

Richard Bentley: Publishing Godfrey Mundy's *Our Antipodes*

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*I won't describe; description is my forte,
But every fool describes in these bright days
His wond'rous journey to some foreign court,
And spawns his quarto, and demands your praise —
Death to his publisher, to him 'tis sport
While nature, tortured twenty thousand ways,
Resigns herself with exemplary patience
To guide-books, rhymes, tours, sketches, illustrations.¹*

Richard Bentley (1794–1871) was born in Paternoster Row, the heart of the London publishing and bookselling trade, where his father, Edward Bentley, and his uncle, John Nichols, published the *General Evening Post*. After leaving St. Paul's School he worked in the family's printing firm then, in 1819, went into partnership with his brother Samuel, establishing their own quality printery in Dorset Street. Bentley's move into publishing occurred a decade later when a client, the publisher Henry Colburn, who had been placing business to the value of £3,500 with the brothers, was unable to pay his printing bills. Bentley sold his share in the business to his brother and became Colburn's junior partner for £2,500.

Alexis Weedon, in *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market 1836–1916*, suggests that in spite of personality differences and backgrounds “Bentley and Colburn successfully catered for the public taste, spent heavily on advertising, copied other publishers' successes and were litigious in defence of their copyrights.”² *The Juvenile Library* and *National Library of General Knowledge* were unsuccessful and the planned *Travel and Discoveries Library* never eventuated, but their *Standard Novels* series set a benchmark for cheap fiction at six shillings per volume and continued under Bentley's guidance long after his partnership with Colburn was dissolved in August 1832.

Within three years Bentley was an independent publisher, printing the works of William Hazlitt, Horace Walpole, Leigh Hunt and Jane Austen as well as publishing many popular writers of the day: Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Maria Edgeworth, and Frances Trollope. Four years later he secured a contract with Charles Dickens for two novels and appointed him as the editor for the

¹ Baron George Gordon N. Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto V, LII, *The Works of Lord Byron Including the Suppressed Poems* (Paris: A. & W. Galignani, 1828), 613.

² Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836–1916* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). Weedon, Professor of Publishing Studies at the University of Bedfordshire, UK, investigates the records of twelve publishers, including Richard Bentley.

newly-created *Bentley's Miscellany*, an imitation of *Constable's Miscellany* of "original and selected publications designed to provide cheap ... and agreeable knowledge in the areas of Literature, Science and the Arts."³

The first issue of *Bentley's Miscellany* appeared in January 1837, and its popularity was due in part to the serialisation of *Oliver Twist*. Within two years, Dickens had bought himself out of his contract and Harrison Ainsworth took over the editorship. By 1841 sales had dropped, Ainsworth's services were dispensed with, and Bentley stepped in as editor.

An economic downturn in publishing and bookselling throughout Great Britain and Europe from about 1842–1855 contributed to an already depressed home market. Publishing on a profit-sharing basis with new authors or reducing prices in the fiction lists brought little relief to Bentley and by 1854 he was forced to sell the *Miscellany* privately to Ainsworth for £1,700. The firm struggled to remain solvent, particularly after 1857 when the House of Lords denied the validity of British copyright of books by Americans. With a listing of more than fifty American authors, Bentley's losses were substantial. Involved in an intensely competitive domestic market, British publishers increasingly relied on the growing book export trade. While it might seem that Australia's rising population and limited local publishing and printing facilities made it, during the late 1850s, a significant and selective consumer of British books on all subjects, with sales outpacing even India's earlier lead, Wallace Kirsop's detailed research, examining newspaper advertising of book auctions and catalogues, suggests that Australia, like New Zealand and the United States, proved an ideal dumping ground for publishers' excess stocks.⁴

In 1833 Richard Bentley had joined the race to satisfy the Home readership for information about the Australian colonies with Lt. William Henry Breton's *Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia and Van Diemen's Land during the Years 1830, 1831, 1832 and 1833*.⁵ Concerned that "an emigrant should not be misled by over-drawn accounts," Breton described the landscape and the natives and reported on the progress of white settlement, the cost of living and employment opportunities.⁶ Each page was headed with a running-title, such as 'Female Slavery', and although his outlook was somewhat pessimistic, he

³ *Constable's Miscellany*. Eighty volumes produced from 1826–1835.

⁴ Wallace Kirsop, *Books for Colonial Readers—The Nineteenth-Century Australian Experience* (Melbourne: The Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand in association with The Centre for Bibliographical and Textual Studies, Monash University, 1995), 10–11.

⁵ Bentley issued a second edition of Lt. Breton's travels in May 1834, in which "new facts have been added and some errata corrected." A second issue in 1835, described as a third edition, included the preface to the second edition and a new title page.

⁶ Lt. W. H. Breton, RN, *Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia and Van Diemen's Land, during the Years 1830, 1831, 1832 and 1833* (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), preface.

appreciated the climate, the freedom from taxes and tithes, the plentiful provisions and inexpensive servants.

Edward Landor's controversial book about Western Australia, *The Bushman; or, Life in a New Country*, was published by Bentley in 1847. Illustrated by Lt. A. H. Irby, it is more than a settler's diary of trials and triumphs. For the publisher and readers caught up in the Home debate regarding the future of Britain's colonies, Landor's impassioned plea is for recognition of their welfare. He challenges the Government's "aim to keep them dependent on the Mother Country." "Too remote for sympathy—too powerless for respect," he writes, "their insignificance entitled them only to neglect."⁷

A year later, Bentley followed Landor's polemic with J. C. Byrne's *Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies, 1835–1847* (1848), a two-volume account including maps, which focused typically on the exotic and outlined employment and social prospects for emigrants.

Travel writing during this period had generated little profit for the publisher, so Bentley was taking a sporting chance in 1852 by publishing Colonel Godfrey Charles Mundy's second book, a triple-decker, entitled *Our Antipodes: or, Residence and Rambles in the Australasian Colonies, with a Glimpse of the Goldfields*.⁸ From June 1846 until his return to England in August 1851, the well-connected, Eton-educated Mundy had served as the Deputy Adjutant-General of the Australasian Colonies at a time when his cousin, Sir Charles FitzRoy, was their Governor-General.⁹ Bentley was attracted to Mundy's confident style, his sketchbook and the desire to portray "a just conception" of a part of the world becoming more important to the British Empire.

The Colonel also had form. In 1832 the distinguished firm of John Murray (London) had published Mundy's illustrated account of his time in India as aide-de-camp to Lord Combermere. *Pen and Pencil Sketches, A Journal of a Tour in India* attracted a great deal of puffery from *Fraser's Magazine*, which celebrated the young captain "as a hearty, adventurous, bold, chivalrous, dare-devilling, tiger-killing, jackal-murdering fellow, with a firm hand, a keen eye, and good humour

⁷ E. W. Landor, *The Bushman; or, Life in a New Country* (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), iii–vi.

⁸ R. A. Gettmann, *Victorian Publisher: A Study of the Bentley Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 105. His sampling dates from the conclusion of the Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley partnership, twenty years earlier than Mundy's visit, and does not take into account Richard Bentley's travel publishing nor the extraordinary impact of a book like *Our Antipodes* in 1852.

⁹ From 2 January 1851–17 January 1855, Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy was Captain General of New South Wales, Victoria, Van Diemen's Land and South Australia, and the Governor-General of all these colonies as well as Western Australia. Robin Brown, ed., *Collins Milestones in Australian History, 1788 to the Present* (Sydney: Collins, 1986), 211.

in abundance.”¹⁰ Mundy’s entry into print was a resounding success with a second edition in 1833. *Books for Railway Reading* (1838) also lists this title.

Our Antipodes was a wide-ranging and very entertaining account of life in the Australasian colonies, including New Zealand. In addition to the typical descriptions of landscape and the indigenous peoples it provided an historical background to white settlement, social commentary and up-to-date practical advice for mechanics and settlers as well as eyewitness reports of the latest gold discoveries. A memorandum of agreement was signed in London on 9 February 1852 and the contract provided for both parties to share equally in the profits, after deducting all expenses.¹¹ Gettmann points out in his study of the Bentley Papers published in 1960 that, “the profit-sharing agreement was useful in the case of gentlemen travellers or amateur authors for whom immediate payments were not imperative.”¹² However, in this instance Bentley also guaranteed to pay Mundy, regardless of the book’s success or failure, the sum of £200 in two promissory notes of £100 each at three and six months’ date from the day of publication of *Our Antipodes*.¹³

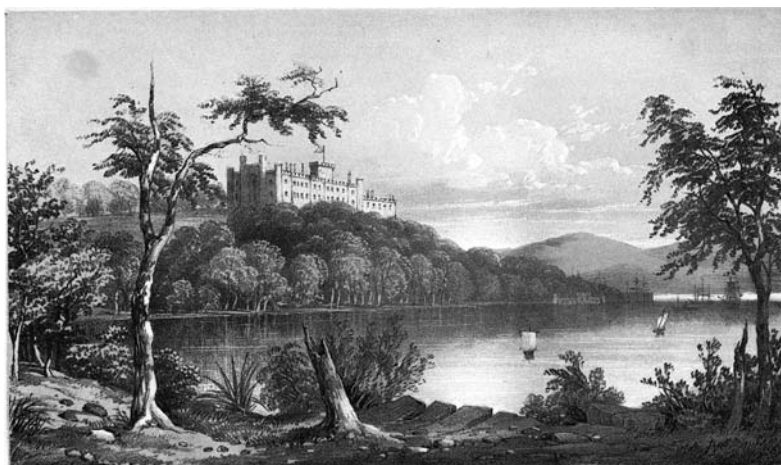


Figure 1: Louisa Mundy, *Government House, Sydney, and Cove Farm*
Our Antipodes Vol.II, third edition, revised, 1854.
(All images are from the private collection of Colin Bannerman.)

Statistics in Richard Bentley and Son’s *A List of the Principal Publications Issued from New Burlington Street During the Years 1852, 1854 and 1857* all record that the handsome first edition of *Our Antipodes*, in three volumes, demi octavo, with

¹⁰ *Fraser’s Magazine* 6 (September 1832), 148–61.

¹¹ Bentley Papers, British Library Add. Ms. 46616, ff. 95–98.

¹² Gettmann, 105.

¹³ Bentley Papers, 1823–1915, British Library Add. Ms. 46652, f. 150.

fifteen illustrations based on sketches by Mundy and his wife, Louisa, drawn on stone by W. L. Walton and lithographed by Hullmandel and Walton, was released for sale on 29 April 1852 at 42 shillings.¹⁴ The *1852 List* (Privately Printed 1918) outlines briefly the book's publishing history, noting, "A Second Edition (two thousand copies in the same form) appeared on October 28, 1852." On the title page the book is described as "Second Edition, revised" and there are changes to the setting of Volume I but not apparently to Volumes II and III. However, the attribution for Mrs G. C. Mundy's picturesque sketch of *Government House, Sydney and Farm Cove* in Volume II, made to her husband in the first edition, has been corrected.¹⁵

Bentley's *1854 List* gives the date of 15 December 1854 for "a Third Edition, complete in one volume, demi 8vo., cloth ... at 15 shillings, of which fifteen hundred copies were printed and two chapters (Emigration and Transportation) combined (Ch. XIX) and the Sydney Market Reports omitted from the Appendix. A few passages rewritten and a note omitted."¹⁶ Both the title page and a new preface announce a third edition: "In issuing an Edition of *Our Antipodes* reduced from three volumes to one, the Author believes that a better work, as well as a cheaper Book, will be offered to the Public." However, the publication date on the title page is "1855" and the eight plates illustrating this single volume bear, as they do for all the illustrated editions of *Our Antipodes*, the original date of "1852."

Such was the popularity of Mundy's travel book that Bentley also released a fully-illustrated three-volume set of *Our Antipodes*, described on the title pages of all the volumes as "Third Edition, revised" and dated on the title page for Volume I, 1854, Volume II, 1852 and Volume III, 1854. This composite effort is not mentioned in the Bentley *Lists*.

The *1857 List* (1904), under the heading "Bentley's Popular New Series of Two Shilling Volumes," announces: "the Fourth Edition [Publisher's Monogram and Motto]. Small crown 8vo, coloured picture boards. The present Edition has no illustrations, but in the text apparently coincides with the previous edition. The Fifth Thousand was advertised early 1858." The *1854 List* (1918) notes "A Fourth Edition, in blue cloth 3 shillings or coloured paper wrapper 2 shillings was published on November 24, 1857."¹⁷

¹⁴ Mundy's title is abbreviated hereafter in references as *OA* and any parenthetical references are to volume and page numbers in his work.

¹⁵ Mrs G. C. Mundy, *Government House, Sydney, and Cove Farm, OA II*. Frontispiece; *View on the Mountain Road, OA III*, 75. See also Webby, Elizabeth. "Louisa and Godfrey Mundy" in Joan Kerr, ed. *The Dictionary of Australian Artists, Painters, Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992), 19–21.

¹⁶ Richard Bentley and Son's *A List of the Principal Publications Issued from New Burlington Street During the Year 1854* (London: 1918).

¹⁷ The publishing dates for the *Lists* are correct. They are "privately printed lists," "fifty copies printed" in London for Richard Bentley and Son after the sale of the House of Bentley to

The first edition's gold blocked and decoratively embossed blue covers, showing a globe of the world divided into hemispheres and a witty design, probably from Mundy's pencil, combining the acts of reading and writing, illustrated precisely the Colonel's point of view. On top of the world, the enthralled reader is attired for bed, comfortably reclining in an adjustable library chair with a detachable reading table. His slippered feet are on the raised footstool and he is reading *Our Antipodes* by candle-light. Upside-down and down-under is the uniformed Colonel, sword by his side, the mightier quill in his hand. He is seated on a long-legged stool and bent over a slope desk, furiously penning his antipodean bestseller.

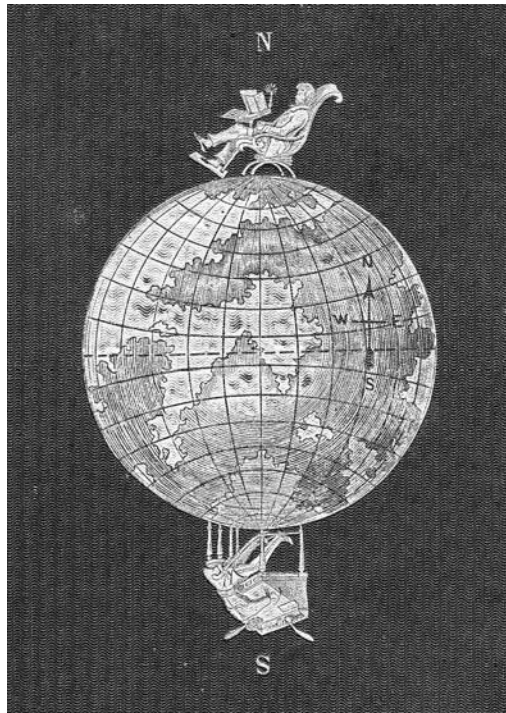


Figure 2: Cover of *Our Antipodes*, 1852.

Our Antipodes became compulsory reading for travellers by sea or armchair. Within twelve months selections were extracted to provide the Australian component of a German children's book of world adventure.¹⁸ Interest was keen. Bentley negotiated a German version in 1856 described as being “nach G. C.

Macmillan in 1898.

¹⁸ *Das Buch der Reisen: bunte Bilder aus der Natur und dem Menschenleben zur Belehrung und Unterhaltung für die reisere Jugend*, gesammelt und herausgegeben von H. Kletke (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1853).

Mundy" ("after G. C. Mundy").¹⁹ It appeared in "Dun wrappers, title repeated on front wrapper, with figure of native, or red cloth boards, gilt ornamented spine with short title *Australien von Mundy*"²⁰ and was adapted by Friedrich Gerstäcker (1816–1872) who focused on the prospects for German emigrants with "much that is relevant to the English and British interests omitted."²¹ His publisher, Karl Andree, commented in the Foreword: "... it is clear that the Germanic culture, in its English variant will dominate Australia and the whole of the South seas."²² Gerstäcker followed this work with a Swedish adaptation in 1856 and a *neue ausgabe* for German readers published by Verlag von C. Senf's Buchhandlung, in 1867.²³

Gerstäcker was a professional writer of travel books and although his visit to Australia coincided with the last months of Mundy's stay it is more likely Bentley recommended him as the translator or adapter.²⁴ Even before his Australian tour he had compiled *A Handbook for Travellers in Northern and Southern Australia* in 1849 to assist German emigrants.²⁵ The material had come from several travellers' accounts, among them: J. C. Byrne's *Twelve Years' Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835–1847* published by Bentley in 1848 and Charles Rowcroft's *Tales of the Colonies*, which Gerstäcker had translated into German in 1845.²⁶

¹⁹ *Wanderungen in Australien und Vandiemensland*, nach G. C. Mundy. Deutsch bearbeitet von Friederich Gerstäcker. Hausbibliothek für Länder und Völkerkunde [Lands and Peoples] (Leipzig: Verlagsbuchhandlung von Carl B. Lorck, 1856).

²⁰ J. A. Ferguson. *Bibliography of Australia*, Vol. VI, 1851–1900 H–P. (1965; Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1977). 764–5.

²¹ *Wanderungen in Australien und Vandiemensland*, ii.

²² *Ibid*, x.

²³ *Vandringar i Australien och Vandiemens Land, efter G. C. Mundy. bearbetad af Friedrich Gerstäcker, öfversättning* (Stockholm: L. Brudins, Forlag, 1857). Richard Bentley had published *Rambles in Sweden & Gottland with Etchings by the Wayside*, by Sylvanus (Author of *Pedestrian Reminiscences at Home and Abroad with Sketches of Country Life*), 1847.

²⁴ F. Gerstaecker, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World*. (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1853 and 1854; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853). In German as *Reisen, von F. Gerstäcker*, Vol II–Australia (Stuttgart und Tübingen: J. G. Cottascher Verlag, 1853–1854). *The Two Convicts*, new ed. (London: G. Routledge & Co. 1857) reprinted to the 1930s. In German as *Die Beiden Sträfflinge*, Australischer Roman, Vols I–III (Leipzig: Costenoble, 1857), *Im Busch: Australische, Erzählung*, Vols I–III (Jena: Costenoble, 1864).

²⁵ F. W. C. Gerstäcker, *Nord Und Süd Australien—Ein Handbuch for Auswanderer, Northern and Southern Australia, A Handbook for Migrants* (Dresden & Leipzig: Arnoldische, Buchhandlung, 1849). "Although descriptions of landscape, climate and conditions are seen through English eyes—the content applies to Germans equally for they too, with effort, prudence, planning and modest expectations, should be able to have a secure existence in the country" (Preface). Charles Rowcroft took up a land grant in Tasmania in 1821 and returned to England in 1826. *Tales of the Colonies, or, The Adventures of an Emigrant*, edited by a late colonial magistrate, Vols I–III (London: Saunders & Otley, 1843). Subsequent editions were published under his name.

²⁶ *Die Abenteurer eines Auswanderers: Erzählungen aus den Colonien von Van-Diemens-Land*, von Charles Rowcroft; aus dem Englischen von Friedrich Gerstäcker (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1845).

In recent years a continued interest in *Our Antipodes* has led to the publication in Australia of various editions,²⁷ because historians like Henry Reynolds and social critics including Joy Damousi, Lydia Wevers, and Robert Hughes have all viewed the work as an invaluable historical source that presents accurately the realities of colonialism.²⁸ Godfrey Mundy's writing reflects the Eurocentric viewpoint inherent in the book's title: he endorses the British government's policy of imperial expansion, the development of pastoral and mineral resources and the spreading of Christianity to "these remote and interesting offshoots of his native land". Rather than reintroducing convict transportation to the colonies, a subject under debate at the time, he supports selective emigration, but does not want the moral atmosphere "Tipperaryfied" by the idle and disaffected Irish (III:82). Indeed at times he shares an unexpected sympathy for the neglect felt by frustrated colonists like Edward Landor, while his astute observations go far beyond previous references to the indigenous inhabitants. Mundy reminds the reader "Australia is held neither by inheritance, by purchase, nor by conquest but by a sort of gradual eviction. As our flocks and herds and population increase ... the natural owners of the soil are thrust back without treaty, bargain or apology ..." (I:226–8).

"Extermination is then the word," proclaims the reviewer for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. "Colonel Mundy entertains no doubt ... these terrible razyas ... are for the most part ignored by the local authorities ... or else considered as justifiable negrocide."²⁹ Reynolds refers to Mundy's reporting on instances of genocide:

Colonel G. C. Mundy, who travelled extensively in the colonies, was both shocked and surprised when "men of station and cultivation" advocated indiscriminate retaliation against the Aborigines. A frontier settler told him he would shoot "a blackfellow wherever he met him as he would a mad dog."³⁰

²⁷ G. C. Mundy, *Sydney Town 1846–1851*, facsimile of six chapters from *Our Antipodes*, ed. Bill Hornadge (Dubbo, NSW: Review Publications, 1971). G. C. Mundy, *Our Antipodes...*, facsimile (Kilmore, Victoria: Lowden Publishing, 1977). *A Record of Observations in Van Diemen's Land by G. C. Mundy*. Annotated Tasmanian section from *Our Antipodes* (Adelaide: Sullivan's Cove, 1986). G. C. Mundy, *Our Antipodes...*, facsimile of Vol. II only (Christchurch: Kiwi Publishers, 1999). Godfrey Charles Mundy, *Our Antipodes...*, ed. D. W. A. Baker (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2006).

²⁸ Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convict, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Lydia Wevers, *Country of Writing: Travel Writing and New Zealand 1809–1900* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002); Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: a History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787–1868* (London: Collins Harvill, 1987).

²⁹ "Residence and Rambles in Australia," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 72 (1852), 300–315.

³⁰ Henry Reynolds, *The Question of Genocide in Australia's History: An Indelible Stain?* (Ringwood, Victoria: Viking, 2001), 95.

A lengthy article in the *British Quarterly Review*, entitled "Australia and Its Wealth,"³¹ is based on *Our Antipodes* and two other works.³² It quotes liberally from Mundy's observations of town and country life and focuses particularly on the gold discoveries at Ophir in NSW, the rise of the pastoral industry and the prosperity of the squattocracy.

... The term squatter—inlegant, as it may appear, is an official term in this colony (I:275)

... In Australia there are squatters of all classes, high and low with interests in the city and at their stations ... lawyers by dozens who practise the art of fleecing both in town and country ... half the members of the Legislative council are squatters. The Speaker squats equally and alternately on the woosack of the House and at his wool-stations on the Murrumbidgee. (I:281)

Assured of the finest hospitality when travelling on official business, Mundy stayed on a sheep station at Carcoar where "the evenings passed very agreeably with music, singing and plenty of books; and on the table just as might be in a country house fifty miles from London, lay the last number (four or five months old of course) of the *Illustrated London News*, *Punch*, and other periodical publications." He went on to observe:

The pictorial press is a very important and valuable vehicle of general information to the people of these Colonies—especially to those who have never visited the Old World—the plates conveying impressions more distinct and probably more lasting than could ever be afforded by verbal description alone. Through the pleasant medium of the pencil they learn the beauty and grandeur of the Mother country, and the effect is to incite her children to follow and emulate her... (I:296–7)

The Athenaeum,³³ attracted to descriptions of "life on the gold diggings" and a novel convict tramway, "a railway worked by white slave-power" (III:204), was critical of the Colonel's style. "He is lively, discursive and anecdotal ... as if talking at a mess-table."³⁴ Nonetheless, sales indicate that the public did not mind if Mundy digressed from weighty matters to apocryphal stories about bushrangers and drunken convict servants and masters, or thrilled readers with descriptions of hunting the kangaroo.

³¹ *The British Quarterly Review* 16 (Aug. 1852), 238–66.

³² *Twelfth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners*, presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, 1852.

³³ John C. Francis, *John Francis, Publisher of The Athenaeum: A Literary Chronicle of Half-a-Century*, two vols. (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1888). Bentley titles were advertised and reviewed regularly in *The Athenaeum*.

³⁴ *The Athenaeum Review*, No. 1280, 8 May 1852, 509–11.



Figure 3: G. C. Mundy, *Hunting the Kangaroo*
Our Antipodes Vol.II, third edition, revised, 1854.

From the other end of the world *The Sydney Morning Herald* reviewer complains “of the remissness of the London agents of our Sydney booksellers” as “two steamers have arrived which left England after the book was published ... yet there are no copies for sale in the colony.” Referring to his “copy received by us from our London bookseller, by the ‘*Australian*,” he tackles “the one fault in the work:”

... the author has not acted fairly towards those who received him on friendly terms ... we question whether he would have been so hospitably received, whether all restraint would have been thrown off in his presence, and he have been treated as an old friend instead of a casual acquaintance, if it had been known that he regularly “logged” every night ... that on such a “day [a gentleman] had so many thousand head of cattle or sheep, that he came here without a penny, and is selling land at so many hundred per cent, profit. ... Nor should the jokes (some of them very bad) which may have caused a laugh when first uttered be put down to the persons making them.

Appalled by “a breach of good taste” in Mundy’s descriptions of the remnants of the former convict system and how “he has unnecessarily dragged before the public statements that had been long ago, by common consent, buried in oblivion, and thereby inflicted much unnecessary pain,” the reviewer senses there is in “the gallant author a feeling that a colonist is a different kind of person from his fellow-subjects in England. He speaks of a colonist with the same spirit that a Brobtignagian [*sic*] may have spoken of Gulliver.”³⁵

³⁵ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Vol. 33, No. 4807, 9 Oct. 1852, 2.

Undoubtedly *Our Antipodes* was a most successful travel book and pictorial guide. While earlier accounts highlighted the exoticism of the Australian landscape and its inhabitants, by 1852 the urbane Mundy had a lot more to write home about. Ably balancing history, anecdote and witnessed events he informed the British government and readers about major issues facing the well-being of the Australasian colonies and actively promoted selective emigration to ensure their future economic development. Curiosity had also been stimulated by the colonies' representation at Britain's Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations (1851) dubbed by Mundy "that great tournament of the arts" (III:265) and the book's appearance coincided with improved literacy and educational standards among the wider public, the result of social and political agitation. Mundy presented "useful knowledge" in an entertaining way and *Our Antipodes*, in cloth or coloured boards, joined Henry Brougham's "march of the mind" onto the shelves of subscription and free libraries, the reading rooms of mechanics' and literary institutes and railway bookstalls throughout Britain.

Sophisticated printing ensured Mundy's amateur sketches leapt from the pages in Walton's tinted lithographs with a clarity and sophistication not previously seen in this genre. Indeed, Charles O'Hara Booth's convict tramway, which serviced coalmines and linked with Port Arthur, survives only through Mundy's drawing. During the 1890s this image became the subject of a large oil painting, now lost, by the artist Captain Haughton Forrest and it was subsequently photographed by John Watt Beattie to create, along with other prints and paintings of the period, a series of lantern slides for a lecture on the penal settlement.



Figure 4: G. C. Mundy. *Convict Tramway*, "a railway worked by slave power"
Our Antipodes, Vol.III, third edition, revised, 1854.

Caroline Leakey, in her novel *The Broad Arrow*, devotes several pages to a terrifying descent in the coal trucks made by the Evelyn family. There was the shame of being conveyed by men treated as beasts, as well as their close proximity. The overseer needed bribing with tobacco to ensure a safe ride with the convict relay teams,³⁶ and as Robert Hughes has pointed out they “could rattle downhill at 30 m.p.h., a terrifying velocity at a time when people seldom went faster than a trotting horse.”³⁷ When Mundy caught up with William Smith O’Brien and other Irish political prisoners stationed in Van Diemen’s Land he knew what he would do if he were the Governor: “Prescribe a month’s steaming in the Port Arthur Railway—at Midsummer for any future impatient aiming at the overthrow of the British Constitution.” (III:221)

After nearly six years’ residence and rambling Mundy had had “enough of new, raw colonies” (III:409) and sailed with his family for England on 24 August 1852 to take up the position of Under Secretary to the Office of Wars and Colonies. With *Our Antipodes* a runaway success, having gone through four editions, the ebullient Mundy plundered his diaries to create a ‘romance’ entitled “An Incident of Australian Life—A Tale of Twenty Years Ago” (1853) and “Bush-Ranging Facts” (1854). Both appeared in the final issues of *Bentley’s Miscellany* before the private sale of the periodical in 1854 to Richard Bentley’s former editor, Harrison Ainsworth.³⁸

By 1867 Richard Bentley’s son George had taken over the main responsibility of the firm and edited *Temple Bar*—a collection of literary essays, biographical pieces, travel sketches, and serialized fiction. In 1895 George was succeeded by his son Richard who had been in publishing since 1884. Three years later the House of Bentley came to a close when he sold the business to Macmillan and Co. for £8000.

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³⁶ Caroline Woolmer Leakey, pseud. “Oliné Keese,” *The Broad Arrow: Some Passages in the History of Maid Gwynham, A Lifer*, two vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1859), II:278–84.

³⁷ Hughes, 408.

³⁸ G. C. Mundy, “An Incident of Australian Life—A Tale of Twenty Years Ago,” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 34 (July–Dec. 1853), 489–505, 607–20. “Bush-Ranging Facts,” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 35 (Jan.–June 1854), 238–48, “The Missing Sentinel: A Garrison Yarn,” *Bentley’s Miscellany* 72 (Sept. 1854), 467–79 (English subject matter).