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# **Tallangetta, the Squatter's Home**

**Howitt William**

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TALLANGETTA,  
THE SQUATTER'S HOME

A STORY OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE.

BY  
WILLIAM HOWITT,  
AUTHOR OF "TWO YEARS IN VICTORIA,"  
*&c. &c.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LONDON:  
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## P R E F A C E.

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IN these volumes it has been my object to depict the various phases of Australian life and character more fully than could be done in my "Two Years in Victoria." Perhaps the reader will be surprised to find in the Bush and in the competitive hurry of the new colonial city some of the personages who figure here. But it requires only a brief sojourn in a colony like that of Victoria to remind you that its population is made up of the overflowings of England and many other countries, and that these overflowings have carried with them every possible theory and practice, every idea, feeling, passion, speculation, pursuit, amusement, and imagination which are fermenting in the old countries.

When the reader comes upon a certain personage in these pages, Dr. Spenser Grayson, I beg him not

to treat him as an imaginary one. If he will turn to a file of the *Times* newspaper of 1853 he will find a letter of Sir William à Becket's, late Chief Justice of Victoria, giving an account of this very man, under one of his aliases, as he came before him; and in the *Melbourne Argus* he would find an additional account, on reprinting Sir William's letter, of the remarkable poetical genius of this man, who, the editor says, sent them by far the best poetry they ever received.

But perhaps no character would be less expected in the gold colony than that of the spiritualist, Dr. Woolstan, or Mr. Flavel, the seer, whom I have introduced here. Yet it was in the far bush that I was first surprised by an exhibition of table-turning, and, what is more curious, we have now, at this moment, an Australian spiritualist in London, astonishing daily circles of the most intelligent and unsuperstitious classes by demonstrations far more surprising than those I have assigned to Dr. Woolstan at Tallangetta.

When that psychological phenomenon — which may now be truly termed a new yet decided feature

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of social life — had only advanced to the stage of table-turning, Mr. Faraday thought he had completely laid the ghost of the question by attributing the rotatory motion of a table to the muscular action of the persons putting the tips of their fingers upon it. But a man cannot well have gone much amongst the inquiring classes of society — and I mean private and select society, not public and promiscuous assemblies, where some professional Medium exhibits — who has not seen phenomena which will require not only something beyond Mr. Faraday's theory, but beyond any theorising upon any yet known physical principles, to explain. We are told by numbers of people of first-rate education and talents, people perfectly sane, perfectly honourable, wide-awake as any of us, who hate a lie and despise humbug, that tables do not now merely turn round by the imposition of hands, but heavy ones rise from the floor to the ceiling, leaving everyone's hands below and out of reach, turn over and descend sometimes to the floor, legs uppermost: and these, we are assured, are but of the lowest class of the physical demonstrations of the kind. In numbers of families the daily conversa-





tion with the spirits of their departed friends, as they believe, goes on as regularly as with those still incarnate; painting, writing, speaking by spiritual influence, are freely exercised, and that in the families of men of good status in church, in state, in army, in navy, in literature and science. All round us this state of things prevails, to an extent which few have any full conception of; and I have myself seen, in most trustworthy and distinguished quarters, things which I have no hesitation in pronouncing to be deserving not of sneering, not of huffing off without inquiry, but of a calm yet serious and careful observation, as of a social and psychological phenomenon of singular and impressive features, of wide extent, and rapidly-advancing development. Such careful and philosophical investigation would detect the error if such error exists, lead to explanation if explanation be possible, whilst, if there be a truth in it, however disguised or undeveloped, turning a cold shoulder to the sun does not put it out -- it only leaves the sun shining on your backs.

Sir David Brewster and Lord Brougham have dipped their toes in the rising ocean of inquiry; we



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, with philosophical genius, will  
cal spirit and patience to the  
s spiritualism has been exhibit-  
orm or another; and there is a  
t where there is smoke there is  
. In the long ages of the sacred  
rkable centuries which succeeded  
Christianity, in the mythic struc-  
ancient nations, in India, China  
ping and table-turning these  
gypt, Greece, and Rome, under  
d concealments of magic, witch-  
ian philosophy, and the occult  
ldle ages, spiritual agency has  
rding to the firmest convictions  
ds of those countries and times.  
is "familiar spirit," Numa his  
s had their genii, Friar Bacon his  
aracelsus his inward illumination,  
: Geister," so Jacob Böhme and  
cent, and Zschokke in our times,  
temporaries by their revelations.



Certainly, in all ages, there has been a very great smoke in that quarter.

But my business with it here is only artistic. Spiritualism has produced, in America, not merely rapping, but the poems of Harris, one volume of which only I have read,—“The Legend of the Golden Age,”—and which I do not hesitate to pronounce amongst the finest poetry since Shelley and Byron; finest in all the great essentials of poetry, in the power, vividness, boundless sweep and entire originality of imagination, in its plastic energy and affluence of language, and in its bold and unconventional, yet sublime philosophy. The smoke of spiritualism, therefore, is now visible enough; the fire is burning near enough to us to warrant that use of it in imaginative literature which our great dramatists and fictionists, which Shakspeare, Horace Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, Scott, Beckford, Bulwer, which Goethe in Germany and Poe and Hawthorne in America, have made of the mysteries and the popular excitements of the times in which their fictions are laid. Where I found it I have used it—in the Bush; and that not in the person of a humbug

at in men educated, scientific,  
l their relations, profoundly reli-  
ly honest. I have seized Time  
k of his, at which he has had  
nd been one of the first to plant  
rose fiction. The philosophy of  
gs to the philosophers. As for  
; in all times settled the affair in  
ilton will have it that—

al creatures walk the earth,  
n we wake, and when we sleep.”

one of the most spiritual and  
of the age, contends, in “Festus,”

—  
rial, immaterial  
of pure wisdom are despised.  
ow that, properly prepared,  
pted knowledge to receive,  
th desired, illumined; man's  
l, dilated, clarified,  
ation and divine  
to convene with purer forms  
æn surround us aye and gladden  
d and exaltation. Thus,  
aven is not more clear to one  
er, outwardly; but one,