lament to an Indian Mother and, of course, Virgil's Cave. Over the course of several issues, Aesi also published her epic eighteen stanza-poem, 'Australia', commencing in mid-June 1853, and concluding in late August the same year. Despite the diversity of topics deployed as well as the overstraining effect of a young poet, an original style can be detected in many of these poems. Indeed, some are reminiscent of the sprung style of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), who published his works much later. Although Aesi's poetry is unlikely to appeal to present-day readers, I was eager to include as much as I could to ensure I conveyed something of her voice, passion, and attitudes, as evident in

the third stanza of 'Australia':

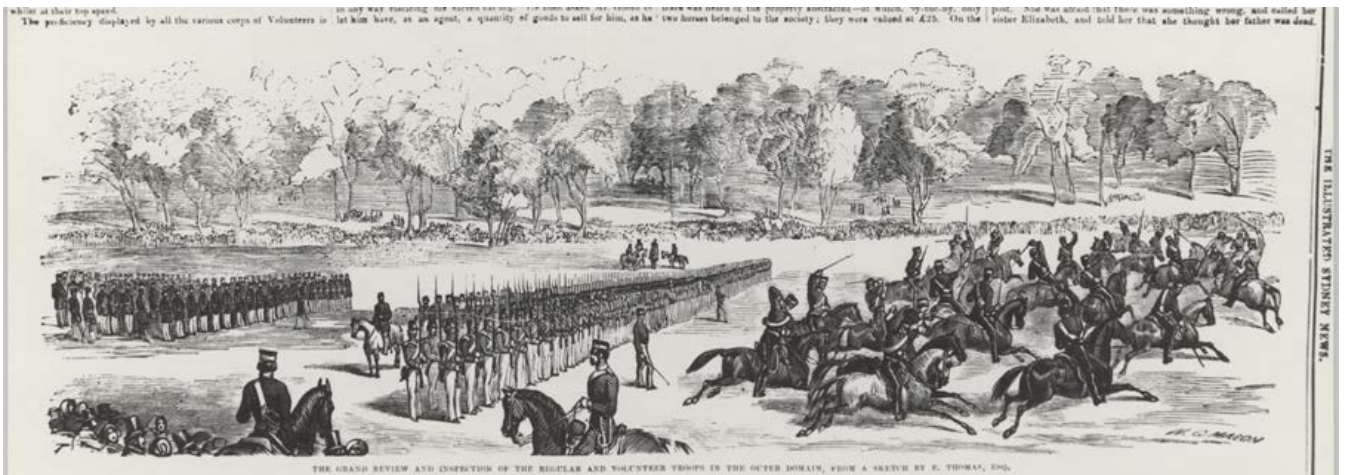
Thou art so wildly fair, O Southern land!
That I would have thee like to her afar
That wondrous Continent (whose shelly sand
Was flung from the Atlantic Depths) a star
Amid the Nations! - and a living light
Of truth-based Independence, high enroll'd
A Victor in the lists! On thou must fight -
'Till thou hast wearied her, that Nation old,
Who leads, and stays thee, even as a wayward child.
Whose spirit wills but dares not wholly to be wild.

Mr Hawksely was the editor of the *People's Advocate* and according to Peter Cochrane, wore a cabbage-tree hat inside the offices of that newspaper, complete with a tricolour ribbon, to inspire solidarity among his colleagues and contributors. Records suggest Ellen Oke, the mother of Aesi's stepbrothers and -sisters, died in 1854. I do not know if Aesi attended to her and her father's other family, but this contextualised the sombre spirit and preoccupation with death in many of Aesi's poems.

My account of Dr Lang's impassioned attempts to establish a new political vision and structure for colonial society by initiating Australian Leagues is well-recorded both in the primary sources and secondary accounts of this period. Lang's *Freedom and Independence of the Golden Lands of Australia* did indeed inspire many colonists, particularly among the native-born to believe, or at least, hope that this luminous moment would lead on to the formation of Australian independence. The degree to which this vision was undone by the new patriot feeling stirred by what is now known as the Crimean War cannot be quantified. Nonetheless, my depiction of how events transpired is based upon my interpretation of the newspapers and numerous scholarly sources listed in the bibliography. The details of the Voluntary Corps, including their uniforms, are drawn from the newspapers as well as George Dibbs' recollections which describes how he and his brother, Tom, received commissions with the Rifles.

William Charles Wentworth and his daughter were heckled out of Sydney when they left to deliver the colony's first constitutional bill to the British parliament. It seemed somewhat fitting justice for the old Wool King who had once rallied Sydney to Vacluse so he could present Governor Darling and his family with an ironic salute.

The two letters from Deniehy to Aesi were both written in 1854, and I have quoted directly from these. I also teased out their connection with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows*, which Deniehy lent to Aesi and is referenced in her poem, 'Thoughts for The Australian League' (1 April 1854) as a "soul-larging book". The scene of their meeting at the Apothecary and then taking a stroll through Sydney is however, imagined.



'The Grand Review and Inspection of the Regular and Volunteer Troops in the Outer Domain, from a sketch by E Thomas, Esq.', from the *Illustrated Sydney News*, Daniel Solander Library database, Botanic Gardens. This is c. 1860 and the weather is much better than the day the Dibbs and others from the Voluntary Corp received their commission from Governor Fitzroy, but it is set in the Outer Domain where Aesi made her presentation.

17. THE COURAGE TO COPE



Waratah, or warada in D'harawal, in bud (Telopea speciosissima)

I have gleaned details regarding the colonial contribution to the Paris Universelle Exposition from the State Library, the British Library, numerous newspapers, and the Australian Museum. Colonel Barney and Reverend Clark were both commissioners and North Shore neighbours so their engagement with Aesi's work is speculative but probable. The original works by Aesi which I have mentioned in this chapter are featured in the picture section of *Wild Love* or can be found in public and private holdings. The colonial newspapers provide some insight as to why and when the Ironsides left Burton Lodge for Crows Nest Cottage. There appears to have been some tension between James and Martha, for while advertisements were placed to auction the Ironsides household items at Burton Lodge, this was then cancelled, and in 1855 Martha managed the auction associated with their removal from Crows Nest Cottage singlehandedly. Crows Nest Cottage was built by Edward Wollstonecraft, who was the nephew of Mary Wollstonecraft and cousin of Mary Shelley. He so loathed the association with his radical relatives he moved to the colonies. The ADB and other sources suggest he was infamously parsimonious, and eventually died in the cottage so I have

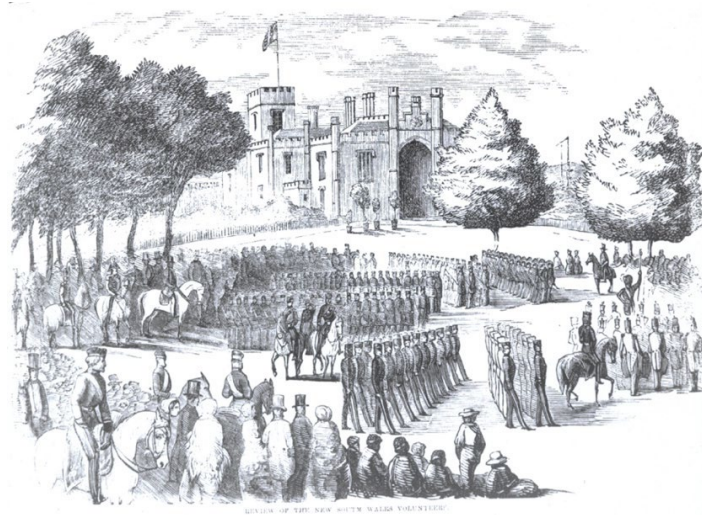
speculated that his mean-spirited ghost remained there, as Ebenezer Scrooge may have done had he not undergone conversion. Redman descendants have a watercolour of Crows Nest Cottage dated 1854 when Martha and Aesi were residing there, in the style of Conrad Martens' watercolours. I have depicted Martens painting this in the company of his daughter Rebecca who was recognised as an accomplished artist in her own right. In his 1881 flamboyant article in the *Sydney Mail*, Alciphron Jones suggests that Aesi received colour lessons from Martens.



Attributed to Conrad Martens (1801-1878), 'The Crows Nest' c 1854. Water colour on paper. Private Collection.

Alexander Berry and Dr Lang were notorious enemies and often treated their acquaintances as collateral damage in their vindictive point scoring. William Redman had married Adelaide Cecilia Carrington in 1850 and was working out of a small room associated with the Royal Hotel, where he also lived with his wife. These arrangements did not last long however as William had recently joined the town council with his old friend George Thornton and was intend upon upward mobility.

As John Ruskin was well-established as one of the most respected art critics since the publication of the first volumes of *Modern Painters* in the 1840s, it is reasonable to speculate that Aesi was familiar with his thinking, if not all his works. The details relating to the Volunteer Corps receiving their commission, including the wet weather, are based upon newspaper reports but I do not know if the Ironsides attended. Nonetheless, as one sketch of the crowds which attend such events depict First Nation peoples, I have included them in my depictions of these scenes.



Review of the NSW Volunteer Corp in front of Government House, rather than the Outer Domain (Daniel Solander Library database, Botanic Gardens)

The newspapers suggest the commissioners in charge of collecting colonial contributions to the *Paris Exposition Universelle* had originally intended to receive all goods by September 1854. However, at the last moment, they decided to host an exhibition of these goods at the Australian Museum. I have used this change of plans, coupled with the fabricated notion that Aesi intended to produce a folio of fifty wildflowers, to create a sense of urgency associated with the production of Aesi's folio. This was partially inspired by the fact that the subscription pamphlet lists forty-three watercolour illustrations, two of which have been left blank, perhaps because these were the ones sold to the Prince of Wales and William Charles Wentworth. Forty-three is such a curious number for a folio of flowers that it suggests Aesi's project may have been unfinished.

I also fictionalised Aesi's trek out to a distant location in search of the waratah, which was then the best known of Australia's native flowers. As mentioned, some Europeans were so fascinated by this specimen they described the colonies as 'the land of the waratah'. In this chapter I also made a subtle reference to the First Nation story associated with the warada which I have described in more detail in the 'About the Flowers' document offered as part of the support materials associated with *Wild Love*.

18. SEEN FROM AFAR



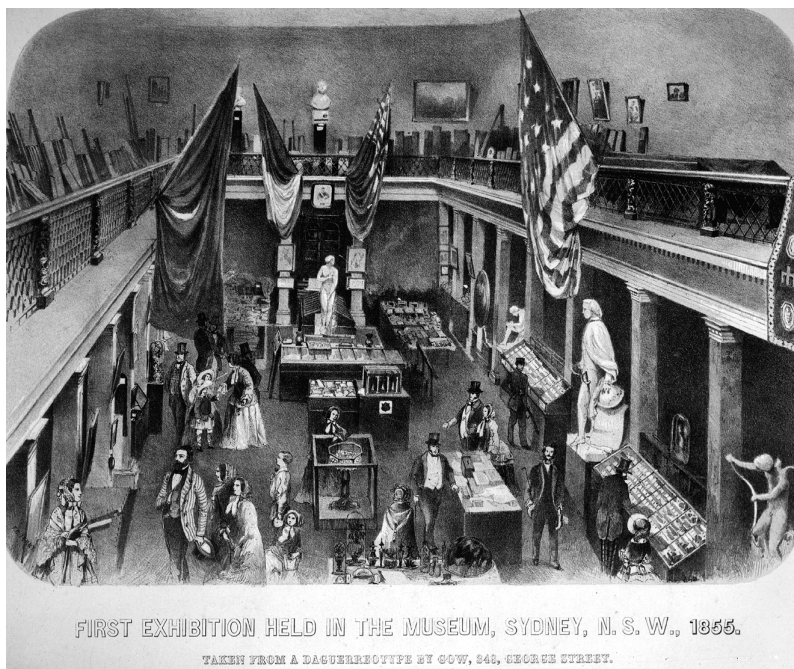
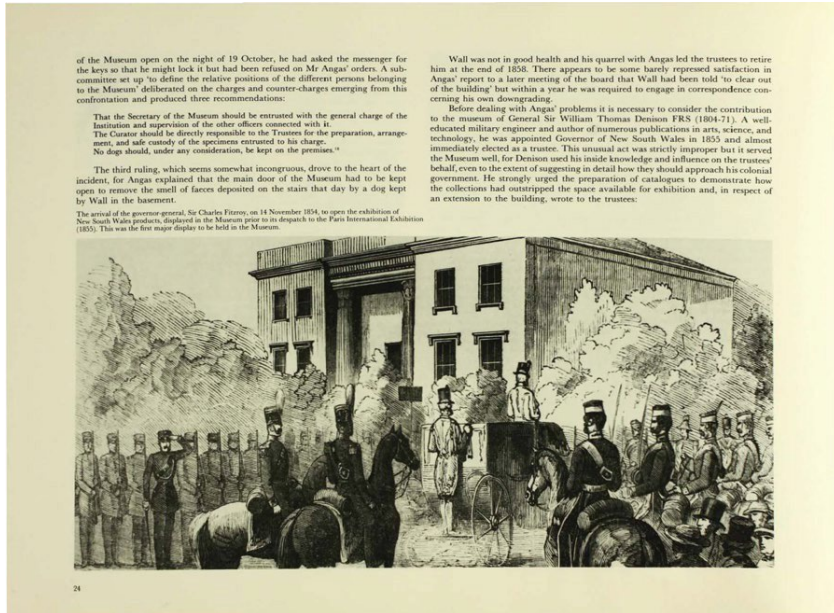
Waratah, or warada in D'harawal, in full bloom (Telopea speciosissima)

'Shoulder to the wheel' is a phrase from a letter Martha wrote to Dr Lang soon after Aesi's death. As she was then paraphrasing Aesi, I have assumed this term was commonly used in their household. As newspapers announced the later arrival of Aesi's work at the Australian Museum exhibition in early December, there is firm evidence that her flower folio was not on display at the official opening, which occurred on 17 November 1855, incidentally, Aesi's twenty-third birthday. I therefore constructed a set of delays to explain this absence which, in turn, allowed for some narrative suspense about this all-important event in her life.

I do not know if Miss Blaxland was involved in this stage of Aesi's career, let alone played the part of *Deus ex machina* as occasionally performed by Miss Betsy Trotwood in Dickens's *David Copperfield*. Nonetheless, Miss Blaxland certainly became a fierce advocate for Aesi and her wildflowers in the 1860s; not only assisting with the negotiations with the London publisher but also urging Aesi to maintain 'her right of primacy' as the colony's first flower painter just months before her death.

All the quotes included in this chapter regarding Adelaide's art are verbatim from the colonial newspapers and confirm that Aesi was the

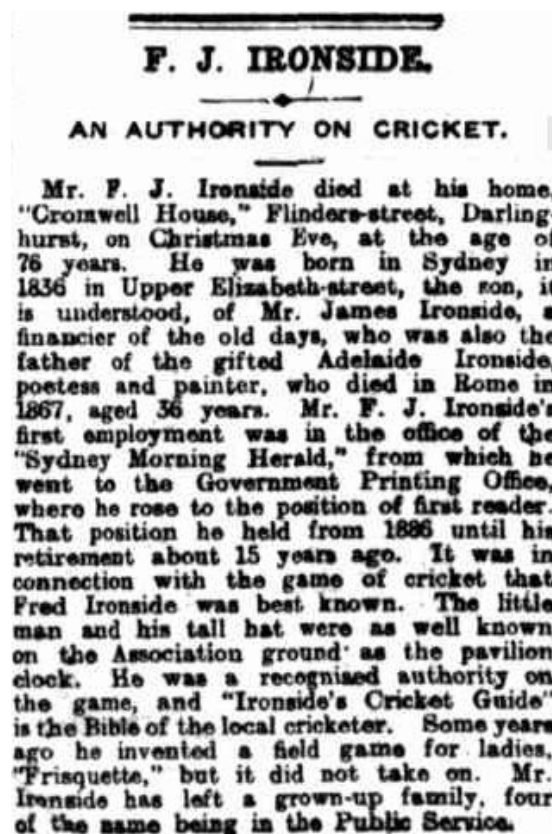
only female artist to receive a silver medal from the Sydney judges. The Australian Museum exhibition opening did include the pomp described as well as the furious heat. Sir Alfred Stephens made a welcome address from the stairs of the museum. Although I do not know if Mrs Dibbs attended that event with the large crowd which gathered on that hot day, her sons were members of the Corps, so it is possible.



Two images of the 1854 exhibition at the Australian Museum, a grand occasion across the colony. The Dibbs brothers may well have been among those in the left of the first, which features the Voluntary Corps delivering Governor Fitzroy to the opening. The second provides a glimpse into the Museum itself, where Charles Nicholson's statues are on display.

Numerous sources confirm that Martha handled the auction of the household items without her husband and that after vacating Crows Nest

Cottage and before they departed abroad, she and Aesi went to stay at the Langs cottage. In an 1861 letter to Dr Lang, Aesi reminds him that she had intended for her time abroad to be a period of ten years, comparable, she said, 'to the siege of Troy'. There is no record of Aesi visiting James Ironside before she left the colony, but newspapers confirm that he was living in Surry Hills with his children and the descriptions of that area are based upon contemporary sources and those in the City of Sydney Dictionary. It is worth noting that with the death of Ellen Oke a few years prior, James Ironside was now a single father. Later newspaper accounts confirm that Aesi's stepbrother F.J Ironside became an authority of cricket and even invented a game for women. The 'shiny thing', Adelaide gave Ellen was the silver medallion award from the Australian Museum and while newspapers confirm Adelaide received this, the medallion is no longer in any collection, so I speculate Aesi may have given it to her stepsister.



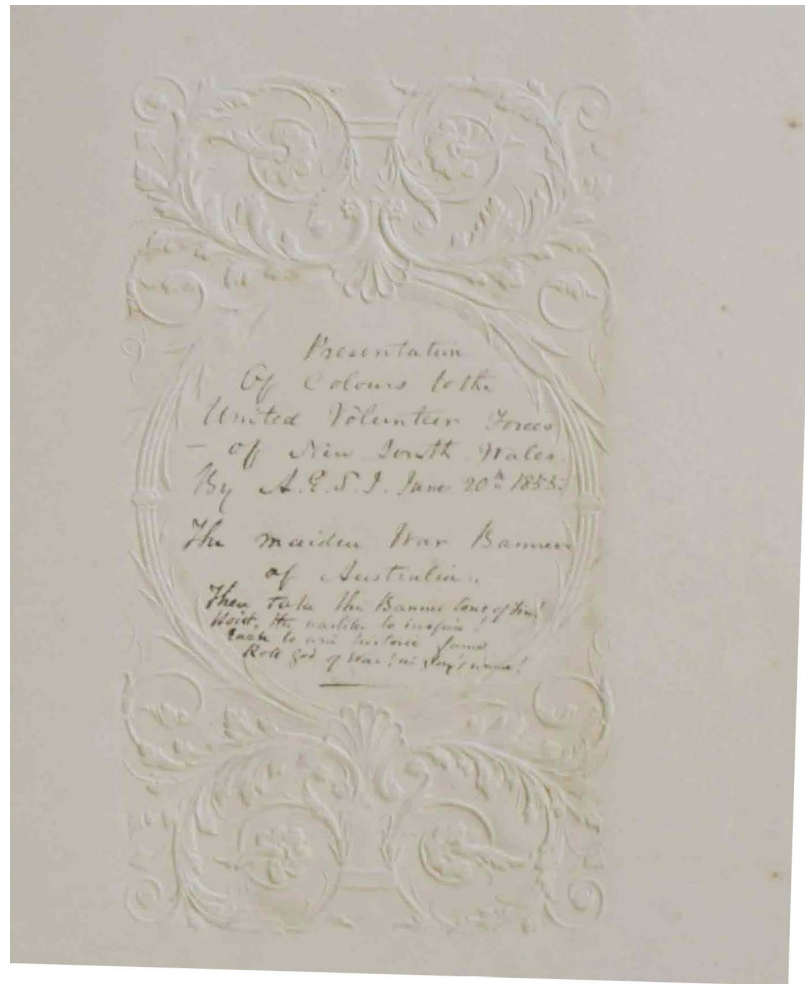
'F. J. Ironside: An Authority on Cricket', *Truth*, 29 December 1912, 12.

The descriptions of Aesi's chalk work *The Dream* (now held in the Tasmanian Museum and Gallery) comes from newspaper reports,

however, as the central figure somewhat resembles Daniel Deniehy, I speculate that this work was inspired by a dream which Aesi had of her troubled friend. There is no evidence that Mary Redman's father, Robert George, was 'a professor of sidereal science'. However, I came upon this phrase during my research into the intersections between eighteenth-century wisdom traditions and nineteenth-century Spiritualism and astrology and was so delighted, I decided to include it by attributing it to Mary Redman's father. A *sidereal day* measures the rotation of Earth relative to the *stars* rather than the sun. It helps astronomers keep time and know where to point their telescopes without worrying about where Earth is in its orbit. So what is sidereal time?

Dr Lang did make the comments included regarding the Eureka Rebellion and its flag in the newspapers, but I have speculated that they then stimulated Aesi's idea of the banner along with the previous inspiration she had received from Dr Lang when he mentioned a new Australian flag at the Parade Ground protest against the resumption of transportation in 1850. I gleaned the details of the banner presentation including the terrible weather from the newspapers and the Ironsides archive. Aesi's Common Day Book includes the stencilled lettering she used to stitch onto the banner, as featured in *Wild Love*, as well as two copies of the rousing self-referential poem Aesi dedicated to 'the Sons of Fire' and clearly intended to present to the Volunteer Corps which is also featured in *Wild Love* (page 222)

The first copy of the poem is dated February 1855 which indicates Aesi had the idea of presenting her banner early that year, just only months after the events associated with the Eureka Rebellion in December 1854. Aesi also transcribed another version of the same poem into her Commonplace Book, which includes the date of the presentation in June 1855. As there are no other examples of her recording her works more than once, I speculate the event and poem were particularly important. To fabricate the reasons for its significance, I had to wrestle with several seemingly contradictory elements of Aesi's character. How, for example, reconciling Aesi's fiery spirit as expressed in her 'Sons of Fire' and republican poems with the 'dutiful' and 'devoted' patriotic sentiments she delivered at the presentation according to the newspaper accounts.

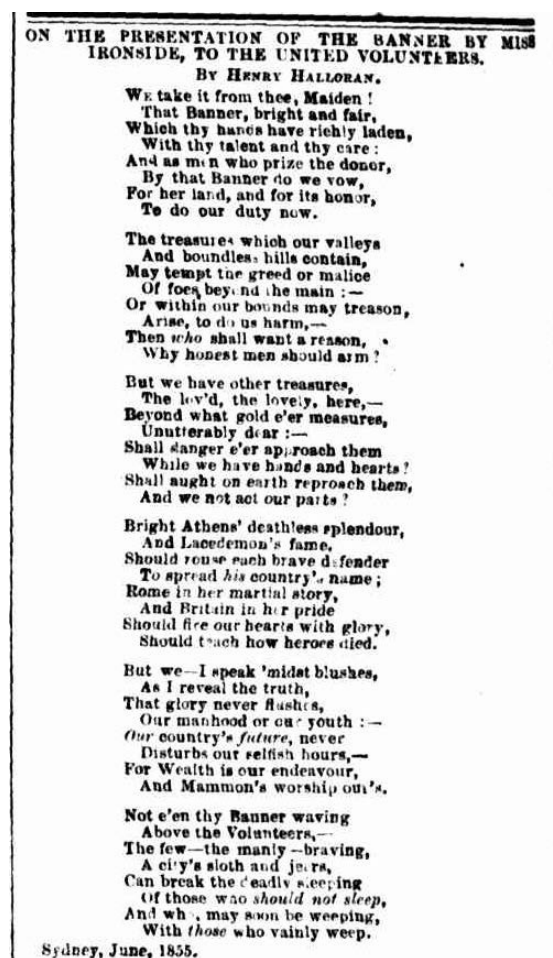


Adelaide Ironside, *Commonplace Book*, Private Collection.

In the 1890s, two female descendants went to considerable effort to find Aesi's banner which had been misplaced by the Voluntary Corps. Although they were unable to recover the actual item, newspaper accounts thankfully include clear descriptions of the now lost banner, confirming the fabric was a blue silk, as I have described, although of course I do not know when she purchased this material or why she chose this colour. My suggestion that she wished to encourage comparison with the Eureka flag is pure speculation, but both were certainly blue. Various reports also confirm the banner comprised four wildflowers as a centrepiece. Although there is no detail about which specimens she selected, I have selected four from those she painted which may have held specific significance to her as they certainly did so for later floriographers. In addition to the Grey Spider Flower which I chose because it captures something of Aesi's idiosyncratic and occasionally prickly character, I included the Fringe Lily or Fringed Violet, because, according to the Doctrine of Signatures, this specimen suggests heightened spiritual abilities due to its colour and delicately vibrating fringes. I also chose *Boronia Serrulata*, also known as Native Rose and

fringes. I also chose *Boronia Serrulata*, also known as Native Rose and Sydney Rose, because of its association with Catherine Alexander at Stenhouse's séance and Deniehy at Sir Stephen's soiree in *Wild Love*. Finally, I included the mighty waratah, not only for its beauty and significance in the final chapters of Part Two of *Wild Love*, but also because its Latin meaning 'seen from afar', can be applied to Aesi on the blustering day she stood on the rise of the Domain presenting her banner to the troops.

The Ironsides left Sydney less than a week after the presentation which means that Aesi would not have seen the poem Henry Halloran published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in honour of her banner presentation in mid-July 1855. Was Halloran, one of the 'young ensigns' and 'good matches' enamoured with Aesi, I wonder? At the very least, this poem suggests she received considerable public recognition around the time of her departure from the colony.



Henry Halloran, 'On the Presentation of the Banner by Miss Ironside to the United Volunteers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1855, 2.