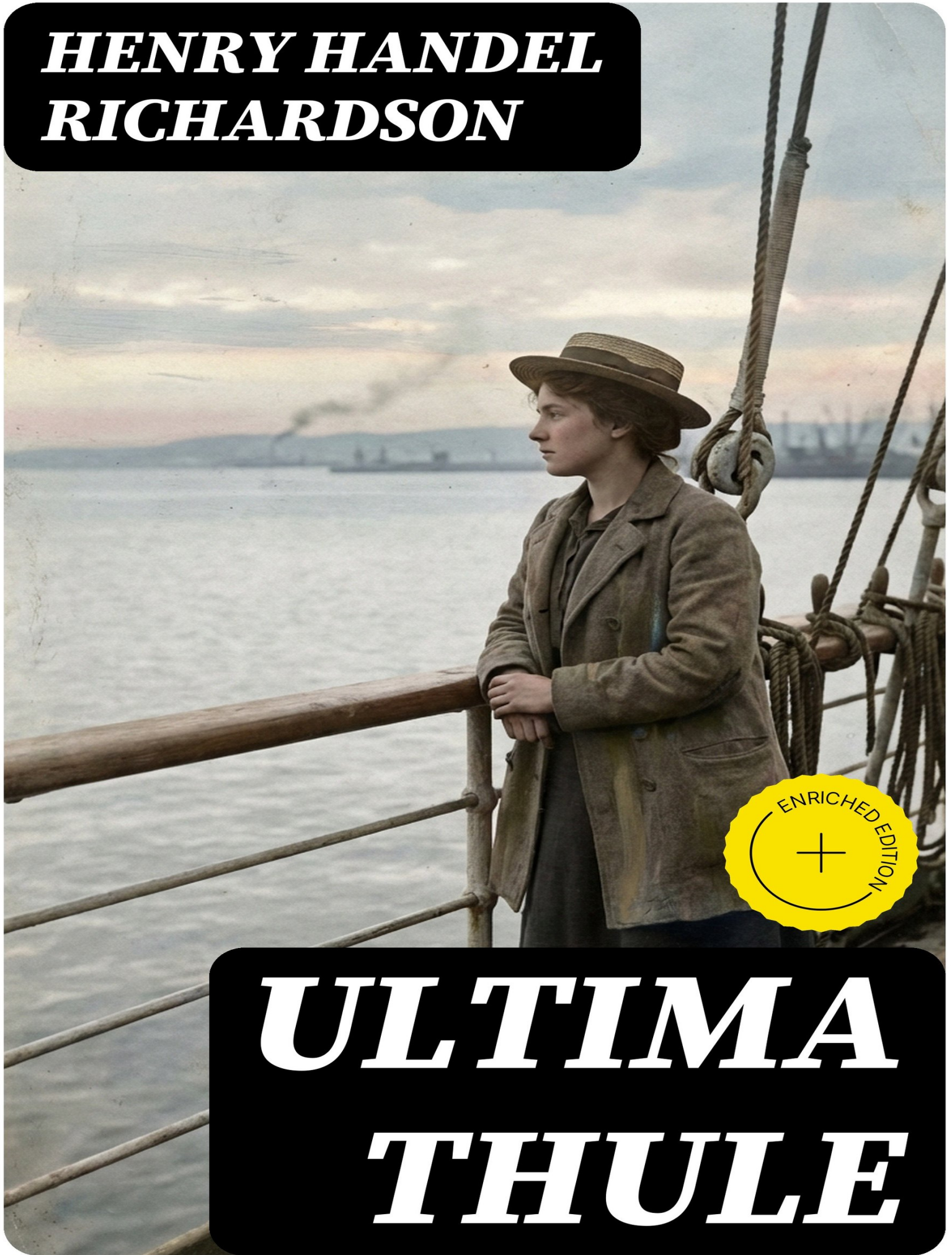


***HENRY HANDEL
RICHARDSON***



***ULTIMA
THULE***

**HENRY HANDEL
RICHARDSON**



**ULTIMA
THULE**

Henry Handel Richardson

Ultima Thule

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Lucas Finch

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Introduction

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At the far edge of a young colonial world, where opportunity and uncertainty advance together, *Ultima Thule* follows an ambitious emigrant physician and his steadfast wife as they search for a place to belong, discovering that the glitter of advancement, travel, and professional pride is braided with fatigue, compromise, and fragile status, and that the very roads that promise arrival—through towns enlarged by gold, drawing rooms calibrated by rank, and seas that connect colony and metropolis—also pull them outward into a testing space where loyalty, identity, and sanity are negotiated at great cost.

Published in 1929 as the concluding volume of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, Henry Handel Richardson's *Ultima Thule* is a work of realist fiction rooted in nineteenth-century Australia. It traces the rhythms of colonial Victoria, a society reshaped by the gold rush and its aftermath, and observes how professional classes navigated a landscape still defining its institutions and manners. The novel stands within a tradition of psychological and social realism, attentive to domestic life and public reputation, and belongs to a formative era of Australian literature in which writers examined settlement, mobility, and the costs of empire from within an emergent national frame.

Richardson resumes the story of Dr Richard Mahony and his wife Mary as they adjust to shifting circumstances in a colony whose fortunes fluctuate with markets and fashions.

The premise is deceptively simple: a family seeks steadiness amid movement between places, professions, and expectations. The voice remains supple and exact, moving inward to sift half-acknowledged motives and outward to register social nuance. Scenes accumulate patiently rather than sensationally, and the tone is composed, incisive, sometimes cool, always humane. The reading experience is immersive and measured, drawing the reader into moral scruple, practical calculation, and the fragile poise between aspiration and fatigue.

Among its most resonant concerns is the migrant's oscillation between attachment and alienation. Ultima Thule attends to the hunger for status and the vulnerability of those who must continually prove themselves within hierarchies that are both porous and punitive. The title evokes a farthest frontier, suggesting how distance magnifies hope while warping judgment. Richardson tracks the etiquette of rank, the unease of professionals in a boom-and-bust society, and the pressure to convert talent into security. Empire hovers as both network and mirage, binding colony and metropolis in an uneasy exchange of standards, opportunities, and anxieties that test even the most disciplined temperaments.

The novel also offers one of Richardson's most nuanced portraits of marriage as a cooperative enterprise shaped by unequal expectations. Mary's practical intelligence and social tact carry substantial weight within the household economy, while Richard's training and ambitions confer authority that is continually negotiated. The text watches how money mediates affection, how work spills over

domestic thresholds, and how partners absorb or deflect the judgments of their communities. Without melodrama, Richardson shows the incremental strains that accumulate when ideals meet logistics, charting the delicate balance between tenderness and impatience, privacy and exposure, and the everyday labor required to maintain dignity.

Psychological acuity is central to the book's power. Richardson renders thought as a shifting weather, registering sudden brightness, long stretches of overcast, and the disorientations that come when inner weather fails to match outward circumstance. Without sensational disclosure, she traces how fatigue, disappointment, and social pressure can narrow perception or widen it painfully, and how self-respect may falter under the scrutiny of others. The result is an intimate study of vulnerability and resilience that resists diagnosis and refuses sentimentality. Characters are neither simplified heroes nor villains; they are recognizable, fallible people negotiating limits, haunted by previous choices, and hungry for coherence.

Ultima Thule endures because it clarifies how modern lives are shaped by mobility, precarity, and reputation—conditions as familiar today as in the world it depicts. Readers will recognize the strains of relocating for work, the calculus of career versus community, and the invisible labor that sustains households during volatility. Its exploration of mental burden and social stigma remains urgent, as do its insights into how empires, markets, and institutions mold private choices. Richardson's patient realism rewards contemporary attention: it invites reflection on what it costs

to preserve integrity, care for others, and claim a home when the map keeps shifting.

Synopsis

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Ultima Thule, published in 1929, concludes Henry Handel Richardson's trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. The novel resumes the story of Dr. Richard Mahony and his wife Mary in colonial Australia after years of restless movement between hemispheres. From its outset, the book narrows its lens to the intimate stakes of home, vocation, and dignity, setting a sober mood in which private anxieties mirror a society still finding shape after the gold-rush decades. Richardson frames her protagonists at a threshold: they have returned with hopes of stability yet are shadowed by the costs of ambition and displacement, questions that the narrative methodically tests across domestic, professional, and social spheres.

Seeking to reclaim a professional footing, Mahony attempts to re-establish himself within the medical sphere while negotiating a social environment that prizes utility over the cultured refinements he cherishes. His cultivated ideals meet the brisk commercial ethos of colonial townships, deepening an old sense of being out of place. Mary's practical acumen steadies the household, her competence with money and people offsetting her husband's erratic judgment. Patients, acquaintances, and distant relations drift in and out, sketching a milieu where reputation can be made or unmade quickly. The couple's hopes coalesce around modest security, yet every advance

is tempered by unease, pride, and lingering debts to the past.

As the narrative widens, Richardson traces the family's entanglement with volatile colonial fortunes: fees are late, investments unreliable, and patronage capricious. The social code is exacting, demanding display without guaranteeing acceptance. Mary cultivates alliances and routines that keep the household afloat, while Mahony's fastidious temperament complicates dealings with colleagues and clients. Domestic scenes carry the pulse of realist detail—meals, journeys, rented rooms—through which the precariousness of class standing is felt. A child's needs and perceptions add pressure to daily decisions, sharpening questions of schooling, place, and future. Throughout, the prose keeps ambition and anxiety in delicate counterpoint, refusing both sensationalism and sentimental consolation.

Against this unstable backdrop, signs of Mahony's nervous fragility become harder to dismiss. Richardson renders his inner weather with close psychological attention: fatigues that lengthen, irritations that curdle into suspicion, and lapses of confidence that erode professional poise. The irony of a doctor unable to diagnose himself threads through the chapters without didactic emphasis. Mary reads the shifts first in practical effects—missed opportunities, strained interviews, minor estrangements—before recognizing their deeper rhythm. The novel dwells on what illness does to time, shrinking horizons and unmooring certainties, yet keeps the portrayal humane and scrupulous, attentive to the mixture of love, embarrassment, and duty circulating within the home.

The outward consequences gather: colleagues hesitate, creditors press, and official procedures come into view, exposing the period's rough balance between care and control. Moves are made for the family's protection, some prompted by necessity, others by counsel that cannot accommodate nuance. Richardson's tact lies in showing how ordinary transactions—leases, letters, consultations—become charged when confidence falters. The narrative perspective shifts among family members enough to register competing burdens without assigning blame. Mary's role expands from partner to manager, interpreter, and advocate, her steadiness contrasted with a society that can be both supportive and punitive. Through these pressures, the marriage's core loyalty is tested and redefined.

In later sections, the world narrows and intensifies. Memory and landscape interweave as Mahony revisits earlier choices in thought and feeling, while the countryside and the cities of colonial Victoria take on a remote, almost symbolic edge. The dream of reaching a last, hospitable far place gives the title its resonance, and the book measures what remains when that dream fails to anchor a life. Richardson refuses simple verdicts, allowing moments of tenderness, lucidity, and even humor to surface amid decline. The family's routines become both refuge and constraint, sustaining a precarious normality that is credible, unsentimental, and deeply moving.

As the culminating volume of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, *Ultima Thule* gathers the trilogy's abiding concerns—migration, class aspiration, professional identity, conjugal fidelity, and the costs of intellectual fastidiousness—in a

final, unsparing register. Its significance lies in marrying panoramic social history to an early, exacting portrait of mental illness and caregiving within colonial settings. The conclusion remains restrained, more earned than announced, inviting reflection rather than shock. What endures is the novel's compassionate clarity: a sense of how ordinary lives are shaped by distant ideals and nearby contingencies, and how love and duty persist, however imperfectly, at the limits that give the book its name.

Historical Context

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Henry Handel Richardson's *Ultima Thule* (1929) concludes her trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, a realist portrait of colonial and late-Victorian Australia. The novel's action is rooted chiefly in Victoria—Ballarat and, above all, Melbourne—across the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Its milieu is the professional middle class, especially medicine, within a British colonial society governed from Melbourne's Parliament and bound to imperial markets and standards. Richardson, born Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson in Melbourne in 1870, drew on her family's experiences of migration, professional aspiration, and social reversal, using them to scrutinize how institutions, class expectations, and economic cycles shaped private lives.

Victoria's formative upheaval was the gold rush beginning in 1851, which attracted hundreds of thousands of migrants to fields at Ballarat and Bendigo and rapidly expanded colonial revenue and infrastructure. Ballarat became a major mining and commercial center with hospitals, schools, and newspapers established to serve a volatile population. The rush left enduring legacies: accelerated urbanization, sudden fortunes and losses, and a social fluidity that sat uneasily with imported British hierarchies. For professionals such as physicians and merchants, the goldfields and their service towns offered opportunity coupled with precariousness, a dynamic that

later reverberated in Melbourne as fortunes made on speculation or service proved difficult to secure.

In the 1880s, Melbourne acquired the nickname Marvellous Melbourne, signaling rapid growth, civic showpieces, and exuberant confidence. Grand projects and institutions—boulevards, cable trams from 1885, museums, universities, and the Royal Exhibition Building, used for the 1880 and 1888 international exhibitions—advertised prosperity. Easy credit from banks and building societies fueled a land and property boom that encouraged middle-class striving and conspicuous consumption. The city's newspapers, clubs, and philanthropic bodies flourished, reinforcing ideals of respectability and success. This atmosphere frames the novel's portrayal of ambition and status, revealing how fragile standing could be when wealth was tethered to rising asset prices and reputational display.

The boom collapsed in the early 1890s. In 1893, a wave of bank suspensions and closures—part of a broader collapse in credit—triggered a severe depression in Victoria. Property values fell, unemployment surged, and insolvency became common among shopkeepers, professionals, and investors who had borrowed heavily in the 1880s. Charitable relief expanded as private aid societies and churches responded to distress. Industrial conflict also marked the period, with the maritime strike of 1890 and the shearers' strikes of 1891–1894 reflecting pressures on wages and employment. The novel's social background is shaped by this bust, emphasizing how economic contraction reshaped households, careers, and civic confidence.

Late nineteenth-century Victoria was tightly connected to Britain through trade, migration, and communications. Steamship routes and the completion of the Overland Telegraph in 1872, linking Australia to the global cable network, shortened the time for news and business decisions. Professional status often depended on British training and credentials; medical practitioners commonly held qualifications such as MRCS or LRCP, and colonial medical registration acts regulated practice. Institutions like the Melbourne Hospital (founded 1848) and regional hospitals in Ballarat served growing urban and provincial populations. These imperial and institutional frameworks inform the novel's depiction of transnational movement, credentialed expertise, and the tensions between colonial opportunity and metropolitan standards.

Social life in colonial Victoria rested on a gendered division of labor. Respectable middle-class women were expected to manage households, sustain family networks, and uphold propriety, yet many also undertook paid or semi-commercial work during downturns, including taking in boarders or running small enterprises. Legal change advanced slowly: the Married Women's Property Act 1884 in Victoria expanded married women's rights to own and control property. Female education widened, with institutions such as Presbyterian Ladies' College in Melbourne (established 1875) training young women for academic and musical accomplishments. Against this backdrop, the novel portrays domestic resilience and constraint as structural features of its society, not merely personal dispositions.

Colonial approaches to mental illness were institutional and legalistic. Victoria's first public asylum, Yarra Bend (opened 1848), and later Kew Asylum (opened 1871) embodied a system oriented toward containment, classification, and moral management rather than curative therapies. Commitment procedures required certification under lunacy statutes, often initiated by family members and sanctioned by medical authorities. Treatments were rudimentary by modern standards, and social stigma could shadow patients and relatives long after discharge. These settings and policies form an essential historical frame for the novel's interest in psychological strain and social vulnerability, situating individual distress within the practices and reputations of nineteenth-century colonial psychiatry.

Although written between the wars, *Ultima Thule* looks back to pre-Federation Australia to examine the human costs of colonial modernity. Its realism and psychological acuity register the volatility of a society built on extractive wealth, imperial credentialing, and speculative finance. By threading professional ambition, domestic duty, and social reputation through cycles of boom and bust, the work questions triumphal narratives of progress that celebrated Marvellous Melbourne and the goldfields. It reflects the era's institutions—hospitals, banks, asylums, charities—and critiques their limits, presenting a society in which mobility promised much yet offered scant protection against economic shocks, illness, and the pressures of respectability.

ULTIMA THULE

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Part I

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Chapter I

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When for the third time, Richard Mahony set foot in Australia^[1], it was to find that the fortune with which that country but some six years back had so airily invested him no longer existed. He was a ruined man; and at the age of forty-nine, with a wife and children dependent on him, must needs start life over again.

Twice in the past he had plucked up his roots from this soil, to which neither gratitude nor affection bound him. Now, fresh from foreign travel, from a wider knowledge of the beauties of the old world, he felt doubly alien; and, with his eyes still full of greenery and lushness, he could see less beauty than ever in its dun and and landscape.—It was left to a later generation to discover this: to those who, with their mother's milk, drank in a love of sunlight and space; of inimitable blue distances and gentian-blue skies. To them, the country's very shortcomings were, in time, to grow dear: the scanty, ragged foliage; the unearthly stillness of the bush; the long, red roads, running inflexible as ruled lines towards a steadily receding horizon...and engendering in him who travelled them a lifelong impatience with hedge-bound twists and turns. To their eyes, too, quickened by emotion, it was left to descry the colours in the apparent colourlessness: the upturned earth that showed red, white,

puce, gamboge; the blue in the grey of the new leafage; the geranium red of young scrub; the purple-blue depths of the shadows. To know, too, in exile, a rank nostalgia for the scent of the aromatic foliage; for the honey fragrance of the wattle[6]; the perfume that rises hot and heavy as steam from vast paddocks of sweet, flowering lucerne[7]—even for the sting and tang of countless miles of bush ablaze.

Of ties such as these, which end by drawing a man home, Richard Mahony knew nothing. He returned to the colony at heart the stranger he had always been[1q].

Landing in Melbourne one cold spring day in the early seventies, he tossed his belongings into a hansom[2], and without pausing to reflect drove straight to his old club at the top of Collins Street. But his stay there was short. For no sooner did he learn the full extent of his losses, than he was ripe to detect a marked reserve, not to say coolness, in the manner of his former friends and acquaintances. More than one, he fancied, deliberately shunned him. Bitterly he regretted his overhasty intrusion on this, the most exclusive club in the city; to which wealth alone was the passport. (He had forgotten, over his great wanderings, how small a world he had here come back to. Within the narrow clique of Melbourne society, anything that happened to one of its members was quickly known to all; and the news of his crash had plainly preceded him.) Well! if this was a foretaste of what he had to expect—snubs and slights from men who would once have been honoured by his notice—the sooner he got out of people's way the better. And bundling his clothes back into his trunk, he drove off again, choosing, characteristically enough, not a quiet hotel in a good

neighbourhood, but a second-class boarding-house on the farther side of the Victoria Parade[3]. Here, there was no earthly chance of meeting any one he knew. Or, for that matter, of meeting any one at all! For these outlying streets, planned originally for a traffic without compare—the seething mob of men, horses, vehicles that had once flowed, like a living river, to the goldfields—now lay as bare as they had then been thronged. By day an occasional spindly buggy might amble along their vast width, or a solitary bullock-wagon take its tortoise way; but after dark, feebly lit by ill-trimmed lamps set at enormous distances one from another, they turned into mere desolate, wind-swept spaces. On which no creature moved but himself.

It was here that he took his decisions, laid his plans. His days resembled a blurred nightmare, in which he sped from one dingy office to the next, or sat through interviews with lawyers and bankers—humiliating interviews, in the course of which his unbusiness-like conduct, his want of *nous*[5] in money matters was mercilessly dragged to light. But in the evening he was free: and then he would pace by the hour round these deserted streets, with the collar of his greatcoat turned up to his ears, his hands clasped at his back, his head bent against the icy south winds; or, caught by a stinging hail-shower, would seek shelter under the lee of an old, half dismantled "Horse, Cow and Pig-Market"[4], of which the wild wind rattled and shook the loose timbers as if to carry them sky-high.

Of the large fortune he had amassed—the fortune so happily invested, so carefully husbanded—he had been able to recover a bare three thousand pounds. The unprincipled

scoundrel in whose charge he had left it—on Purdy's equally unprincipled advice—had fleeced him of all else. On this pitiful sum, and a handful of second-rate shares which might bring him in the equivalent of what he had formerly spent in the year on books, or Mary on her servants and the running of the nurseries, he had now to start life anew: to provide a home, to feed, clothe, educate his children, pay his way. One thing was clear: he must set up his plate again with all dispatch; resume the profession he had once been so heartily glad to retire from. And his first bitterness and resentment over, he was only too thankful to have this to fall back on.

The moot question was, where to make the start; and in the course of the several anxious debates he had with himself on this subject, he became ever more relieved that Mary was not with him. Her absence gave him a freer hand. For, if he knew her, she would be all in favour of his settling up-country, dead against his trying to get a footing in Melbourne. Now he was as ready as any man could be, to atone to her for the straits to which he had brought her. But—he must be allowed to meet the emergency in his own way. It might not be the wisest or the best way; but it was the only one he felt equal to.

Bury himself alive up-country, he could and would not!...not if she talked till all was blue. He saw her points, of course: they were like herself...entirely practical. There were, she would argue, for every opening in Melbourne ten to be found in the bush, where doctors were scarce, and twice and three times the money to be made there. Living-expenses would be less, nor would he need to keep up any

style. Which was true enough...as far as it went. What, womanlike, she would overlook, or treat as of slight importance, was the fact that he had also his professional pride to consider. He with his past to condemn himself to the backwoods! Frankly, he thought he would be doing not only himself, but his children after him, an injury, did he agree to anything of the kind. No! he was too good for the bush.

But the truth had still another facet. Constrained, at his age, to buckle to again, he could only, he believed, find the necessary courage under conditions that were not too direly repellent. And since, strive as he might, he could not break down Mary's imagined disapproval, he threw himself headlong into the attempt to get things settled—irrevocably settled—before she arrived; took to scouring the city and its environs, tramping the inner and outer suburbs, walking the soles off his boots and himself to a shadow, to find a likely place. Ruefully he turned his back on the sea at St. Kilda and Elsternwick, the pleasant spot of earth in which he once believed he had found a resting place; gave the green gardens of Toorak a wide berth—no room there for an elderly interloper!—and, stifling his distaste, explored the outer darkness of Footscray, Essendon, Moonee Ponds. But it was always the same. If he found what he thought a suitable opening, there was certain not to be a house within coo-ee **[8]** fit for them to live in.

What finally decided him on the pretty little suburb of Hawthorn—after he had thoroughly prowled and nosed round, to make sure he would have the field to himself—was not alone the good country air, but the fact that, at the

junction of two main streets—or what would some day be main streets, the place being still in the making—he lit on a capital building lot, for sale dirt-cheap. For a doctor no finer position could be imagined—and in fancy he ran up the house that was to stand there. Of brick, two storeys high, towering above its neighbours, it would face both ways, be visible to all comers. The purchase of the land was easily effected—truth to tell, only too easily! He rather let himself be blarneyed into it. The house formed the stumbling-block. He sped from firm to firm; none would touch the job under a couple of thousand. In vain he tried to cut down his requirements. Less than two sitting-rooms they could not possibly do with, besides a surgery and a waiting-room. Four bedrooms, a dressing-room or two, a couple of bathrooms were equally necessary; while no house of this size but had verandah and balcony to keep the sun off, and to serve as an outdoor playroom for the children.

There was nothing for it, in the long run, but to put his pride in his pocket and take the advice given him on every hand: to build, as ninety-nine out of a hundred did here, through one of the numerous Building Societies[9] that existed to aid those short of ready money. But it was a bitter pill for a man of his former wealth to swallow. Nor did it, on closer acquaintance, prove by any means the simple affair he had been led to believe. In the beginning, a thousand was the utmost he felt justified in laying down. But when he saw all that was involved he contrived, after much anxious deliberation, to stretch the thousand to twelve hundred, taking out a mortgage at ten per cent[10], with regular repayment of capital.

It was at this crisis that he felt most thankful Mary was not with him. *How* she would have got on his nerves!...with her doubts and hesitations, her aversion to taking risks, her fears lest he should land them all in Queer Street. Women paid dearly for their inexperience: when it came to a matter of business, even the most practical could not see beyond the tips of their noses. And, humiliating though the present step might be, there was absolutely no cause for alarm. These things were done—done on every hand—his eye had been opened to that, in his recent wanderings. By men, too, less favourably placed than he. But even suppose, for supposing's sake, that he did not succeed to the top of his expectations—get, that was, the mortgage paid off within a reasonable time—where would be the hardship in treating the interest on the loan as a rental, in place of living rent-free? (And a very moderate rent, too, for a suitable house!) But Mary would never manage to forget the debt that lay behind. And it was here the temptation beset him to hold his tongue, to say nothing to her about the means he had been forced to employ. Let her believe he had built out of the resources left to him. For peace' sake, in the first place; to avoid the bother of explanation and recrimination. (What a drag, too, to know that somebody was eternally on the *qui vive*[\[11\]](#) to see whether or no you were able to come up to the mark!) Yet again, by keeping his own counsel, he would spare her many an hour's anxiety—a sheerly needless anxiety. For any doubts he might have had himself, at the start, vanished like fog before a lifting breeze as he watched the house go up. Daily his conviction strengthened that he had done the right thing.

21 Short for ipecacuanha, a medicinal preparation from a South American plant root historically used to induce vomiting or as an expectorant.

22 Nankeen refers to a durable yellowish cotton cloth originally produced in Nanjing (formerly transliterated Nanking); 'nankeen trousers' denotes trousers made from this cloth, common in 19th-early 20th-century colonial dress.

23 Tussore (often spelled tussar) is a coarse wild silk from India used for garments; here it describes the doctor's creased silk coat.

24 A puggaree is a wrapped cloth band worn around a sun helmet or hat in British colonial climates to protect from sun and heat.

25 A Latin phrase literally meaning 'limbo of the foolish' often used figuratively to mean a fool's paradise or an illusory phantom; the term here criticises a fanciful project as delusive.

26 An older medical term for puncture of the chest wall to drain fluid from the pleural cavity (pleural aspiration); historically a recognised surgical procedure.

27 A professional medical periodical in which doctors published case reports and articles; historically this name or similar titles referred to journals serving Australian medical practitioners.

28 An alternative medical system founded on principles such as 'like cures like' and highly diluted remedies; widely practised and debated in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

29 Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843), a German physician who founded homeopathy and whose name

commonly appears in contemporaneous medical debates.

30 A fluid-filled cyst caused by infection with *Echinococcus* tapeworm larvae (hydatid disease), which can form in subcutaneous tissue or internal organs and requires surgical management in many cases.

31 Probably a reference to a continental (French) piano-maker labelled 'Aucher Frères' (Frères = brothers); the text uses the name to contrast piano makes, and the exact historical firm may vary or be a fictional/period spelling.

32 Title and character of an 18th-century children's moral tale that became a popular pantomime; by the 19th century 'Goody Two-shoes' denoted a didactic show for children.

33 Latin for 'Thee, O God' and the title of an ancient Christian hymn of praise traditionally used in liturgical contexts and public thanksgiving services.

34 A French phrase meaning 'nobility obliges,' expressing the idea that privilege carries responsibilities; used here as a motto Mahony wishes his son to remember.

35 An industrial steam or factory whistle used to signal shift times; in the text its periodic shriek is a local, often oppressive, sound marking the town's industrial routine.

36 A British term for a wheeled baby carriage or pram; commonly used in the period to mean a child's stroller.

37 A local public-health appointment responsible for sanitation, disease control and inspection; in colonial contexts this was a paid official post with duties for a district or municipality.

38 Mentioned as a medical practitioner Mahony consults in Geelong; likely the surname of a contemporary physician

(exact identity not specified in the text) whom the protagonist seeks for a second opinion.

39 Latin for 'do not touch me,' a Biblical phrase often used idiomatically to mean 'leave me alone' or 'do not interfere,' here invoked to characterise Mahony's aloofness.

40 Hawthorn is a suburb of Melbourne, Australia; in the story it refers to the Mahonys' other house in Melbourne rather than the rural Barambogie property.

41 A city in Victoria, Australia, notable for the mid-19th-century gold rush; in the text Ballarat evokes Mahony's earlier professional success in a larger urban setting.

42 Oakworth is presented as a nearby town with a hospital to which the injured boy is sent; it may be a real or fictional local centre used in the novel for regional medical services.

43 A fictional small coastal town in the novel, representing a late 19th-century Australian seaside community and resort where much of the story is set.

44 A colloquial nickname given to Mahony because of his uneven gait; such local sobriquets were common in small communities to mark distinctive physical traits.

45 Common name for several Australian shrubs and small trees (often in the genera *Leptospermum* or *Melaleuca*) that form coastal scrub and bloom in spring; here it evokes the local vegetation.

46 A Latin phrase meaning 'nothing further beyond' or 'the highest point'; used in English to denote the ultimate example of something.

47 Flexible ladders made of rope and wooden rungs (often called Jacob's ladders) used to transfer people

between small boats and larger ships, notoriously precarious in heavy seas.

48 In 19th-century medical and maritime contexts this typically referred to alcohol or other quick-acting restorative substances (e.g., brandy) given for shock or seasickness; Mahony's remark rejects such remedies.

49 A historical medical term broadly referring to sudden loss of consciousness or stroke-like attacks; in the book 'apoplectiform' denotes episodes resembling true apoplexy.

50 A style of eyeglasses without temples that clip onto the nose (literally 'pinch nose'), often gold-rimmed and associated with Victorian-era dress.

51 Abbreviation for Postmaster General, the government minister (or senior official) responsible for the postal service, telegraph and related matters in British-derived administrations of the period.

52 A British coin and unit of account used into the 19th and early 20th centuries worth 21 shillings (one pound and one shilling); 'guineas' were commonly used in fees and professional charges.

53 Reference to the Kelly gang or 'Kellys,' the bushranging outlaws led by Ned Kelly active in Victoria in the late 1870s–1880s, notorious for hold-ups and widely discussed in colonial Australia.

54 The Latin botanical name for the weeping willow, a tree often planted along watercourses; the novel uses the Latin name to evoke a cultivated, familiar landscape associated with the asylum.

55 A meeting-hall for the Independent Order of Rechabites, a 19th-century friendly society promoting total