THE LAST EXPLORER

The Life and Work of Ernest Favenc

CHERYL FROST

Foundation for Australian Literary Studies

Monograph No 9

THE LAST EXPLORER

THE LIFE AND WORK OF ERNEST FAVENC

by

CHERYL FROST

FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIAN LITERARY STUDIES

James Cook University of North Queensland
Townsville, Australia
1983

Frost, Cheryl, 1945 -

The last explorer, the life and work of Ernest Favenc.

Bibliography.

ISBN 0 86443 101 5

1. Favenc, Ernest, 1846-1908.
2. Explorers, Australian – Biography.
3. Australia – Discovery and exploration.
I. James Cook University of North Queensland. Foundation for Australian Literary Studies.
II. Title (Series – Foundation for Australian Literary Studies monograph series; no. 9)

919.4'043'0924

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, for permission to quote from the original journals of Ernest Favenc's expeditions, written by himself, by S.C. Briggs, and by Emily Caroline Creaghe; for permission to reproduce pages from Favenc's journal of the *Queenslander* expedition; and also for access to, and permission to quote from, Favenc's correspondence.

I have received invaluable assistance in my research from the staff of the Mitchell Library, the State Library of Victoria, the Oxley Library, the Fryer Memorial Library, and the library of James Cook University of North Queensland.

I also wish to thank Madeline Frost for typing the completed draft, and especially my colleagues, Mr Ross Smith and Ms Lindel Ryan for their help in tracing some of Favenc's contributions to newspapers and journals. Funds supplied by the Australian Research Grants Commission were also instrumental in the tracing of some references. Finally, I am grateful to Professor Harry Heseltine, who accepted this biography for publication among the monographs of the Foundation.

Ernest Favenc

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

EARLY YEARS IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

In some respects Ernest Favenc was remarkable, and in others merely representative. In the 1870s and 80s he explored some of the remaining unknown parts of Australia, and he wrote histories, so he may be interesting to historians. He wrote stories, novels and verse, and so has a claim on the attention of literary critics. Since he was also a journalist, his ideas and attitudes reveal something about Australian society at the end of the last century. Finally, the experiences which shaped his attitudes took place mostly in North Queensland, and his life and writings therefore throw light on the development of the region.

A few general reference works give outlines of Favenc's life.[1] Some of the details are as follows.

He was born in London on 21st October 1845 and educated at Temple College in Cowley in Oxfordshire and at the Werdeutscher Gymnasium in Berlin.[2] He had at least one brother, Jack, and two sisters, Edith and Ella.[3] He came out to Australia in 1863, when he was eighteen, and after staying in Sydney for a few months moved to North Queensland, then the frontier for European expansion. Probably he was driven north by an innate love of adventure and the chance of making his fortune in the pastoral industry. The Lands Acts of the new Queensland government in 1860 had thrown the Kennedy district open for selection, but by the end of 1863 the land there had all been claimed, and the new districts of Burke and Cook were opened for settlement in January, 1864.[4] Able young men like Robert Christison, who in 1864 set out from an established run in the Kennedy for Lammermoor station, moved westwards with the frontier, and Favenc initially followed their example:

> Soon after arriving in Sydney he went up to a station on a tributary of the Upper Burdekin in the then newly-settled district of the Kennedy in Northern Queensland. Here, with the nearest place thirty miles away, and never-never country west and north, he got his first bush experience, living there most of the time with but one companion, and sometimes alone. After a trip to the Gulf District, then in its first stage of development, he settled down to station work of all kinds in various parts of northern and central Queensland.[5]

In gaining "colonial experience," or jackerooing, Favenc was doing as many a "gentleman squatter" from England had done before taking up his run, but since he did not settle permanently in one place his experience was comparatively varied and extensive.[6] He learned the bush better than most, as his obituary in the Sydney *Bulletin* was to point out: "He was a born bushman. Englishman though he was, his feats in a multitude of tight places won him the admiration of his native-born companions."[7]

The twenty years and more which Favenc spent in North Queensland cannot now be reconstructed in detail, but his major occupations are known or can be inferred. His first contribution to the *Queenslander* appeared in 1871. Like all his early writing it was signed "Dramingo," the tribal name of an aboriginal who had been his companion for some time.[8] From 1871 and probably earlier he both worked and wrote, and his publications are fairly informative about his experiences in the North Queensland bush. These were in fact the chief inspiration of his writing throughout his life.

As the above passage indicates, he worked mostly on stations. Their names, and the dates of his employment have mostly been lost, but a poem entitled "Thermuthis," printed in the *Queenslander* on 14th March, 1874, gives the date of writing as 1st February, and the place as Telemon, a station on the Flinders River north-west of Hughenden. A short story, "The Lady Ermetta, or the Sleeping Secret," contributed to the Christmas Supplement of the *Queenslander* in 1875, opens with the narrator, who is probably, from the tone, to be identified with Favenc, acting as superintendent on a station in the far outback. This is almost certainly the position he usually held, after he had gained experience.[9]

Between August and December 1875 a serial by Favenc, *Jack Essingham, or the Graves of a Household,* was running in the *Queenslander.*[10] It vividly describes environments and activities which he knew well: the petrified gossipy existence of an outback town; the dignified lifestyle of the owners of an established station; the determination needed to make a success of a new station in North Queensland. Jack Essingham goes as part-owner to the neglected and ill-equipped station of Hillingford, and Favenc narrates in detail the process of restoring it. He preaches a homily on the viability of cattle over sheep in the North,[11] but for a reader now his attitude to the aborigines is most striking. On arrival Essingham, who is Favenc's ideal of manhood, brings the station blacks to what he considers a proper submission by flogging one of them, and later he leads a raid against a tribe believed to have speared cattle.[12] Favenc clearly would not have been impressed by Robert Christison's humane, if somewhat paternalistic, treatment of the aborigines on Lammermoor. In fact he condemned the policy followed by Christison, of encouraging them to camp on the newly-established stations.[13]

The evidence that he participated personally in dispersals is overwhelming. They are described twice in his other fiction – in "Pompey," written for the *Bulletin* in the 1890s and as the climax of the novel, *The Secret of the Australian Desert* – and twice in factual anecdotes contributed to the *Bulletin.*[14] All of these episodes are bloody and terrible. A passage in "In the Night," a story which appeared in the *Bulletin* on 17th December, 1892, further supports Favenc's participation. It describes the end of a battle between whites and aborigines:

> One dead white man, speared through the body; one with his head cut open, whom the speaker was trying to revive, and four dead blacks, lying on their faces with outstretched arms – the posture in which niggers usually die who meet with a violent death.

(The term "nigger" was the usual one for the period, and need not suggest that Favenc was unusually racist.) Elsewhere he admits his involvement, rather defensively, but in so many words: "Few people, unless, like myself, they have had personal experience, know anything about black dispersing by the police."[15] In a more reminiscent tone, he writes of an occasion,

"Once, when Mr E. Cunningham of Woodhouse and himself were following up some blacks who had been spearing cattle, they pulled up for a smoke, and sat down on a hillock on the present site of Charters Towers. . . ."[16] Apart from the evidence it offers of one of Favenc's station employments, a simple statement such as this has its value in that it captures the physical conditions of a past way of life and the prevailing mental attitude.[17]

From August, 1879 to January, 1880, Favenc published a second serial, *Lost in the Winning,* in the *Queenslander.*[18] It was longer than *Jack Essingham* but inferior to it. The first episode is an account of a race to the Lands Office between rival squatters in North Queensland to register holdings. Favenc himself is unlikely to have taken part in such a race, but some of the men who had must have been among his employers.

His second occupation in the region was also in the grazing industry. He spent, he says, four years "overlanding."[19] Given the conditions of the time, this term might well be meant mostly in the strict sense in which he employed it in a series of articles which he wrote much later:[20] of moving stock across unexplored country to new runs. In "A Drover's Diary," which he published in the *Queenslander* between April and September, 1876,[21] the trip was over a recognized route along the coast from the Calliope River to Lake Elphinstone. The Diary deals with the many obstacles encountered, notably the dangerous swim across the flooded Fitzroy River and the back-breaking pull over the Connor's Range near Collaroy, also described by Rachel Henning,[22] but its dominating tone is humorous. Favenc has a talent for capturing landscape unpretentiously:

> For dismal, eerie-looking scenery I would back a Queensland river at half-flood at night-time against any place. The dark water slowly gliding amongst the mud-stained trunks of the weeping tea trees, the added gloom caused by the foliage overhead, the ragged strips of bark here and there flapping, all make one think of the dismal swamps of Canada.[23]

In 1865-6 the grazing industry in North Queensland was hit by economic crisis. Opportunely, in July 1867, gold was discovered on the Cape River, some hundred and fifty miles west

of Townsville, and a series of other finds followed – the Ravenswood field in October 1868; the Gilbert River field in April 1869; and the Charters Towers field in December 1871.[24] Favenc was thus provided with his third occupation, mining. A piece of doggerel which he contributed to the *Queenslander* reveals that he was in Ravenswood, broke after a spree, in 1871.[25] Favenc's acquaintance with Charters Towers extended beyond his early speculations in company with Edward Cunningham on whether there would ever be a goldfield on the site. He wrote later:

> Perhaps there is no more striking remembrance amongst my memories of the north than the rise of Charters Towers. Not the rise as it is generally known, but its development from a few scattered tents – a development which few witnessed, and no one has told of so far as I know. I happened to be mixed up with it.[26]

Possibly he also mined for copper at Cloncurry. "My Story," printed in the *Queenslander* early in 1875,[27] tells how the first-person narrator and two other prospectors set out from the Cloncurry diggings and reached to within a hundred miles of the Roper River by the end of November, 1871. Such precision implies a factual basis. Favenc used his experiences as a miner in other writings as well: "The Gold King" tells of the adventures of a drunken miner, Tom Duval, in the township of "Mullucksville," probably Ravenswood;[28] a late episode in *Jack Essingham* presents a detailed account of life in a North Queensland mining camp;[29] and in "A Drover's Diary" Favenc writes of the Canoona goldfield (then closed) in the manner of a mining man.[30]

Something may now be said about Favenc's writing during the 'seventies, which is the main source of information on his life.

Between November 1871 and November 1880 he published in the *Queenslander* seventeen poems, half a dozen short stories, two short comic articles, two serials and two "diaries." Two poems signed Dramingo also appeared in the *Australian Sketcher.* The bias of this early writing was therefore towards poetry and fiction.

His attitude to the early verse printed in the *Queenslander* was, at least on the surface, rather rueful. He commented on a poem which he quoted, by way of decoration, in "A Drover's Diary:"

> The above quotation is from an unpublished poem of my own. I mention this for fear anybody might mistake it for Milton's or Tennyson's. Some day when I'm in a benevolent frame of mind, and want to make the fortune of an enterprising publisher, I will give it to the public.[31]

This passage in fact reflects realistically the quality of the verse. Dramingo's first poem in the *Queenslander,* entitled "Leichhardt," suggests various sensational fates which may have befallen the lost expedition, and ends with the possibility that in future "some famed city" may stand upon Leichhardt's "very bones." It prefigures the idea of struggle with the land which was to dominate Favenc's writing and his life. A range of themes emerges in the other early poems. In "The Noble Savage" a clergyman obsessed with tracts confronts an aboriginal obsessed with gin.[33] "An Episode" deals with the typically Victorian comic scenario of a marriage proposal.[34] Some sentimental poems draw moral reflections from the contemplation of nature or the passing of time.[35] The closing stanzas of "To the Morning Star" are sufficient illustration:

> Still, in lone majesty shine on,
> Creation's radiant king,
> The unceasing woe thou lookst upon
> To thee no change can bring.
>
> In some new life, the grave beyond,
> Thou yet our home mayst be;
> When freed from every earth-wrought bond,
> Our souls are fit for thee.

Favenc also versifies romantically remote events. In "Thermuthis" the baby Moses is drawn from a Nile closely resembling an Australian creek at sunset. "The Demon of Man," also based on the Old Testament, describes the visitation to Egypt of the angel of death, and foreshadows Favenc's later romantic preoccupation with death.[36] In "Sir Guy's Memories" he takes on the *persona* of a landless knight whose lady has forsaken him for one more nobly born. Sir Guy transfers his own affections with an unromantic equanimity, yet some lines have an heroic ring:

. . . but when fall I must,
'Neath a worthy foeman's lance,
And gasp out my life in the trodden dust
Of some hard fought field in France. . . .[37]

Except as concerns the poet's financial position, the situation is not easily translated into the Queensland of the 1870s, but then a perusal of the *Queenslander* shows that the colony was far from autonomous culturally. Tennyson's Arthurian poems and the romantic re-creation of the Middle Ages by the early Pre-Raphaelites might have been expected to influence some people.

Four of the poems in the *Queenslander*[38] and the two in the *Australian Sketcher*[39] were reprinted in Favenc's anthology, *Voices of the Desert,* in 1905. They are works of local colour, and, as in his prose, Favenc is at his best in descriptions based on experience. "In the Desert" was written, as he stated in the *Queenslander* and as the drafts in his diary attest, when his first expedition was battling loneliness, exhaustion and starvation near Cresswell Creek:

A cloudless sky o'erhead, and all around
the level country stretching like a sea –
A dull grey sea, that had no seeming bound,
The very semblance of eternity.

All common things that this poor life contained
Had passed from me, leaving no sign nor token;
My footfall broke stillness that had rained
For centuries unbroken. . . .

The sun at even sank down angry red
In the dim haze that bounded the far plain;
And then the stars usurped the heavens instead,
With silence in their train –

Near the end, the spirit of the desert pleads to be left a little space, free from the white man's vanities and cares. This implied awareness of his own race as intruders persisted as a minor counter-theme in Favenc's writing throughout his life.

Love or nostalgia for the desert dominates the preface of *Voices of the Desert.* The prose description is more successful than the verse:

> If there is such a thing as darkness which can be felt, then the Australian desert possesses a silence which can be heard, so much does it oppress the intruder into these solitudes. One might remain there a long day and night and never hear as much sound as would be caused by the rustle of a leaf. . . .
>
> Repellent as this country is, there is a wondrous fascination in it, in its strange loneliness and the hidden mysteries it might contain, that calls to the man who has once known it, as surely as the sea calls to the sailor. To pass a night alone in the desert spinifex country, is to feel as much cut off from the ordinary life of the world as one could feel if transplanted to another sphere. The motionless air, so dry and devoid of moisture that a polished gun-barrel can be exposed to it and remain untouched by a speck of rust, seems to bring the stars nearer to the earth and enhance the beauty of their rays. The ordinary light of the moon is coarse and garish compared to the pure effulgence of the larger planets. On a moonless night the coming of the morning star is heralded by a breaking light that might well be mistaken for the dawn. Like a cold, white flame the planet rises, and to watch its ascent from the horizon gives a man the feeling that he is watching the birth of a new world.[40]

On the other hand, two of the poems of the 1870s reprinted in the volume narrate the deaths of men alone in the remote bush, almost certainly expressing some of Favenc's imaginative fears for himself. In "An Episode of Bush Life"[41] a rider dies of thirst, pinned down by his dead horse within earshot of a running river, and in "Dead in the Queensland Bush"[42] a traveller dies after drinking from a waterhole found too late.

In all the reprinted poems description and narration merge into a philosophy which typically is full of despair, a fact which the poet admitted in his preface, and attributed to the landscape. "Haunted"[43] and "*Gloria Mundi*"[44] are predominantly expressions of Favenc's near nihilism. "*Gloria Mundi*," written during or soon after the first expedition, exposes the hollowness of earthly love and beauty, of ambition and the longing for gold, and finally suggests that there is no post-mortal compensation:

> We are gone! and alike are forgotten
> Our virtues – our sins.
> On our tombstone, neglected and rotten,
> Black Death sits and grins.

Since "*Gloria Mundi*" was printed last in *Voices of the Desert,* this view was given a special emphasis, which might have been expected, perhaps, after the disappointments of Favenc's later life. A permanent gloomy aspect of his temperament is revealed, however, when it is remembered that he first wrote "*Gloria Mundi*" in the midst of what he was later to call his "best days."[45]

The earlier of the two articles in the *Queenslander* in 1872 is a satire of scientific learning – a paper supposedly read in 2872 by one Professor Allinamess, giving humorous false etymologies of the names of bush creatures.[46] The ending of Favenc's story, "A Gum Tree in the Desert," suggests that his attitude to science was unchanged twelve years later.[47] The second article satirizes professional loungers and scroungers in bars.[48] Writing from their point of view, he makes comments such as,

> No, sir: during a long career in Queensland I can say with pride, that I never did any work yet worth mentioning.

On the other hand, Favenc undoubtedly had considerable first-hand knowledge of bars himself.

Dramingo's six stories in the *Queenslander* between December 1874 and November 1880 illustrate their author's versatility. "The Gold King" and "The Lady Ermetta," written respectively for New Year and Christmas, are fantasies containing personifications such as Gold, Father Time, the Old Year and the New Year, and the Genius of Christmas. "My Story" and "The Medium"[49] are supernatural tales set partly in the bush and partly in Australian cities. "A Romance of Kangaroo Point"[50] is a satiric comedy set mainly in Brisbane, while "The Strange Adventure of George Vallance"[51] is a shilling shrieker, concerned with a group of vivisectionists of human beings in London. The chief practitioner is called Allcut. Three of these stories are set partly in Europe – a venue which Favenc abandoned in his later fiction.

Simple experiments in technique match the variety of genres and settings. Four stories are written wholly or partly in the first person. "The Lady Ermetta" and "George Vallance" are tales-within-a-tale, and two-thirds of "My Story" is sup-

posedly transcribed from a diary. The kernel story of "The Lady Ermetta" parodies popular romantic fiction, and the tale as a whole attacks the genre to which it belongs – the Christmas story. These were to flourish in appropriate special issues of newspapers and magazines for many years to come.

As far as ideas are concerned, the question most often dealt with is the justice which time and fate may or may not measure out to good and evil people. In two of the four stories in which this is the central issue – "The Medium" and "A Romance of Kangaroo Point" – justice is done. "My Story" and "George Vallance" end without reaching a resolution, but justice seems unlikely to be done in either. This supports the implication of his poetry, that Favenc was an unresigned fatalist rather than a conventional moralist. "The Gold King," on the other hand, ends with the enrichment and rehabilitation of the alcoholic Tom Duval. Favenc's morality or despair may have depended on his mood, or he may have written what he thought would please his readers in different contexts.

The plot of the serial, *Jack Essingham,* moves between Europe and Australia, and resembles in its early parts Clark's *For the Term of his Natural Life,* which was running concurrently in the *Queenslander*: Jack Essingham, the scion of an aristocratic provincial family in England, is forced to emigrate because he is believed guilty of an adultery committed by his weak-willed cousin. He makes his fortune as the owner of Hillingford, and after seven years the truth about the original offence is discovered. Jack's life in Queensland is attended by various poignant happenings, including the deaths of his beloved half-sister Rachel, and his profligate half-brother, George. A neighbour, and suitor of Rachel, a young man named Horace Vernon, is reformed by his love from idle pleasure-seeking to manliness and hard work. Despite these numerous overtones of romantic melodrama, *Jack Essingham* does not conform to the genre in every detail. In the first place, no fit mate is found for Jack, though he is courted over several chapters by an ardent barmaid. Secondly, the ending is not a joyful reconciliation, as might have been expected. After an interview with his family in England, Jack sets out to look for his cousin, who is being paid

by the Prussians to spy on the French – the year is 1870. Jack succeeds in his mission, but is captured by the French with incriminating documents belonging to his cousin, and is shot as a spy in mistake for him. This is an ironic repetition of the beginning of the story, and one would expect the point to be that fate is capable of some dastardly double-crosses. Instead, Favenc extracts a conventional religious message: that a person's death, however undeserved and apparently arbitrary, has been decreed by a God who desires only good for his children. Death is therefore to be met not only bravely but with confidence and faith. This, of course, totally reverses the view of "*Gloria Mundi.*"

In *Lost in the Winning* comic and satiric episodes set in Brisbane alternate with melodramatic episodes on a station in north-west Queensland. As in "A Romance of Kangaroo Point," the satire of the urban chapters depends on the first-person narrator, in this case a pet magpie named Maggie. Maggie belongs to Mrs Danten and her four grown-up children. She approves of the idealized elder brother, Jack, and younger sister, Clara, but disapproves of Agatha (the Bouncer), who is given to gluttony, vanity and self-deception, and of James, who is avaricious and cowardly. Maggie ironically exposes these weaknesses to the reader, while the other characters remain unconscious of them, at least on the surface. Clara, who possesses wit as well as beauty, is employed as another instrument for exposing and punishing urban character types, such as gossips and clergymen. Maggie began life as a country bird, and often longs to return to what she remembers as an idyllic free existence in the bush. This is one of the very few expressions, in the writing attributed to Favenc, of the romantic nostalgia for the outback which is to be found in poets like Paterson and Morant in the 'nineties,[52] though it may not after all be the dominant point of view in the decade.[53] Favenc's predilection for the remote desert is not really to be compared with this feeling. Like Paterson, however, he sees the bush as the sphere of exciting incidents and as encouraging the development of tough and manly characters, and he certainly prefers it to the nuances of urban existence.

In the selectors' race to the Lands Office which begins the serious plot of *Lost in the Winning,* one man miscalculates his distance and dies of thirst in arid country only minutes before a thunderstorm brings the rain which would have saved his life. Such incidents are frequent in Favenc's poetry and fiction. The rambling plot centres on David Nevill, who becomes emotionally involved with a beautiful young woman named Jane Dunwick, living on a station next door to his own. Partly through her relatives, Jane becomes the centre of an unlikely congruence of crime which makes, especially towards the end, for some highly-charged situations, from which the author wrings the last drop of emotion.

Favenc's fiction in the *Queenslander* in the 1870s possesses the usual faults associated with nineteenth-century newspaper fiction: it is often melodramatic and poorly structured. On the other hand it is rarely dull, and attests to creativity and liveliness in the writer. Its best quality is authenticity, and it is based on a life experience which in many respects was unusual. It can be read as a guide to the fantasies, interests, and cultural expectations of Queenslanders during the decade.

Favenc's fifth occupation in Queensland, and the only one for which he is much remembered nowadays, was that of explorer. He must have been a free-lance explorer from his first arrival in Australia: his stories and poems reveal an intimate acquaintance with every recognizable locality in the North, from the desert to the east coast and the islands, from the edges of the Gulf to the rainforests of the tableland. In 1878, however, Gresley Lukin, the proprietor of the *Queenslander*, put up the money for an expedition to cross in a direct line from Brisbane to Port Darwin, surveying the route of what he believed should be a new railway line, and Favenc took the opportunity to turn professional.

CHAPTER 2

THE *QUEENSLANDER* TRANSCONTINENTAL EXPEDITION

The railway line did not eventuate, and is not likely to, perhaps, even in another hundred years. The idea seemed sound enough at the time, though financially risky. If it had been built it would have transformed the colonies, especially Queensland, by lessening the "tyranny of distance." Favenc pointed this out in his own terms in an article in the *Sydney Mail* in May, 1881, when he still hoped that the scheme would be put into effect:

> We in the older colonies will watch the progress of the work with great interest. That its completion will indirectly affect us, there is no doubt. We cannot open up a new highway to the old world without feeling it. That, if successful, it will shortly put Queensland in the foremost rank is also nearly certain. When we come to consider how much more trade it will bring to her seaboard in the north, and the impetus to immigration that will ensue, we must not be surprised if the next few years see her advance with giant strides.[1]

Even though it failed of its chief purpose, the *Queenslander* expedition was the most successful of the four which Favenc led, partly because it crossed large tracts of new country, and partly for its narrative interest. He left four separate accounts, all still available: his hand-written journal, now in the Mitchell Library; a colourful version entitled "An Explorer's Diary" printed in the *Queenslander;*[2] a sober narrative in his *History of Australian Exploration;*[3] and a somewhat more personal and expansive account in his late history, *The Explorers of Australia and Their Life Work.*[4] In addition S. C. Briggs, surveyor for the expedition, kept a journal, also now held by the Mitchell Library. The following account is based on Favenc's and Briggs' journals and the version in the *Queenslander.*

Favenc left Brisbane in July, 1878, accompanied by Briggs and G. R. Hedley, who was officially second in command. In the *Queenslander* Favenc described the last leg of the trip to Blackall, in a Cobb and Co. coach. A high point was the crossing of the Comet,

> a muddy-looking ditch, traversed by a very low-level bridge. You dash down a steep incline almost at right-angles to it, as if you meant going straight over the bank to find a muddy grave. A sharp wheel round puts you on to the bridge – not *over* it, as seems highly probable at first blush – and with a yell and a rush you get up the opposite bank.[5]

Much to the surprise of the townspeople, if Favenc is to be believed, the coach reached its destination, where a race meeting and a stock show were being held. The principal pub was crowded with bushmen, among them Alex Jardine and Adam Mossman, and one night a clever sneak thief made a large haul.[6] The explorers set out to the north-west on 19th July, after an enthusiastic send-off. Briggs recorded:

> Packing horses and got all square for a start. Blackall people gave Champagne and drank our healths in a most kind manner. Got fair away amongst showers of old boots by four and made about seven miles west of Blackall by sundown – everything very satisfactory. Camped early.

The first stage was across known country to Cork station on the Diamantina. Favenc's first notebook is filled with sketches of landscapes and people and with calculations of courses through the bush and of racing odds, so that only the events of one day – 7th August – appear in detail. A complete account of the first stage nevertheless appeared in the *Queenslander,* in three articles in October and November. Publication was delayed by the difficulty of communicating with Brisbane. In the early articles Favenc refused to take himself or the expedition seriously:

> I like sticking in readings of thermometer; it looks scientific; and I have noticed in all the late journals of exploring expeditions that they do it. Now I am anxious to do the thing properly; I want to keep up the character of a bold explorer after the latest model.[7]

Not surprisingly, the editor felt obliged to explain that "An Explorer's Diary" was not an official record, but "was commenced by its author by way of amusement to while away, now and then, an evening in camp."[8]

The playfulness of the account in the *Queenslander* can be found also in the journal entry for 7th August, but other factors

are present as well – a weary response to the monotony of the trip and some patronizing feelings towards Briggs:[9]

> And in the morning there was much frost, so that there was even ice in the buckets, and all men found many excuses for stopping near unto the fire; but presently the sun was very comfortable. And the horses being collected and each horse furnished with his pack, we turned our faces towards the north-west and set forward on our way, passing for many hours through much open country. . . . And at noon tide we came to some scrub of a strange white gray, which one of our party said was called mulga scrub and mulga grass by the people who do live here. . . . So we crossed the creek in the centre of the valley, and made our camp on the other side where one of our party killed a serpent, a very venomous beast about twice as long as a man. And after we had wondered much that it should come out in winter time, for these beasts like not the cold – we left it close to the campe for our surveyor to walk on when he came in, which was a very merrie geste –

Words like "mulga" and "creek" in this parody of late medieval romance style, or *The Pilgrim's Progress,* produce a remarkable effect, to say the least. If only in imagination, Favenc was allowing his feelings to dictate to the conditions. It is obvious even from the account in the *Queenslander* that the trip to the Diamantina was not very easy. Some of the horses were "screws" and behaved perversely, and the miles of spinifex country caused horses and riders great discomfort:

> If anybody does not know what spinifex is like, let him imagine about five thousand knitting needles rolled up in inextricable confusion, with all the points outwards; scatter these tangles over barren stones like a newly-metalled road; and that is the sort of country we have been going through today.[10]

The party reached the Diamantina nevertheless, exactly a month after leaving Blackall.

They spelled there for about two weeks and recorded mostly unfavourable impressions. Briggs complained that the storekeeper at Cork "liquored up all the evening and never asked one of the fellows to have a drink."[11] Favenc wrote more poetically for the public of the Diamantina as the "home of the winds," and described features of the landscape:

> The gorges at the head of this creek are very striking; the rocks are such a bright red, and every cliff is crowned with a dark cap of scrub; the spurs break off abruptly and end in three or four isolated-looking peaks; and the cliffs have little caves worn and fretted in their faces, like loopholes in an old fortress.

He adds that, "It blows hotter than hot sometimes – almost makes one think the gates have been left ajar, and we are getting a foretaste of the future." Opal, a former native policeman based at Cork station, joined the expedition, and Favenc acquired supplies and fresh horses.

Still travelling north-west, now through unexplored country, they reached the River Burke on 8th September. The landscape changed from sandstone and spinifex to light savanna and they enjoyed the clear water in the sandy river bed and a change of diet to wild duck. (On 28th August Briggs had written, "Opal and self scoffed a snake – very warm today.") On 10th September they set out "to cross the Never-never" between the Burke and the Herbert (now the Georgina).

Favenc's journal, which was kept up conscientiously after leaving the Burke until 21st September, is preoccupied with the search for water, which almost always had to be dug for in the creek beds. The entry in the *Queenslander* for 21st September summarizes these days:

> As for the water, in the course of a few more days I anticipate being able to give the horses a shovel and send them down to the creek to dig for themselves; it is quite laughable the way in which they wait about for a waterhole to be opened for them. . . . At the last creek we camped at, thirty miles from the Herbert, we had to go deeper, and in consequence every drop had to be baled out, and an artificial waterhole made with a waterproof spread on the ground. This is a cheerful kind of employment.

They shot lorikeets for food, and Favenc remarked that they "would not be here at all but for the bloodwood trees which are laden with blossom, on which they feed."[13] He was still finding the landscape striking:

> When I got back to the horses and looked around I could not help being struck by the scenery, barren as it was. It is in such places you fully realize what a narrow escape the whole interior of Australia had of being a desert. On all sides bare red sandy soil, excepting where covered with the prickly triodia; no sign of life

> save our horses, camped under the shadiest tree they could find, and horribly disgusted with their surroundings; in the background the barren sandy peaks and tablelands, stern and gaunt in their fantastic singularity; and overhead a cloudless sky, but with a kind of hot-looking haze lying low above the horizon.[14]

At the last camp, fifteen miles from the Herbert, no water could be found, and they left it at 4 a.m. to avoid travelling through the hottest part of the day.

They followed the Herbert north to its junction with Rankin's Creek, and soon (23rd September) encountered civilization in the form of a mob of travelling cattle. Banks, the man in charge, killed a beast for them. Briggs underlined the word "beef" in his journal, and pointed out that it was the "first feed of Beef since we left the Burke."

Briggs' journal provides most details about this time, while the party spelled on the Herbert. Hedley rode north to Rocklands station to fetch more beef. In camp, the mornings were spent in repairing water bags. . . . "All hands bad with the gripes. One of my eyes bunged up with the Fly or swelling 'blight.' Turn in early at 12.30. Out again and shifted all the packs into tent. Thunderstorm through country from the westward. However, we only got a few drops." On 4th October, Frank Scarr, who was returning from Tennant Creek to his home in Queensland, arrived at the camp, to the "great surprise" of Favenc and Briggs. He gave what Briggs called "an awful account" of the country to the west, and he and Briggs exchanged calculations as to the latitude of Rankin's Creek. Favenc acknowledged in the *Queenslander* that Scarr provided valuable information about Lorne and Buchanan's Creeks.

On the 6th the explorers followed Rankin's Creek for seven miles to its junction with Lorne Creek, where grass and water were adequate. They continued along Lorne Creek slowly for nearly two weeks, as their horses regained condition, and set out on the dry stage to Buchanan's Creek on the evening of the 19th. They arrived at about 7 a.m., "having travelled all night over utterly timberless country, the last ten miles over very cracked and barren plains."[15] Though Favenc judged the waterholes in Buchanan's Creek to be impermanent, the party settled

down to explore and by the end of October they had completed several forays into the surrounding country.

On the 21st, his birthday, Favenc left for the north, driving horses loaded with water bags. Early the next morning he discovered and named Birthday Creek, but the country remained unpromising: "All that morning I rode over the most desolate country I ever saw – barren plains without a single thing of any sort in sight."[16] In the evening he turned south again towards Buchanan's Creek:

> While riding over a blue-bush flat – my attention being directed towards the two horses I was driving – I felt something touch my foot, and looking down saw a big gray snake comfortably coiled round my horse's fore leg. Grayfriar managed to get rid of him somehow and, as no bad effects followed, I suppose it was not of a venomous species, but it was too dusk to see distinctly what sort of snake it was.

Hours later he concluded that he had crossed Buchanan's Creek in the dark, so he made camp. The next day proved equally eventful:

> As the sun rose, the view that I saw that morning surpassed anything that I had ever before beheld. Whether it was that the slope was so gradual, or that the morning was exceptionally clear, I know not; but never did I have such a vivid conception of distance as I got that morning. East and west the level country stretched on and on until it faded into gray nothingness, and the weakness of our human vision alone seemed to stop the sight from travelling on for ever; only to the south a thin black line that through the field glasses looked so near and attainable bounded me. It grew hotter and hotter, and as I rode on over the level downs country the black line of timber – now shadowy and indistinct, now broad and plain (as the haze that the midday heat creates kept rising and falling) – kept me in a state of curiosity that at 11 a.m. was solved. The well-grassed downs country ran down on the gentlest slope imaginable, the forest rose as softly on the opposite slope, but where they met there was no creek – only the prickly spinifex, the stunted bloodwood, the grotesque ant-hills, and the red sandstone of the desert.[17]

No hint of these feelings or of the artistry with which they are expressed here appears in the fragmentary notes of this adventure in Favenc's journal. He turned his horses and followed his tracks back to Buchanan's Creek.

Another of the excursions from Buchanan's Creek was undertaken by Favenc and Briggs. They set out to the north-west on the 27th, and, returning, struck the creek far to the north, where Frank Scarr had camped. Scarr had believed that the water at his camp would last for a month, but Favenc and Briggs found it completely dried up. At night they began to follow the creek bed back to Amazon Lagoons, but by 10 o'clock the horses were completely exhausted. After hanging their saddles on a tree the men went on on foot until 12.30, as Briggs recorded, "spelling and laying down every ten miles – awful walking among the bluebush and lignum." They camped until 3 a.m., balancing the chance of passing the camp in the dark against the impossibility of travelling after sunrise. Briggs continues:

> However the gods were propitious and we had the pleasure of hearing the horse bells just as day broke. Made our way into the lagoon and walking in knee deep took such a drink. The sun looked lovely on the water but I hope never to see it rise again under the same circumstances. We had been 24 hours without a drink. Made up to camp and opened our bottle of brandy. Drank success to the Trans Continental. We had a near perishing.

By now the functions of the white members of the expedition were clearly defined: Hedley stayed in camp and hunted or fished – essential activities because the supplies of dried meat were now low; Briggs sometimes went with Favenc on his explorations and sometimes remained in camp with Hedley; Favenc seems to have led every expedition into new territory. As early as 1st November Briggs commented sympathetically on the effects of this energetic engagement with the country: "Favenc awfully knocked up and a little disagreeable. Poor beggar has been doing too much." The difference in character between Favenc and Briggs is obvious from their narrations. Favenc gives facts in his journal about distance, direction and landscape while in the *Queenslander* he offers polished and edited literary performances. Briggs uses his diary to express personal emotions and concerns, which had as much to do with comfort and survival as with observation.

Exploration in the neighbourhood of Buchanan's Creek continued for another two weeks, as Favenc searched for a route to the north-west. On the 8th he set out to the west, and

came upon a group of aboriginal women, who were digging for yams. After rounding them up he questioned them about water, and they directed him to a creek running south-west into a large lake. He named the creek "Brunette" and the lake "de Burgh." When he and Briggs returned next day to their camp on Brunette Creek they had another, rather different, encounter with aborigines:

> Hedley had caught some fish when we got back, and we were just enjoying a little fish dinner when a chorus of yelling and screaming arose, and a large body of natives made their appearance on the opposite bank of the creek. They had no weapons, and it was evidently a peaceful visit, but we politely intimated that we preferred them on the opposite bank, and persuaded them to stay there while we finished our dinner. I had always considered that the waving of green boughs by natives as a sign of peace was a pretty fiction of the story books, but as these blacks did it I must henceforth believe in it. After we had packed up and saddled we allowed the blacks to cross the creek, and after giving them a few trifles we started north-west in search of a camp, for there was no grass worth speaking of where we had dinner.[18]

The next day the party investigated the flats around Lake de Burgh, and Favenc concluded in his journal that it was "a fine sheet of water, though surrounded by abominable country." On the 11th he discovered a second lake and named it "Sylvester," but there was still no water-course to the north-west. He continued to search for six days, and on the 17th found another lagoon, this time to the north. It was named from the flocks of corellas which were present, and the base camp was shifted there the next day, but a search revealed only dry water courses to the north-west. Corella Lagoon proved to be a meeting place for aborigines. Favenc estimated their number at three hundred, and speculated (or perhaps noticed) that they were celebrating tribal rites. He gives a few neutral facts – that they had erected gunyahs, that fresh-water mussels were their main food, that they carried water in large wooden vessels called "coolamen" – but is too ready to condemn what he saw as laziness, sexism and lack of hygiene. To us now the life of the aborigines at Corella Lagoon may appear as an idyll of the desert and the bush. It was certainly an extremely intelligent adaptation to a different environment.

On 20th November the whole tribe – every black in South

Australia, according to Briggs' journal – visited the white men's camp. They kept to the "line of demarcation" established for them – the other side of the lagoon – and displayed only friendly curiosity. The explorers reacted with defensive hostility, understandable in view of their relative numbers and ingrained prejudice. After two days of tension and keeping watch they moved their camp to a less promising waterhole five miles to the north east.

On 26th November, the day that they had agreed to send Lukin a telegram from the Overland Telegraph Line, they set out on a definite push to the north. They rode twenty-two miles to Cresswell Creek, which Favenc had already discovered, but it was without water. Opal, who had been tracking a stray horse, left the party during the day, and was not seen again. He may have joined the tribes at Corella Creek. Though Favenc waited for him, he did not organize a search, which may not have been practical. The next day the explorers followed Cresswell Creek down for twenty miles. In mid-afternoon, when the horses were at the end of their strength, they sighted a fine lagoon which they named "Anthony" in honour of Briggs' brother. Briggs' journal conveys the intense anxiety of the last part of the ride, listing the signs that water was nearby, such as an old crow and dingo tracks. In the *Queenslander* Favenc wrote more calmly of broaching their last half-bottle of brandy to christen the creek, and "in consideration of having at last got on a watercourse that promised to help us a good bit on our road."[19]

His optimism turned out to be ill-founded. After spending two days and a night in a solitary, fruitless search for water in the north, he led Briggs and Hedley westwards along Cresswell Creek. They named the last water on the creek the Adder Waterholes after the dominant fauna. (They killed seven death adders themselves and found the bones of several previously killed by blacks.[20]) Further west the creek lost itself utterly in "a great tract of flooded country – a nice mixture of bluebush flats and polygonum swamps; all dry of course."[21] It was on these flats, which in places were covered with white dust from many rainless seasons, that the expedition most nearly came to grief.

They set out westwards on the evening of the sixth. By 9 a.m. on the second day the horses were seriously distressed. Favenc and Hedley nevertheless separated and rode west and south on two of the fresher mounts while Briggs remained with the others. Neither Favenc nor Hedley saw anything but desert, barren beyond all of Favenc's experience and expectation. By the time they returned to Briggs, the horses could hardly be kept from the waterbags. They set out for the Adder Camp, thirty-five miles away, travelling due east all through the night and the next morning:

> As the day got hotter the horses seemed to lose heart, and began to straggle about in an aimless kind of manner, giving us great trouble and taking a great deal of extra work out of the horses we were riding. The flat was simply indescribable – so bad was it that the horses, in spite of the thirst that was tormenting them, would round up in a mob and refuse to move, so frightened did they get with constantly stumbling.[22]

Favenc, who was bringing the weaker horses at a distance behind Briggs and Hedley, was at last forced to leave two behind. The men finally reached the water holes, utterly worn out. In the *Queenslander* Favenc goes on to describe the nadir of the expedition:

> After an hour's spell, which was absolutely necessary for the horses, I started back with a water-pack for the two I had left on the flat. One was dead, the other dying, when I got there. The dying one was an old favourite of mine. I held the poor fellow's head up while he drank the water I had brought – it was the last kindness I could do him; he was too far gone to rally, the infernal blue-bush country had killed him. I had not brought a pistol with me, so I had to leave him to die alone, under the bright moonlight on the desolate flooded flat; and as I rode I felt, I think, more sorrowful than I would have done for a human companion. . . .
>
> It was midnight when I got back. Briggs and Hedley were so sound asleep that they did not hear me ride into the camp, and no wonder, for this was the third night in the saddle.[23]

The sentimentality of this account should not lead one to doubt its truth. It receives a bald confirmation from Favenc's journal and a lengthy, independent confirmation from Briggs'. Briggs seems to have controlled his panic while Favenc and Hedley were away by filling pages with loving messages to his mother and brother and girl friend, and with his hopes in God's protection. The conformity of these men to nineteenth-century

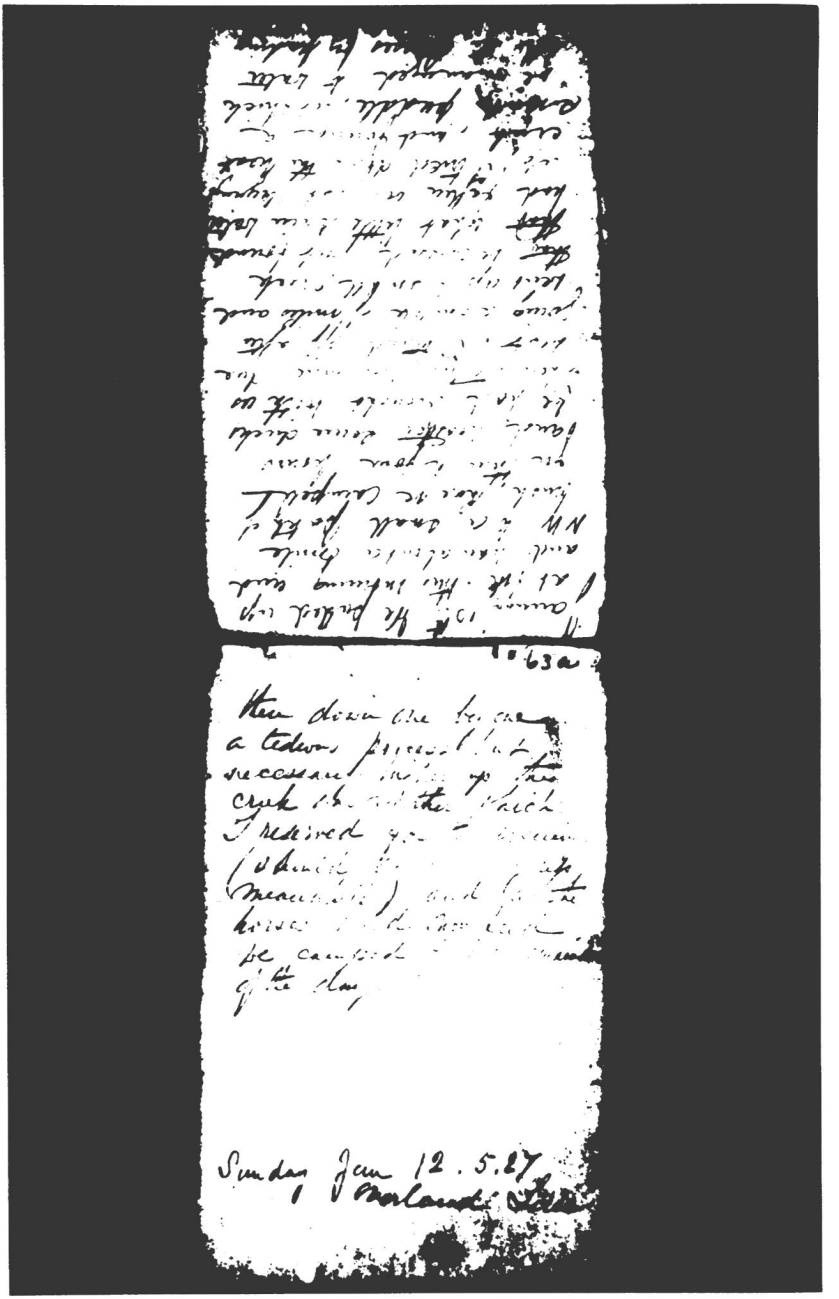
cultural expectations is most apparent in Briggs' self-conscious sentimentality in a crisis.

Throughout December Favenc made repeated attempts, from different starting points and at different angles, to find a way westwards to the Line, about ninety miles away. He was slowly forced to conclude that only thunderstorms to the west would make the journey possible. The explorers therefore settled down to wait. They were now dependent for meat on wild birds which, they joked, a cherub supplied, and they named one of the creeks Cherub Creek after this being. Briggs' journal for Wednesday, 25th December gives a good idea of their lives at this time:

> Merry Christmas to all kind friends, although ours is not a very bright one – very little to eat and the prospect of a good starving. The day broke cloudy – scud flying fast to the westward. Spoonbill for breakfast and shifted back to the ridge. Being *this day* we had a pot of tea and two tablespoon fulls of flour made into "skilly" for our Christmas pudding. Then filled ourselves with pigweed. Water very low in the hole and no birds came.
>
> Heavy rain at sundown. Two frogs appearing, I killed and toasted them. Although very small they are awfully good. Turned in.

The rain induced Favenc to try another major push to the west on Boxing Day, but a day's ride revealed that the fall had been confined to eastern parts. The party returned defeated on the 28th. From 31st December to 5th January Favenc's diary records, uncharacteristically, the contents of the game bag. In the *Queenslander* he makes it clear that the need for a change of diet was pressing: "the most noticeable thing was a constant weariness and a feeling of languor, accompanied by a never-ceasing hunger."[24] Ironically, the camp now had sometimes to be shifted because of the likelihood of flooding, and the horses were constantly in danger of bogging in the soft ground.

At last Favenc decided to set out again for the Line, which he believed could be reached in two nights and a day of hard riding. They accordingly left Cherub Creek, accompanied by Briggs' prayers and resolutions to lead a better life, at sunset on the 10th. The next day they found a small puddle in a creek bed and managed to water all the horses by leading them down to it one by one. More water, which Favenc reserved for the



Pages from Favenc's journal of the *Queenslander* Expedition, describing the final push for the Queensland Telegraph Line, 10th-12th January, 1879.

evening, was found higher up the creek. The night stage lasted until 1 a.m. and they were in the saddle again at daybreak. In the early afternoon more water was found in gullies and on the flats. Finally, just before 5 p.m. on the 12th, a date which Briggs underlined in his journal, they struck the Telegraph Line: "Smiles came on all faces. Things looked up with the Transcontinental."

They followed the Line south to Powell's Creek station. Favenc's telegrams relieved the anxiety of friends in Brisbane, and led to soundly-based congratulations from at least one newspaper editor:

> The successful completion of the task without mishap by Mr Favenc proves that Mr Lukin was right in his choice and that small, smart, and highly equipped exploring parties, headed by the right man, can do what large, lumbering and heavily-laden ones, with the wrong man leading, cannot – the fiasco of past pretentious expeditions to wit.[25]

Lukin himself, on the other hand, preached about the usefulness of the country explored and vindicated the railway line: "With the exception of isolated and comparatively small patches, the whole interior is capable of being immediately transformed into one vast sheep and cattle run, and in due course much of it will no doubt be fit for agriculture. The country is there; it is for us to go and take possession of it."[26] The imperialist spirit was very much alive in the hearts of some Queenslanders in the 1870s.

The explorers spent the next two weeks in what Briggs called "a most systematic loaf" at Powell's Creek station. Favenc's writing for the *Queenslander* resumed its humorous tone:

> Our principal exploits at Powell's creek were in the eating line. I trust that all Queenslanders will not be credited with possessing unnatural appetites because we displayed so much voracity, but I am afraid we have ruined the reputation of the colony.[27]

On the 24th they commenced a leisurely journey northwards along the line. A week later Favenc declared himself in his journal as "being on the sick list," presumably with fever brought on by the wet weather and the low-lying country. They nevertheless left the Line to explore to the south-east of Daly

Waters Station, and did not arrive there until 7th February. They rested for six days and reached Roper Creek on the 17th. It was still raining steadily and game was plentiful at all the water holes. Roper Creek was flooded: "Camped on a small ridge with water all round three sides. . . Cannot say whether it is the ordinary kind of flood or an extraordinary one. At present the road is three feet under water."[28]

From 22nd February until 5th March they camped on the bank of the Katherine River, which was in high flood, and enjoyed the hospitality of Katherine station, half a mile away, at meal-times. Hedley was now in bed with fever, and Briggs entertained himself in the evenings by playing "Loo." Favenc watched the erection of a massive telegraph pole on the bank of the Katherine[29] and rode out with Murray the station-master to explore the nearby limestone caves.

At last the Katherine fell enough to allow Favenc and Briggs to swim their horses over behind the boat. Hedley was still feverish and remained at the station. The rivers to the north, notably the Elsie, had to be swum, and the creeks were all "up to the saddle flaps." Favenc offered some shrewd observations on the small mining town of Pine Creek:

> Everybody said the place was played out, and that there was nothing more to be made; but as, in spite of these assertions, everybody smoked manillas and drank three-star, the poverty of the place did not come so forcibly home to one.[30]

His attitude to the Chinese workers was an uneasy mixture of admiration, contempt, and compassion.

Soon after leaving Pine Creek, on the 19th, Favenc's fever returned, and on the 14th Briggs reported that he was "very bad," and could hardly sit his horse. On the 15th they reached Southport and, four hours later, Palmerston, in a small steam launch. Favenc commented on the kind hospitality given to the explorers, and Briggs' journal reveals that this was largely alcoholic, though he himself accompanied one of the female residents to church on Sunday. On 24th March they boarded the S.S. Ocean for the journey to Brisbane.

Incredibly, their adventures were not yet over. Abreast of Cape Direction the Ocean struck a reef, and could be neither towed nor floated off, though the ballast and a good part of the cargo were jettisoned. Favenc wrote:

> I am still proud to remember that the most original idea was suggested by the writer of this diary. The idea was that we should set to work and drink all the beer on board, and then float the steamer off with the empty bottles. Everybody was so taken with this notion that we went below in a body to commence. When, however, the Chinese steward informed us "only six piece bottle left" despair ensued, and we felt our end was approaching. But the thought of being left beerless under a summer sun on that desolate reef so stimulated everybody to fresh exertion that that night she came off.[31]

The narrative of the *Queenslander* expedition reveals a great deal about the character and attitudes of the men who took part – for one thing their intolerance of other races, for another their willingness, up to a point, to be patient with conditions, and yet to take advantage of them were possible. Not everyone could have faced the long wait for rain on Cresswell Creek with such equanimity. In addition, Favenc's report contains useful information about the country and about the lifestyles of various people met on the way. From a literary point of view, the blurring of the distinction between reality and fiction, particularly in the narrative in the *Queenslander,* is most interesting. This did not result only from the style which Favenc chose or from any embroidering which he may have indulged in. His actual experience, like that of other explorers, seems to have had many of the characteristics of an adventure story. (Romantic expectations, like other expectations, may subliminally influence reality.) Following his journey to Cresswell Creek, Favenc based many factual and fictional narratives on his own and others' experiences as explorers.

CHAPTER 3

IN SYDNEY IN THE 1880s

The parallel with an adventure story was extended when Favenc married Bessie Matthews soon afterwards, on 15th November, 1880.[1] The bride's father was Benjamin Matthews of Wimple, in Devon. Seventeen years after the wedding a contributor to the *Queenslander* wrote as follows, presumably from personal knowledge:

> His wife is herself a clever literary woman, who has most ably assisted him in his work . . . Twenty years ago his bright pen enlivened the columns of Queensland papers, when, under the *nom de plume* of Dramingo he wrote stories and sketches all of local colouring and interest. He was later a capital draftsman, and he and his busy wife collaborated so entirely that while one was writing a part of the story or sketch in hand, the other would be drawing illustrations for it on wood, and they were in the habit of exchanging their tasks when one or the other grew tired. This, too, with as little concern as if they were copying instead of originating at each stroke of the pen or pencil.[2]

An old exercise book held by the Mitchell Library partly supports this view of the collaboration between Favenc and his wife. It contains two longish stories, "The Miner's Plate," an excessively complicated tale of a murder, in Favenc's hand, and "A Romance of Kangaroo Point," written in ink in a young woman's hand and attributed in pencil to Mrs Ernest Favenc. His wife's collaboration should therefore be kept in mind in any attempt to evaluate Favenc as a writer. She may have contributed to any except the earliest of fictional writings, though probably she worked mainly on those with urban settings.

The publication of "A Romance of Kangaroo Point" in 1876 indicates that Ernest and Bessie had a close relationship for years before their wedding. Long courtships are inevitable in pioneering communities and many squatters in North Queensland did not marry on the grounds that the frontier was no place to bring a wife.[3] As a station manager, Favenc might have been expected to share this scruple, whether justified or not. The first-person narrator of "A Romance of Kangaroo Point" is a young man named Mervington Smithers, who works as a clerk

in Brisbane. Unconsciously and therefore ironically he reveals himself to be vain and cowardly, especially in contrast with Fred Conway, a young man from the bush who is his rival for the hand of the beautiful heroine in the story. Mervington's uncle, Ralph Amberly, is also approved of in contrast with his nephew, because of a character and world-view shaped by his life with the British army in India. Despite the juvenile plot, which is no doubt a fantasy on Ernest's and Bessie's real situation, the irony of the story is occasionally penetrating, and there is some genuine comedy.

Lost in the Winning, published a few months after Favenc's return from the *Queenslander* expedition, is also relevant to his courtship. Despite his attachment to Jane Dunwick, David Nevill's real love is Clara Danten. Towards the end, they become engaged, but on the eve of the wedding the groom is forced to depart on a voyage. A storm blows up, the ship is wrecked, and the reader and Clara are left in suspense as to his survival. Much later he reappears in Brisbane and catches Clara in a situation which appears compromising. The suspense over Nevill's return is so prolonged that the reader is likely to give up in disgust but the situation has a biographical interest as a reflection probably of Ernest's and Bessie's feelings during the *Queenslander* expedition. Probably he wrote the bush episodes and she the urban episodes: the former resemble parts of *Jack Essingham* and the latter "A Romance of Kangaroo Point," especially in their ironic use of a first-person narrator.

There are two other sources of information about Favenc's family. A cutting in the Mitchell Library reveals that he had a daughter, Amy, who won a prize of £5 in the Pearsall's Needlework Competition in Melbourne. The journalist commented that her talent as an artist was inherited from both her parents. Secondly, an article in *Art and Architecture* in 1907 dealt with Mrs Ernest Favenc as the first in a series entitled "Our Australian Craftswomen."[5] A photo accompanying the article reveals her to have been a short, plump woman with a determined, energetic face – an impression of character which is confirmed by the commentary. Some ten years previously Mrs Favenc's love for embroidery, which was traditional in her family, "grew too much for the limits of repression in the family circle." By

Bessie Favenc, from *Art and Architecture: Journal of the Institute of Architects of New South Wales,* 4, November – December, 1907.

implication, she had an idea for capitalizing on it, by running a correspondence course in embroidery for country women in association with the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal.* (She seems, in fact, to have been in the Journal's employment.)[6] According to the article, she knew from experience "the difficulty that the woman in the country finds in being properly catered for in this respect." This suggests that not all of her years in Queensland were spent in Brisbane. After 1897 her correspondence course attracted many enthusiastic pupils, "until her name as a skilled mistress of the needle is now known throughout the whole of the Commonwealth, New Zealand, and even sequestered Fiji." She was employed by David Jones to superintend their country order and needlework departments, and her services as a judge in competitions in Sydney and elsewhere were in demand: "her known honesty in the matter of her decisions meets with due recognition." The article concludes: "Mrs Favenc has, strange to say, the gift of business tact and bookkeeping strongly developed, this being rarely associated with the artistic temperament." Her own article on the history of embroidery, which follows,[7] argues that needlework should be recognized as an art, a point which is convincingly demonstrated by the illustrations which accompany the text. Her qualities, notably her inventiveness and business sense, must have been of immense usefulness, especially during the couple's later years in Sydney.

A further sequel to the *Queenslander* expedition was that Favenc became the owner of a property of 1800 square miles located about a hundred miles east of Powell Creek Station. Eva Downs was part of a remote parcel which the South Australian government was prepared to hand over, sight unseen, provided certain conditions were met.[8] Favenc's dream of owning a cattle station was of long standing: in his visionary quality he was complementary to his wife, whose orientation was evidently more practical. At any rate, he was prepared to back his and Lukin's belief that the region could support a pastoral industry, or perhaps he intended to sell land back to the government for the railway line. In the event, the sale of Eva Downs "at a satisfactory price" was announced in a newspaper advertisement of July, 1881.[9] Probably the advertisement was a device to deter humorous comments from Favenc's friends, since he disliked being subjected to "chaffing."[10]

Eva Downs seems not to have been Favenc's only attempt at about this time to fulfil his dream. A sketch-book accompanying his journal of the *Queenslander* expedition contains a map of the Nicholson River, over the border in the Northern Territory, and marks out the stations, Hillingdon, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, on the "well-grassed ridges" and "open box forest" to the south of the river. (The name recalls Hillingford, made a paying proposition by Jack Essingham.) Favenc was to explore this area thoroughly on a later expedition.

From 30th October 1880, when "The Strange Adventure of George Vallance" appeared in the *Queenslander*, until 3rd March, 1890, when "A Bad End in Three Downfalls" was printed in the *Queensland Punch,* Favenc seems not to have made signed contributions to Queensland papers. Articles and poems by him began to appear in Sydney newspapers in December 1880, and it was probably then that he and his wife moved to Sydney. At some stage they bought or began to rent a house at 14 Kellett Street, Darlinghurst. A poem printed in the *Sydney Mail* in August 1881 suggests that a child was born to them at about that time.[11]

Most of Favenc's early writing in Sydney was for the *Mail,* and the frequency of his contributions suggests that he was formally employed by the paper from 1881 to 1883. This is supported further by the poems and articles which he published in the column of political and social commentary entitled "The Meddler." The *Queenslander* expedition seems to have impressed the editor favourably. He republished from the *Sydney Morning Herald* Favenc's series of articles, "The Great Austral Plain,"[12] based on observations made during the journey, and his accompanying leader subscribed independently to the optimistic view of the interior: "The continent of Australia is like a slandered but virtuous woman, steadily outliving detraction."[13]

The *Australian Encyclopaedia* states that by 1887 Favenc "had settled down to literary pursuits on the staff of the *Evening News.*" The *Evening News* favoured tales and reports of murder, suicide and mutiliation. For example, it recounts with relish how a stockman died of thirst in the desert, despite his attempt to stay alive by cutting his horse's throat and drinking

the blood. Such stories exactly suited a trend of Favenc's character, and must have been favoured also by the citizens of Sydney, since in 1890 the *Evening News* was boasting that its circulation was twice that of any other Sydney paper. On the other hand, "literary pursuits" and a career with the *Evening News* would appear not to have been very compatible. Unlike the weekly illustrated papers such as the *Sydney Mail* and the *Town and Country Journal,* the *News* did not place great emphasis on stories, verse, and articles of general interest, though each issue carried a story or an episode of a serial and often a poem. Except for known authors like Lawson or Mrs Campbell Praed, the "literary" writers used pen-names, and no story or poem can be definitely traced to Favenc between 1887 and 1894. Certain fictional works set in Queensland may possibly be his, for example the stories, "Red Gully, A Romance in North Queensland," by Mungana, and "On the Fitzroy River. A Romance of Real Life," by A.M.S., both published in February 1887, and the anonymous serial, "A Queensland Romance," which appeared in April and May, 1891.

Verses by Favenc appeared in the *Sydney Mail* fairly regularly in 1881 and 1882 and a novella, *Grim Reality,* was featured in the Christmas Supplement of 1881. A story of his also appeared before 1890 in the *Bulletin.* Most of his writing during the decade was factual, however, and more or less closely related to his expeditions. I shall deal with the verse and fiction first.

In the 1880s Favenc continued to sign most of his poems "Dramingo," but he attached the pseudonym E. Vethick, presumably Ernest V. Thick, to those which he must have considered less good.[14] The surname conforms with the self-deprecation which caused him to write his name in the journal of the McArthur River expedition[15] as "Duffer Favenc." Perhaps the poems signed "The Victim" which appeared in the *Sydney Mail* in the early 1880s were also his, since this name could have been logically derived from his view of himself in a poem published in February, 1881, "The World's Victims."[16] The verses of the 1880s show no technical improvement on those written earlier, and there is a similar wide range of subjects: a poem dealing with Ulysses and the sirens, one featuring a personification of death, another set in contemporary Mexico,

another in the outback, and yet another in fifteenth-century England.[17] Since the desert and the bush have been abandoned as themes, these verses lack the authenticity and uniqueness which were the only real virtues of Favenc's earlier attempts. Once again they express an unhappy and inconclusive view of life: a person is bound down by a threefold cord of work, poverty and sin, denied all joy and all power over his fate; he is used up by "the world," like wild violets, or the cultivated rose, or the pine which grew free in the forest. Though "Lost" and "Found" draw on Victorian religiosity to suggest that life might possess a transcendent value, Favenc's verse of the 1880s is dominated by a view of the meaninglessness of human joys in the face of death.

An article on Adam Lindsay Gordon's poem, "The Swimmer," which he contributed to the *Sydney Mail* in December, 1881, casts more light on his poetic aspirations and theory. He obviously admired Gordon's work to the point of using it as a model, though, as he tacitly admits, Gordon's craftsmanship was beyond him. His life had followed a similar pattern to Gordon's – removal from England to Australia at about the age of twenty, and an adventurous life in the bush, followed by an unhappy one in a city. He also shared with Gordon unusual physical strength and "nerve," though he directed them to different ends. Finally, lack of recognition, as the article suggests, brought him to a similar melancholy. He came to the same conclusion as Gordon that death, annulling all distinctions, is to be longed for:

> Though the gifts of light in the end are curses,
> Yet bides the gift of darkness – sleep![18]

"The Dead Hand," a highly unlikely ghost story by Favenc, set in France during the Franco-Prussian War, was printed in the *Bulletin* within the first eighteen months of the paper's publication,[19] but it is not of a quality which Archibald would have accepted later. *Grim Reality* is more plausible and more carefully executed, and the characters move between the city and the far outback of Queensland. The settings therefore parallel those of the two serials in the *Queenslander,* but reflect Favenc's recent experience in that the city is Sydney, not Brisbane, and the outback is the region west of the Herbert. One episode is set in a town easily recognizable as Blackall:

> In the estimation of the residents thereof, Bungallee was a town of wealth and importance second only to the capitals of the various colonies . . . it possessed one distinctive and uncommon feature. It was the furthest western township in the interior; beyond it lay the veritable "Never Never." Cobb the ubiquitous ran his coaches so far; a branch bank represented capital and finance, a post and telegraph office the spread of Governmental energy . . . It was a hot day even for Bungallee, where people were used to hot weather. The one broad dusty road that formed the main street of the township seemed to threaten blindness to the incautious travellers who should gaze with unshaded eyes on its glaring white surface. The teams of bullocks drawn up in front of the different public-houses were tonguing painfully, and longing for the time for unyoking to come. Inside the public-houses their drivers and offsiders were discussing the state of the roads, the want of rain, the number and persistency of the flies, and the merits of their various loaders and polers.
>
> Bungallee was doing well just then; men from all parts of the district were in, with big cheques to spend – men who had earned their money during long tiresome days and sleepless nights on the road with stock – men who had been two or three years on far outside stations, never seeing a strange face for the whole of that time – men who had come in half blind with sandy blight, half dead with colonial fever: all were spending their money and seeing such life as Bungallee had to show them.[20]

Grim Reality incorporates not only the tried themes of suffering in the outback and romance in the city, but also moves into the domain of murder mystery, where it is not entirely inept. If it has a point, beyond the quickening of the reader's pulse, it lies in the contrast between three male characters: a cowardly weakling named Parker; Brandon, who has every vice but is redeemed by courage; and Jack Maitland, whose virtues, like those of most of Favenc's heroes, are associated with his adventurous life in the outback. When he returns to Sydney, where he had squandered a fortune, he finds that his earlier dissipations no longer attract him:

> The glory of nature, in her sternest and grandest mood, had caught his fancy, and the spirit of the wild desert, wherein dwells a charm stronger than the sparkle of the wine cup or the smile of a woman, was still upon him.[21]

This is very close to Favenc's view in the preface to *Voices of the Desert,* as we have seen.

Among his contributions to the *Sydney Mail* early in the 1880s were a number of spontaneous anecdotes about life in outback North Queensland. They concerned snakes, "alligators" – as Favenc persisted in naming crocodiles – squatters and swagmen, and the dangerous behaviour of customs officials in Townsville.[22] In form they were personal reminiscences or yarns such as might have been heard in pubs. By the end of the decade Archibald had begun to take this peculiarly Australian genre seriously, and Favenc contributed some longer reminiscences to the *Bulletin* in 1887 and 1888. "The Old Hand" told of a traveller who annoyed a party of drovers with stories of his time in the outback, before being dramatically exposed as a new chum. The setting is evoked very carefully:

> It was many years ago, and in the then Far North of Queensland that I met the "old hand." Burketown at that time was a rising township on its first legs, and the "Plains of Promise" were still supposed to come up to their name. Bobby Towns was the local deity and J.G.M. his prophet . . . It was on the Flinders, on what was known as the dry stage, that the old hand came to our camp, and with the usual *bonhomie* of that period unsaddled his knocked-up old mare and sat himself down in our midst.[23]

The second reminiscence concerns a "gentleman sundowner" named Trombone, who apparently stayed for a week as an uninvited guest on a station where Favenc was working.[24] Both yarns presuppose an urban readership curious about the outback and the pioneering past.

In 'The Great Austral Plain" Favenc's wish to convince his readers of the usefulness of the central plain to the grazing industry co-exists uneasily with his romantic response to the area's remoteness, vastness and silence. The first article deals with the prehistory of the plain, when it was uninhabited except by "a few wandering tribes of blacks." Then came the explorers and in their tracks, especially those of Stuart, came the Overland Telegraph Line. The Europeans' epic struggle with the land was won only at the cost of lives, as the stories of Leichhardt and of Burke and Wills and the lonely death of Gibson on Ernest Giles' expedition of 1873 attest. In the second article Favenc describes the landscape on an "imaginary" trip from the Diamantina to the Telegraph Line. In the third a practical discussion of the distribution and nutritive properties of saltbush, cottonbush, Mitchell grass, spinifex and polygonum is juxtaposed with romantic comments on the climate:

> Frequently at night out there I have noticed the lightning of an approaching thunderstorm to have a red glare, almost like the red fire burnt at the wings of a theatre. As soon as the storm had passed over the lightning would be once more of the ordinary hue. This arose from the cloud of red sand which the wind swept into the air and carried ahead of the storm, and as it approached we saw the lightning through it as through a curtain.[25]

Article IV deals in detail with ways of storing water for stock.

As further sequels to the *Queenslander* expedition, in May 1881, Favenc contributed a series of articles on the transcontinental railway to the *Sydney Mail* – the tenor of which we have seen[26] – and in May and July, under the title "Old Tales of a New Country," he recounted two stories which had probably been told to him *en route* – the attack by aborigines on Barrow Creek telegraph station in 1874, which caused the deaths of the station master and a linesman,[27] and the disappearance of the Prout brothers, while riding to the Line from their station on the Herbert.[28] Favenc's sources were almost certainly the men, among them Frank Scarr, who had recently found the Prouts' horses, a skeleton, and a pair of moleskin trousers wrung out beside a creek.

Apart from the two series of articles which recounted directly Favenc's explorations in the Northern Territory, and which are discussed in the next chapter, he contributed to the *Sydney Mail* three series based on his experiences there: "White Versus Black," a defence of the European treatment of aborigines in the North;[29] "Unexplored Australia," which supports the view that the quality of unexplored territory cannot always be inferred from its latitude alone;[30] and "The Thirsty Land," giving a list of birds and animals with their characteristic behaviours indicating the presence of water.[31]

The History of Australian Exploration was the chief literary product of Favenc's first decade in Sydney, and his most sustained and detailed piece of work. It was an official production, "Issued under the auspices of the governments of the Australian colonies," and dedicated to Sir Henry Parkes. Its purpose was to celebrate the first centenary of settlement and the people who conceived the scheme may well have been impressed by its neatness: after a century all major exploration of the new

continent had been done; the last explorer was to summarize and comment upon the achievements of his predecessors and himself. In fact, Favenc's experience as an explorer, his intimate knowledge of the country, and his acquaintance or friendship with some of the men involved, or their relatives, gives his history a unique value.

His unquenchable optimism about the inland does not in this instance damage his judgment of the work of individuals. His early poem in the *Queenslander* had eulogized Leichhardt as an empire-builder, and throughout his life, like many of his contemporaries, Favenc was intrigued by the lost expedition. A dry comment in the *History* reveals nevertheless that he harboured no illusions as to Leichhardt's bushcraft:

> On the 10th of January, 1845, the MacKenzie River was discovered and here the Doctor and the black boy, Charlie, managed to get lost for two or three days, a faculty which apparently most of the party happily possessed.[32]

He offers the following judgment of Leichhardt's first expedition, from Moreton Bay to Port Essington:

> He was singularly fortunate on this occasion. . . His route had been through a country so easy to penetrate and so well watered, that on one night only had the party camped without water. The blacks, with the exception of the time when Mr Gilbert was killed, were neither troublesome nor hostile, beyond occasionally threatening them. Game was fairly plentiful, and compared with the obstacles that beset Stuart, Eyre, and Mitchell, the footsteps of the explorers had been through a garden of Eden.[33]

In contrast, he defends the hard-working Landsborough from the attacks of Melbourne newspapers and records the achievements of such comparatively unknown explorers as Hann, Hodgkinson, the Prout brothers, Buchanan and Scarr – to mention only names associated with Queensland. He also gives credit in general to the explorers of localities, private individuals who "have done most of the detail work,"[34] but whose names and exploits were too numerous to be recorded.

The *History* alternates between general assessments of the territory explored at convenient intervals and detailed accounts of the routes of the explorers, their adventures and discoveries. This technique makes for readability, especially since the indivi-

dual accounts select the most interesting facts. Circumstantiality is often increased by Favenc's direct knowledge of the areas traversed, as in his explanation of the "tobacco-chewing" aborigines encountered by Kennedy near the Barcoo,[35] and in his reminiscence of the region: "as the residents out there tell you, it takes two rivers in that part of Australia to make a creek."[36] He describes the lawyer vine and the stinging tree, which so added to Kennedy's troubles on his journey to Cape York:

> The first, a vine with long hooks and spurs on it, that once fast, seem determined never to let go again; the stalk being as tenacious and tough as wire, and binding the scrub trees together so as to render advance impossible without first cutting a way. The other, a tree with broad leaves, the sting produced by touching which is so painful that horses, who on first being stung have plunged about and been stung all over, have died from the fever and inflammation caused.[37]

In sum, the comprehensiveness, readability and accuracy of judgment of Favenc's *History* justify Ernest Scott's recommendation of it, in the preface to the volume on land exploration in his *Australian Discovery,* in 1929, as "the best general work dealing systematically with explorations described by the original narratives in this volume."[38] Ten years later H. M. Green claimed that it was "the standard history of Australian exploration."[39] The comparative neglect of the work since may be attributed partly to a change in taste. Academic historians, who have come to be concerned with the complex *melange* of political, economic and social factors, would probably regard Favenc's historical method, with its emphasis on event, as old-fashioned. (Except for the accounts of his own expeditions, the *History* does not have the status of a primary source.) More importantly, the explorers are a part of the national consciousness, and each generation since the 1940s has felt the need to interpret them in its own way, and has accordingly written its own books.

Not all of Favenc's time in the 1880s was taken up by "literary pursuits" in Sydney: on three occasions at least he abandoned his desk to conduct expeditions into unknown parts.

CHAPTER 4

EXPEDITIONS TO THE GULF AND THE GASCOYNE

In August and September 1882 Favenc published in the *Sydney Mail* a series of articles describing a journey by steamer northwards along the east coast to Thursday Island, around the Gulf coast to Normanton, overland to the Nicholson River, and across the range and the desert to Powell Creek station. West of the Nicholson the area crossed was unexplored, since though A.C. Gregory had travelled from the Gulf to the Northern Territory in 1855-6, he had stayed close to the coast. Since Favenc and the friend who accompanied him were driving cattle,[1] he may have reverted temporarily to his old occupation of overlanding, on behalf of an employer, or, more probably, he intended to begin stocking Hillingdon, which had apparently been surveyed during the *Queenslander* expedition. His report is deliberately mysterious "for private reasons" as to the exact route taken, which suggests that he wanted to conceal the location of a station of his own. As well as his private motives, he had a commission to explore new districts for the South Australian government.

One can speculate that Favenc wished to acquire funds for improving Hillingdon, for on 23rd December, 1882, Harry and Caroline Creaghe left Sydney by steamer to join him in the north and to extend his journey of a few months before. Emily Caroline Creaghe thus became the first woman to participate actively in a formal exploring party in Australia; she was twenty-two at the time, and had been married in Sydney a year earlier. Her diary contains a comprehensive record of Favenc's return expedition to the Gulf.[2]

The detailed entries in Caroline's diary begin on 1st January, 1883, the day she arrived in Bowen:

> We went on shore after luncheon and saw all over the town. There are about two or three hundred houses, none at all large, and very much scattered. One street wide but evidently not much used, as grass is growing in abundance about it. . . We went into a black woman's cottage and bought a few shells for a shilling for

> Mrs Ward. Most of the natives live outside the town in caves and bark tents. Half of the people about today were blacks. It has been raining in showers all day, but the soil is so sandy that it is not muddy.

This judicious blend of personal experience and observation is maintained in her successive accounts of Townsville, Port Douglas and Cooktown, as the Corea steamed northwards. On the 9th it berthed at Thursday Island, and the Creaghes became the guests of Captain Chester, in whose house Favenc and his wife were staying. Favenc had already described Thursday Island for the benefit of readers in Sydney, commenting on the variety of races; the governmental and mercantile sections of the town; the nautical pretensions and preoccupations of the white inhabitants; the two seasons, governed respectively by the south-east and the north-west winds; and the pearl shell, much prized by tourists but abhorred by himself.[3] By contrast, Caroline observed during her four-day stay that there was no church, and that "the drinking that goes on in this little place is something tremendous." Her views on this subject were obviously different from those of other people who had gone exploring with Favenc.

The two couples left Thursday Island at 4 p.m. on 13th January in the Truganini, a vessel which Favenc had employed on his earlier trip, but unenthusiastically. "To the jaded and harassed mind," he wrote, "there would be still some satisfaction left in witnessing the hanging of the man who planned the accommodation found on board."[4] The party landed at the mouth of the Norman River to gather shells, and finally arrived in Normanton on the 17th. The next day Bessie stated that she was not well enough to travel overland. Favenc decided to return to Sydney with her, while the Creaghes continued inland some two hundred miles to Carl Creek, "Mr Shadforth's station." From there Favenc, when he returned in March, with Harry Creaghe and another man, "would get the work done in three months instead of four and a half as they would have done if we had gone."[5] On the 20th Caroline and Harry set out in the company of Mr Shadforth, Mr Murray, and four other men.

Caroline comments to begin with on how she felt "decidedly queet" amongst so many men, but her diary is soon

taken up with the more pressing problems of exhaustion, heat, mosquitoes, crocodiles, flies, beetles and poor food. Features of the countryside through which they were passing had taken their names from supposed relics of Leichhardt's lost expedition – "Packsaddle" and "Diary" Creeks, for instance. On the 24th, when they were camped on the banks of the River Leichhardt, Warner, an employee of Murray's, began to throw fits as a result of sunstroke. By the morning of the 26th he was unconscious, though Caroline noted that, "it is most painful to hear his groans." The groans continued until 3 a.m., when he died. Murray rode to the nearest station to assemble tools and a burial party, leaving the Creaghes in camp. Caroline wrote, "Harry and I spent a miserable day until half past three by ourselves in camp guarding the body from native dogs. They have just sewn up his body in his blanket in the midst of a heavy thunderstorm, while some of the others are digging the grave."

Because bush life was a novelty to her, Caroline recorded details which more experienced travellers like Favenc took for granted. For instance, she describes the effect of horseback transport on food:

> Our food in camp consists of nasty dirty hairy dried salt beef, dark brown sugar (half dust) and hard dry damper. There are some tinned meats, but the jolting has made them uneatable. There is some jam, but who can eat it with hard dry damper and no butter?[6]

She was "heartily glad" to arrive at Carl Creek, on 31st January.

She remained there for two and a half months, and her journal records details of life on a remote station, such as are not to be found in Favenc's private or public writings. Open war was being waged between whites and blacks in the district, and the whites lived in a state of alert, and often of fear. Caroline was very anxious when Carl Creek was left for four days (8th-12th March) with only one white man to protect it, and the Nature Police had a permanent encampment nearby, from which they organized patrols. Towards the end of her stay a white man's death at the hands of aborigines was discovered, and the police were sent out to search for the culprits, referred to by Caroline as "wretches."[7] On the other hand, she reports

with equanimity two almost unbelievable cases of the white man's inhumanity. At Frank Hann's station of Lawn Hill the manager, Jack Watson, had forty pairs of black ears nailed round the walls, collected during reprisals against the tribes for cattle-stealing.[8] Secondly, on 20th February Mr Shadforth and one of his sons brought an aboriginal woman to the station – "The usual method here of bringing in a new wild gin is to put a rope round her neck and drag her along from horseback, the gin on foot." This woman, who was given the name, "Bella," was chained to a tree outside the house, until she should become "tamed." It was raining heavily. After arousing the jealousy of an aboriginal woman on the station, Bella succeeded in escaping three days later. Caroline commented obtusely that, whether the escape "was because of Topsy's threat to kill her, or discontent at this life we don't know." Caroline's record contrasts pointedly with comments on black-white relations which Favenc had contributed to the *Sydney Mail* in September of the preceding year:

> I believe in experience when judging of these things, and my own experience of outside life and blacks covers eighteen years of my life. I cannot recall ever hearing even of these atrocities in the districts wherein they are supposed to be perpetrated, whereas in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide one constantly reads of them in the local journals. The northern parts of Queensland are particularly credited with these acts. . . .[9]

Even for whites, the privations of life on an outside station were considerable. The house at Carl Creek was constructed of logs, without windows so as to keep out flies and mosquitoes, and was very hot. No fruit or vegetables were available. The whole household succumbed for a time to sandy blight, and Caroline's diary was not written for nearly a week,[10] because she was in agony, "blind in one eye and nearly so in the other." One man was bitten by a spider, and spent three days and nights "frantic with the pain," when he had to be nursed by the women: "Mrs Shadforth put an Epicacuana poultice on the bite which they say must have done him good, as he is not as bad as others who were suffering in the same way." It is hardly surprising that when Harry arrived back at the station on 11th April, after having met Favenc, and announced that after all Caroline could go with the exploring party, she responded with "intense delight."

They retraced their steps towards the coast and arrived at Gregory Downs station on the 13th, where Favenc was waiting for them with Lindsay Crawford, a former station master at Daly Waters. He had welcomed Favenc and Briggs there in 1879.[11]

From the 14th, when the explorers set out westwards from Gregory Downs, the entries in Caroline's journal are very detailed, in comparison with those which recorded the *Queenslander* expedition. She mentions that seventeen horses were included in the party, nine with packs and four loose, apart from the riding horses. All of the explorers were armed with revolvers, and the men also had rifles slung on their saddles. Initially there was an improvement in the food, since Crawford shot some ducks, and he made a damper sweetened with raisins and currants, which Caroline regarded as a very good bushman's cake.

On 17th April they camped beside Lawn Creek – "a beautiful large piece of water lined with pandanus or corkscrew palms" – and then spent several days near the Nicholson River, which Favenc had examined and described, melodramatically, the year before:

> A thirsty river, a sandy river, and a terror to cross on a hot day. A bed averaging a mile in width, studded with islands, many of them being covered with rosewood scrub on their tops, having treacherous quicksands in its many channels – altogether a river that once safely crossed one feels inclined to stop across.[12]

They noticed few aborigines, though the area was supposed to be "infested" with them,[13] but on crossing the border saw fresh tracks and smoke from camp fires all along the way. Caroline was not the only one to feel nervous. On the 22nd they reached a district where an attack seemed unlikely, but had to ride a stage of twenty-five miles before they found water for the horses, and their own water had to be dug for. All the horses were now suffering from saddle sores.

The explorers continued westwards across a previously unexplored tableland. They found no water on the 23rd, but camped the next afternoon beside a large, beautiful lagoon, which Favenc named the "Caroline." On the 25th they travelled

all day through sandy spinifex country, and camped at a waterhole. The next day no water could be found, and they drank the juice from tins of stewed fruit and rode through the night and following morning, until grass and water were finally found. By now they were crossing what Caroline described as "desert country – horribly rough and uninteresting, all scrubby and full of nasty holes."

A few days later they reached the open plain, where the only trees were around the waterholes, but Caroline saw this as an improvement, presumably because the horses could travel more easily. Favenc and Harry were now scouting for water ahead of the main party, not always successfully. Caroline found the lack of water for washing a hardship, and gives details about other conditions:

> Mr Favenc left us at half past three to look for water out west, but came back at about eight, not successful in his search. We had a large fire burning and a lantern hung up a tree to guide him back to the camp. We are on a plain, slightly timbered and bush all around and as it was very dark he would have some difficulty in finding his way, particularly as the grass is high and thick and if one is a quarter of a mile from camp the tent is hardly visible. We came over "plains" country all the way today, and the flies still torment the very life out of us from sunrise to dark. The cold nights don't seem to kill them, they come back in millions in the daytime. The sun gets very hot from eight in the morning and stays hot till five. I don't believe the days are ever cool in this country, though it is not now such killing heat as we endured from January to March.

On 3rd May Favenc coerced an aboriginal to lead them to a waterhole, where others of his people were already camped. The explorers kept their revolvers drawn, but seem to have dealt with the aborigines intelligently, refraining, for instance, from carrying any artifacts or weapons away from the camp. There followed a stage of fifty hours without water for the horses, when the riders also became exhausted and famished, since no water could be spared for cooking and there was no time to stop and hunt. On the 7th a good waterhole with plenty of grass was found at last. They were now within two days' travel of Powell Creek station, and Favenc settled down to explore the country in that longitude. Harry was mostly confined to camp with an attack of dysentery.

On the 12th the whole party set out westwards for the Telegraph Line. By now they were entirely dependent on game, which was not plentiful. They camped the next night without water, and the country was worse than ever for the horses: "The earth was just like deep soft sand with great pitfalls all over it." As usual the riders could not eat during a dry stage. That evening another dry camp was made, and the next day a horse had to be shot. At last they came to a range (the Ashburton) which, Caroline writes, Favenc had known of beforehand. He must have crossed it the year before, as well as in 1879:

> We got on top of the range at sundown and then had a terrible piece of work. The range extends some distance before it descends again, and the whole top of it consists of successions of frightfully rocky gorges which we had to go up and down the best way we could. If it had not been moonlight we should have been done as we could not have travelled over them. As it was we got on fairly well and at half past 7 p.m. to our delight we came all of a sudden on to the telegraph line, and our joy was unbounded.

There was still the problem of finding Powell's Creek station, but when the telegraph poles changed from iron to wood they knew that they were within five miles of it:

> Mr Favenc thought it advisable for one of them to go on to let them know there was a woman in the party, as no woman had ever been there before. So Mr Crawford went on and told them, but they wouldn't believe it until they saw me.

Caroline spent the next few days resting. She visited a small encampment of aborigines nearby, and describes their appearance and their reaction to their first sight of a white woman. It was decided that since the horses were not in good condition, Favenc and Crawford should carry through the original plan of going east to explore around the McArthur River while Harry and Caroline followed the Line north with the weaker horses. The Creaghes were to wait for the others at Katherine station. Caroline therefore set out on 24th May along the same route which Favenc, Briggs and Hedley had covered in 1879. She tells of an encounter with another group of aborigines, and describes some spectacular ant hills just south of the Katherine. Since she and Harry spent nearly a week at Daly Waters, they did not reach the Katherine until 14th June.

While they waited for news of Favenc and Crawford, the Creaghes visited Springvale station, eight miles away, which was being managed by Mr and Mrs Giles. Their stay of over a week gave Caroline the chance to learn more about aborigines:

> A "Paper Yabber" came over from Katherine to tell us the Murrays would be here for dinner tomorrow. A "Paper Yabber" is what the blacks call a letter. The whites employ the blacks as messengers and very faithful ones they are. They have a stick in which a slit is made and the letter placed in it. In wet or fine weather the letter is taken every care of, and if going a long distance in rainy weather the black sleeps over it to keep it dry, and when travelling it is wrapped in tea-tree or paper bark. The black is repaid for bringing the letter with a fig of tobacco which completely satisfies him.[15]

Caroline's interest in aboriginal messengers somehow filtered through to the *Sydney Mail*, and an issue which carried part of Favenc's account of his exploration of the McArthur River district contained as well a spirited illustration of "The Postman of the Far North."[16] Caroline's close observation is not paralleled in any of Favenc's writing on aborigines, and her patronizing moral view of them as "faithful" is the opposite of his judgment that they were mercenary and unreliable. Favenc's aggressive contempt may well have sprung from guilt; lacking such a defensive mechanism, Caroline supplies more facts.

Four records remain of Favenc's and Crawford's exploration of the McArthur River – two reports on the country, one provided for the Minister of Education for the Northern Territory[17] and the other, much briefer, printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Queenslander;*[18] Favenc's unpublished journal, now held by the Mitchell Library; and his "Diary of a Trip from North Newcastle to the McArthur River," published in five instalments in the *Sydney Mail* in November and December, 1883. In contrast with the journal of the *Queenslander* expedition, his hand-written diary expresses private emotions, and seems to have been written chiefly for his wife. Almost every entry ends with the initials *G.B.P.*, which stand for "God bless my Podge," this being apparently Bessie's pet name. The mood which predominates is weariness, not surprisingly, since this expedition was undertaken on top of considerable other hardships. As well as for the government, it was carried out on behalf of A. and R. Amos, who owned a large property near the McArthur River.[19]

"The Postman of the Far North," from the *Sydney Mail,* November 10, 1883.

Favenc left Powell Creek on 28th May, two days after Caroline and Harry, and in the same direction, northwards along the Line. His entry for the 28th reads:

> Bowley the station master and Abbott assistant at Tenants Creek rode with us about four miles. Crawford and a man named Rogers are with me. R. seems inclined to develop a conversational habbit [*sic*] but is a handy man and will be useful. More so than our late companions who were only ornamental.

On the 31st they branched off north-east from Newcastle Waters, following Ross Creek towards the headwaters of the McArthur. The creek soon proved waterless, and the terrain difficult and depressing. At a dry lagoon in Ross Creek, "a wretched-looking native dog was scratching in the soft mud, and on a neighbouring tree an equally miserable crow was sitting watching him and wondering when he was going to die."[20]

This traverse in fact proved impossible, and the explorers were forced to return to the last water on Ross Creek. After a day's spell they set out again due east, guided by two aborigines of the Koletti tribe, based near North Newcastle:

> They trotted along contentedly the whole of the day, hunting as they went, and when we camped at our old camp where we left the packs they had a large snake about ten feet long, a bandicoot, and an iguana, in fact a very substantial feed for two men. As we had plenty of water with us, we gave them a drink whenever they wanted it, and they seemed to think they were having rather a good time.[21]

Favenc felt frustrated at their zigzag route, which resulted from taking guidance from landmarks rather than a compass, though he also saw its advantage: "Here, where there are no ridges or hills, the blacks go by the 'kiaras,' or main scrubs; and as these scrubs mostly run in parallel lines or at right angles they generally manage to follow clear belts of country." On the 6th June, they brought him to "Yarroo" Creek. This proved to be the only indigenous name which he retained for any of his discoveries. Some water was found in an anabranch, and the guides were dismissed with a tomahawk, some flour, and a shirt each. They were pleased with the shirts, which they said would protect them from the local tribesmen.

The explorers left Yarroo Creek on the 8th with three days' supply of water and fresh horses. Favenc was now confident of

striking the heads of the Gulf rivers within reasonable distance. They toiled for a day through scrub country, grown over with mulga, lancewood and Stuart's hedgewood – "This tree, in the language of the Far North, is a 'devil.' "[22] – and camped without water. The next evening a mudhole supplied each of the horses with a small drink each. Favenc thought the season exceptionally dry. At ten the next morning they nevertheless found a fair-sized waterhole in the bed of "Relief" Creek.

After a brief rest Favenc and Crawford set about exploring the district, leaving Rogers to guard the camp:

> Jack used to stay contentedly, no matter when or what time Crawford and myself would turn up, which was generally at some unearthly hour in the early morning. A lonely camp in the bush is not an altogether comfortable place for a man; no matter what his nerves are like, he is sure to imagine all manner of noises that interpreted mean something dangerous. I know that has been my feeling often and custom only has got me out of it.[23]

Despite patches of scrub, the country which Favenc and Crawford were riding over was promising – ranges intersected by gorges containing well-watered creeks and lagoons fed by permanent springs; and grassy downs between the ranges and the coast descent. On the 15th they decided to shift the main camp south. As they drove the horses through scrub bordering a creek, they found themselves suddenly beneath what seemed like a shelter made of dead boughs, and supported by a tree and by forked poles:

> At first the work looked so substantial that I put it down to whites, but immediately recognised it as a blackfellow's burying place. It was the largest I have ever seen, and put up with more care than the general run. On the boughs on top we found a perfect skeleton of an apparently very large man. The bones were bleached white, and the lower jaw and teeth perfect.[24]

After Favenc had made a sketch[25] they rode on, generally to the south-east through what he regarded as first-class fattening country, though it was stony and intersected with limestone ridges. Parrots and cockatoos were abundant and the numerous kangaroos had created "playgrounds," or large open spaces, like cattle camps. "Perhaps like Gulliver," Favenc wrote in his journal, "we have got into a land peopled with animals."[26] This impression was overturned when they came upon a large deserted aboriginal camp on "Kangaroo Creek." The next

morning they sighted from the spur of a range the head of a large creek running northwards, and realized that this was the McArthur.

By now Favenc's fatigue and boredom are very apparent in his diary entries. On the 17th all the billies were lost, and the day was spent in searching for them without success. Then Favenc mislaid the "housewife" which Bessie had made for him, and on the 23rd Rogers' horse "knocked up" while a dry stage away from the river was being negotiated, and had to be left behind. After water had been found, Favenc returned to look for him, riding fruitlessly for many hours through lonely ranges. That day he reported himself in his diary as *very tired.*

As the McArthur descended it brought consolation. Even in the rocky interior it was well watered and bordered by pandanus. It flowed through gorges, and the explorers could see on the opposite bank straight ti-trees against high columns of rock, causing contrasts of colour such as would "send an artist distracted."[27] As it cut its way through the ranges nearer the coast even more spectacular effects were created:

> We pulled up on the edge of a deep still mere – so deep that the water appeared more black than blue. A solitary diver was sitting on a dead limb, drying its wings, and darting his long neck about. On three sides nearby this lonely little lake washed the butt of the white and red cliffs that arose sheer from the water level; down a cleft directly opposite to us came hurrying a stream of water – broken, by the previous leaps it had taken, into a shower of spray that fell into the lagoon beneath with a ceaseless splash that was pleasant to ears long unaccustomed to such a sound.[28]

In his diary Favenc named this the "Bessie Fall." On the 25th they discovered the "Kilgour," a tributary of the McArthur, and came upon some aboriginal women and children digging for roots in the bed of a dry lagoon – "brought two to camp and gave them a feed as they seemed half-starved; one very ancient lady very talkative."[29]

By now the explorers themselves were dependent on game. They crossed the Port Darwin road on the 28th[30] and made their way to the coast. The formal reporting in the *Sydney Mail* ends at this point, but the journal shows that the expedition went on in increasing hardship.

On the 29th Favenc wrote that his eyes were still very weak and that he could "hardly see anything when the sun gets strong." On 1st July he recorded his first trouble with his horse, Trooper, and ten days later he had him shot to put him out of pain: he speculates that the horse had initially been poisoned by vegetation on the lower McArthur. The first week of July was passed in very dry country: "Awful drought everywhere. Am tired of looking for water. Had five shots at a turkey today and missed him."[31] By the 9th they were back on the well grassed and watered coastal plain, and two days later found them,

> Fairly started on our long dry stage to the line. Very cold last night. Horses very well at present but I don't know how they will look tomorrow night. Perhaps we may be lucky and get a little water.

They came upon some aborigines at a water-hole the next evening, and induced two to guide them to more water which they said existed between them and Daly Waters. After riding a day and a night through the formidable scrubby country they reached water at 1 p.m. on the 14th. The entry for that day reads:

> Had no luck shooting this evening. The shells we have are worn out and missed fire. A little bread left for breakfast tomorrow and then Daly Waters I hope for dinner.

They arrived at Daly Waters the next afternoon and Favenc received a letter and a telegram from his wife. Caroline was "overjoyed" to learn that they had come in safely. The aborigines on the McArthur had a reputation for being dangerous, and two days earlier, when the explorers were already two weeks overdue, Harry had been considering organizing a search party for "either Favenc or his remains."[32]

Favenc and Crawford did not reach the Katherine until the 26th. Caroline reported that they looked very thin and black, and that they "saw no blacks all the way to the McArthur, strange to say." Favenc seems not to have encouraged Caroline's interest in aborigines. Money matters were settled between Harry and Favenc – one suspects, not to Favenc's satisfaction, since he never revisited Queensland or the Territory by land. On the 28th he travelled north with the mailman and probably took the boat which was leaving Darwin for the south about 13th August. Crawford set out on 31st July with a Mr

Johns, and on 3rd August Harry and Caroline, accompanied by the Giles and their Chinese cook and aboriginal stockman left Springvale to follow the others north. Except for a halt of two days while Alfred Giles repaired a dray of his which had broken down and been abandoned ahead of them, the journey was uneventful. Caroline's account of the route differs from Favenc's record of 1879 in that it lists the public houses and describes the intense heat and frightful dust near the Chinese gold field – "so thick that for miles we could not see a yard in front of us."[33] The Creaghes arrived at Port Darwin on 14th August. They stayed at the Government Residence until the 22nd, when they left for Sydney on the steamer "Feilung."

After his first expedition, Favenc had spent about three years in Brisbane and Sydney before again travelling north. When he returned from the Gulf in 1883 there was a further three-year interval before he left on another expedition. Much of the interval must have been spent on research for *The History of Australian Exploration.* In 1887 he produced a well-documented monograph which illustrates the nineteenth-century fondness for resounding titles: *Western Australia, Its Past History, Its Present Trade and Resources, Its Future Position.* This reflects the book's major divisions. It is elegantly produced, apparently under the auspices of the Western Australian government, and dedicated to the governor, Sir Frederick Napier Broome. Favenc's main objective seems to have been to praise the young colony's potential for mining and pastoral development. He rejects earlier descriptions of its interior as "desert" – a view which, of course, he is more likely to have embraced from conviction than from expediency. Therefore it is not quite accurate to equate *Western Australia* with more modern booklets promoting tourism or investment. The book was a prelude to Favenc's expedition to the east of the colony in 1888.

He left Melbourne in the S.S. Otway on Monday, 12th March, accompanied by W. R. Cuthbertson, a surveyor who had led expeditions in New Guinea and laid out the site of Port Moresby, and by Davis, a former pastoralist of the region beyond Mt Labourchere.[34] They landed in Geraldton, and Favenc provided a characteristic description for the *Melbourne Argus:*

> The town itself has a deal of the old-world, half-awakened kind of appearance that characterises this portion of the colony, and houses of the type known to us in engravings of old Sydney are fairly plentiful. The railway station is in the main street, which is also the railway track, and twice a day a solemn procession of one locomotive, one carriage, and a guard's van, parades in a stately and leisurely manner up and down this street.[35]

He journeyed east to Newmarracarra station, where he was impressed by the condition of the horses and sheep, and then followed the track to the stations south of the Murchison. He describes the sand plain crossed by the Greenough River, where the twisted trees reminded him of Doré's illustrations of the *Inferno,* and the more useful country occupied by Youin, Murgo, Nookawarra and Milly Milly stations. He frequently contrasts Western Australian pioneering traditions, to their disadvantage, with those of Queensland. For instance, he explains how the inland pastoralists supported a supply depot at Mullewa, goods for which were brought from Geraldton, seventy miles away, by the horse teams of the sandalwood-cutters; in Queensland a railway line would have been laid to Mullewa and a township established. The habit of sinking wells of large diameter in creek beds as a convenience for aboriginal shepherds would not have arisen in Queensland, where aborigines were employed less often, and never without supervision. Favenc's comments on the shepherding, fencing and wool-scouring carried out by aborigines were reprinted with illustrations in the *Australasian*[36] and later taken up yet again in the *West Australian.*[37] Numerous articles, reports and letters in the *West Australian* show that the aboriginal question was volatile in the colony at this time.

In 1889 Favenc published a clear and succinct, if somewhat pompously worded, account of his expedition in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society.*[38] He reports that after leaving Geraldton he and his companions spent more than a month in known pastoral districts, and that they began to follow the Murchison north-west early in May. They passed Moorarie station, situated on a crossing of the river and holding some of the best country in the district, though the mud-brick homestead had been worn down by the weather. Then they crossed the plateau between the Murchison and the Gascoyne, within

sight of Mt Labouchere with its two peaks, and camped at Carlyon's station. At this point the Overland Telegraph Line was the closest settlement to the east.

In his *History* Favenc recorded the explorations in the centre and north of Western Australia by George Grey in the late 1830s, by A. C. and F. T. Gregory in 1846, 1848, 1858 and 1861, and by his friend, John Forrest, who had followed the Murchison in 1870 on his journey eastwards. His own intention was to examine the region of the upper Gascoyne and the Ashburton Rivers, which had not been examined in earlier expeditions.

On 15th May he left two men at Carlyon's station and set out with Cuthbertson and an aboriginal named Toby to follow the Gascoyne to its source:

> This portion of the continent of Australia partakes of the monotonous character of the great plain of the interior. The forests are stunted and consist chiefly of thickets of mulga, the plains are but poorly grassed, the ridges and ranges excessively stony and invariably covered with spinifex. Necessarily the landscape is devoid of all beauty.[39]

They continued along the nearly waterless Gascoyne for several days, and then pushed on across the formidable range separating it from the Ashburton, meaning to "take the chance of what would turn up." After a day without water they reached what they guessed to be the head of the Ashburton: "the bed was nothing but round cobble stones, the sides of the hills clothed with black scrub, and dotted with fantastically shaped rocks; no sign of water, not a vestige of grass."[40] That night the horses had to be haltered to prevent them from wandering away, but the next day water was found for them by laborious digging in a creek bed. Permanent water was not found until the 21st.

The days following were spent in exploring the country round about – first a dry creek which ran into the Ashburton through a narrow valley; then a shallow river basin to the west; lastly the range to the south-west. The ride to the top of the range was perilous – "it was rather steeper than the roof of an ordinary house, and covered with loose sliding pieces of slate" – but the gradual descent to the south brought the explorers

into a valley, at the bottom of which was a large sandy river bed. Favenc named this tributary of the Ashburton the "Cunningham." The next day Cuthbertson and Toby came upon a large group of aborigines camped in the river bed. They seemed less curious and friendly than the tribesmen whom Favenc had encountered in North-west Queensland and the Northern Territory, though this judgment may be another instance of his parochialism. The explorers followed the Cunningham to its head, on a desert plateau useless for settlement, and returned to Carlyon's station after an absence of nearly three weeks.

Their next expedition, into the interior, brought to light only flat and waterless country, with fragmentary creeks.

On their third journey, however, they penetrated the watershed between the Gascoyne and the Ashburton and discovered rivers and creeks flowing into the Ashburton from the rugged country to the south. One of them struck Favenc as particularly useful:

> This valley of rich pastoral country was one of the finest and most picturesque I have seen during my travels on the Australian continent. The ranges which bounded it were most striking in appearance, presenting precipitous sides towards the valley, whereon the lights and shadows were continually changing. The bottom of this valley was fine open forest country, well grassed, and covered with many varieties of herbage and fodder plants, the whole district forming the ideal of a magnificent sheep and cattle run.[41]

This was the Jackson or the James, the discovery of which, together with the Cunningham, he saw as the chief fruit of his West Australian explorations.

Since Favenc arrived on the scene so late, his discoveries were significant for regions rather than for the whole country, and the vastness of the territories he explored did not alter this result. Though over-optimistic, he was an accurate observer of landscape. He was also careful and patient: except when desperately short of water his practice was to examine an unknown area thoroughly, not merely to pass through it. No doubts can be entertained either of his courage, bushcraft, or intelligence. Unlike some of the better-known explorers, he was

never lost, and he knew when to wait and when to push ahead. It is possible now to look more closely at the motives for his explorations and to consider briefly how his life and writings illuminate the work of other explorers.

The most obvious motive of the explorers was practical. They belonged to a social system bent on exploitation; the pressure of increasing population in Australia demanded the opening up of more land, and imperialism rewarded with fame, and sometimes with money, the men who acted as its advance-agents in this work. All of Favenc's journeys into the desert, and even his initial move to North Queensland, can be partly understood in these terms. He was naturally conservative, conforming apparently without much effort to social expectations in behaviour, just as he conformed to them in appearance. In 1897 a contemporary described him as follows:

> Favenc is only about fifty years of age now, and, though time and care have set their seal on him and bowed his shoulders, he was in earlier days a man of splendid physique and carriage, and the picture of a fine, handsome gentleman, of charming manners and manly appearance.[42]

Other personal factors were also present. In his *History* Favenc ascribes disinterested motives to other explorers and presumably by implication to himself:

> There was nothing hopeful nor inspiriting in the outlook to induce men to attempt to penetrate this silent desert, save the love of adventure and the gratification of a laudable curiosity.[43]

This parallels Ernest Giles' statement: "An explorer is an explorer from love, and it is nature, not art, that makes him so."[44] There is no reason to doubt that a love of adventure was part of the explorers' motivation. In Favenc's case, also, the desert must have presented a challenge to his physical aptitudes and his bushcraft. Adventurousness and the wish to test prowess have been traditional motives of romantic heroes since the Middle Ages and this is therefore another area relating to Favenc in which the sharp distinction between reality and romance is denied. More cynically it might be argued that nineteenth-century imperialism fostered the romantic love of adventure in the population for its own ends.

Finally there was Favenc's dream that the desert could be made to blossom, initially for himself, as seen in his efforts to establish Hillingdon, and in the long run for others. He had set out in 1878 as the advance guard of the railway line which was to enchain the desert, but the desert ended by seducing him. His complicated feelings about it, which have already emerged from this discussion, make him unique in Australian literature and history. The fundamental attraction the desert held for him explains his restlessness in the 1880s, his repeated escapes, despite his weariness, from Sydney's noise and activity into the silence.

In his *History* Favenc wrote that soon after the discovery of the Nepean River in 1789,

> a number of convicts made a desperate attempt to proceed overland to China. They, however, only managed a very short stage of the journey – namely, to Broken Bay. . . The impression these deluded men set out under was, that at a considerable distance to the northward there was a large river which separated this country from China, and when it was crossed they would find themselves amongst a copper-coloured people, who would receive and treat them kindly.[45]

His own dream about the desert has so far proved as illusory as the escapees' conviction about China, but unlike them he was able to exploit the more imaginative aspects of his vision by writing fiction.

CHAPTER 5

SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS: THE 1890s

In 1890 Favenc returned with new enthusiasm to writing fiction, and his literary reputation was founded on the work produced in the next ten years. He had been a part of the literary scene in Sydney during the 1880s, when only Victor Daley, Edward Dyson and William Astley were supplying short stories of merit to the *Bulletin*. The nineties saw a proliferation in the writing and publishing of verse and prose, and Favenc was fortunate in that they corresponded with his retirement from bush work and exploring. His vast experience of the outback, which exceeded that of most *Bulletin* writers, gave him a fund of material of the kind which Archibald wanted to publish.

He seems, furthermore, to have been socially significant among the Bohemians. He himself rated his popularity very highly,[1] and W. E. Fitzhenry included him among the patrons of the *Bulletin* bench:

> While the bench was at Pitt-street, and afterwards at 214 George-street, it was accepted as a rendezvous for most of the paper's contributors (and drinkers). On the bench Louis Becke, home from the South Seas, often had a pleasant snooze, and Ernest Favenc and John Farrell swapped many a yarn. From the bench Harry Morant ("The Breaker") said goodbye to a host of Bohemian friends before his departure to the South African war and his execution before a firing squad.[2]

In 1898 he became a member of the Dawn and Dusk Club, founded by the Bohemians and named after a book by Victor Daley, and at about the same time he was accompanying Lawson and others to beer and prawn parties at Watson's Bay, according, at least, to one recent biographer.[3] Favenc certainly shared with Lawson a liking for beer and conviviality, as well as an intimate knowledge of the drudgery and disappointment of earning a living by writing. On the other hand he was much older and, as we have seen, conservative by nature. Ironically, the attitudes he had learned in the bush may have unfitted him for close comradeship with some of the younger *Bulletin* writers. His racism in particular did not go unchallenged in Sydney. The following commentary on his novel, *The Secret of the Australian Desert,* appeared on the Red Page in 1895:

> One notes with interest how unconsciously Mr Favenc takes the bushmen's view of relationships with the blacks. The white adventurers walk into blacks' country and camps, and are made welcome, afterwards attacking and slaughtering their hosts without provocation. And isn't it characteristic too, when they come across a rocking-stone which they know is a unique scientific marvel, that one of them should propose shifting it with a plug of dynamite? On another occasion a black chief is sleeping in their camp. Says one, "Kick old Columbus up." And the author adds, with delicate euphemism, "Moreton promptly roused the slumbering chieftain." Picture the rousing process and you grasp at once the attitude of white to black all over Australia.[4]

The reviewer goes on to explain that in the novel three survivors from Leichhardt's lost expedition have lived for years among the blacks and that a half-caste is among the characters. "Delicacy," he writes, "might have subtracted that half-caste; truth would have multiplied him indefinitely."

Probably it was no accident that Fitzhenry mentioned Favenc in the same breath with Morant. They shared a love of horses, and a sense of romance and adventure helped determine life experience for both of them. Furthermore, Favenc's cavalier approach to the lives of aborigines, which must have been typical of many bushmen, helps illuminate Morant's attitude to non-British lives in South Africa.

Of all the *Bulletin* writers Favenc seems to have had most in common with Louis Becke. Becke had lived for many years in North Queensland, and had begun to write fiction there,[5] despite the legend, perpetuated in A. Grove Day's biography, that Favenc started him on a literary career in Sydney. The story went that they met one morning in Pfahlert's Hotel in Wynyard Square; Favenc saw the potential of the yarns about the South Seas which Becke was telling, and took him down to the *Bulletin* offices and introduced him to Archibald.[6] In 1895 Favenc published a flattering character-sketch of his friend, which contains no facts, but supports the inference that they had known each other in North Queensland: "To anyone who knows the author of *By Reef and Palm* as I have had the pleasure of knowing him for many years, the startling veracity of his tales appeals at once."[7]

By literary standards, though not by journalistic ones,

Favenc was phenomenally productive during the nineties. He used numerous pen-names: Binghi (the name applied to mainland blacks by the inhabitants of Thursday Island[8]); Delcomyn; Jack Fruit; Armand Jerome; Dramingo (in Queensland newspapers); and D. Collections of cuttings in the Mitchell Library reveal that many of his stories and articles were unsigned, and his total output, like his editorial contribution to the *Evening News,* cannot be determined. His level of production can be inferred from his known works during the first six months of 1890, when he contributed eleven short stories to the *Bulletin* and a lengthy serial to the *Queenslander.*

Of the hundred anecdotes, stories and serials which I have been able to trace as published by Favenc between 1890 and 1899, only eight are set wholly or partly in a city, invariably Sydney, and most of these maintain a connection with the outback. In nearly half of the total the locations are named as north or western Queensland or the Northern Territory. Six use outback Western Australia as a venue, but of these only two are obviously based on Favenc's exploration of the Gascoyne and Ashburton Rivers.[9] One story is set in Borneo,[10] and two on South Sea islands,[11] none of which he had visited at the time of writing, but which had been popularized as settings for readers in Australia by Alex Montgomery and Louis Becke. The remainder are located in unnamed parts of the desert and the outback, and most seem to depend on Favenc's experience of Queensland and the Northern Territory.

The settings are worth paying attention to, first because they are essential to the plots of many of the stories. This is most obvious in the tales of death in the desert, of which there are about a dozen, but the factor of distance in the outback affects many of the others as well, whether serious or comic. "Jerry Boake's Confession,"[12] for instance, depends on the long ride between Herberton and Cairns, which provides the opportunity for a robbery and murder, and then the circumstances for the guilty man to betray himself. In "The Stolen Colours" a courtship is comically disrupted, by misunderstanding and because of the distance between an outback station and a small coastal town.[13]

The evocation of a landscape or a lifestyle is the main point of some of the tales. "An Idyll of the Plains"[14] begins with a detailed realistic description of a bushman awakening on the verandah of an outback pub, the morning after the first night of a bender. There follows a telescoped account of how he courts and wins the publican's niece. The later events are a fantasy, typical of stories written in the 'nineties and earlier by bushmen and miners who were cut off from women, and they are much less convincing than the opening of the story. Similarly, the unlikely supernatural narrative of "The Strange Occurrence on Huckey's Creek"[15] is less interesting than the opening description, despite its tendency to exaggeration:

> The heat haze hung like a mist over the plain. Everything seen through it appeared to palpitate and quiver, although not a breath of air was stirring. The three men, sitting under the iron-roofed verandah of the little roadside inn, at which they had halted and turned out their horses for a mid-day spell, were drenched with perspiration and tormented to the verge of insanity by flies. The horses, finding it too hot to keep up even the pretence of eating, had sought what shade they could find, and stood there in pairs, head to tail.

The widely differing landscapes of the north gave scope to Favenc's gift for description and imparted variety to his stories. For example, the title story of his first collection, "The Last of Six,"[16] is set in the mangrove swamps of the coast near Cooktown; "The Story of a Big Pearl"[17] takes place on Thursday Island and the seas nearby; other stories, including "Not Retributive Justice,"[18] are located in what Favenc referred to as "spinifex land;" "A Tale of Vanderlin Island"[19] imagines the first coming of the white man to the Sir Edward Pellew island group at the mouth of the McArthur; "In the Bamboos"[20] is set near Daly Waters; "The True Story of the Marvellous Fossil Discovery"[21] takes place in Normanton and on the Nicholson River; "The Red Lagoon"[22] vividly evokes the feeling of the Atherton Tableland. Probably most of these tales were in Favenc's mind long before the literary atmosphere of Sydney in the 'nineties encouraged him to write them down.

Like the other *Bulletin* writers, he adjusts the settings automatically to the emotional climate of his stories. Where the prevailing mood is comic, the privations of bush life explain

the presence of "characters" such as the "old Gulf hand" in "Tranter's Shot,"[23] and the Machiavellian cook, Ah Foo, in "The Rumford Plains Tragedy."[24] Where the tone is tragic, or the supernatural element is strong, they are reflected in the landscapes. The opening of "The Last of Six" is a more complex version of the description of the Fitzroy printed in the *Queenslander* in 1876:

> Perhaps no more desolate, depressing scenery can be found anywhere in the world than on the mangrove-flats of Northern Queensland. As you row slowly up some saltwater creek, nothing is visible on either side but low banks of oozy mud, awash at high tide, covered with writhing and distorted trees. Now and then a branch creek breaks the monotony of the scrub, for the shore is here a perfect labyrinth and network of watercourses, whilst the only living denizens visible are armies of hideous crabs, and an occasional evil-looking alligator, which glides noiselessly off the mud into deep water as your boat approaches.

The main ideas here, of desolation, monotony, entrapment and evil, are developed in the story which follows. In his tales of the supernatural, Favenc can endow not only the moonlit deserts, but even the bush at noon with an unreachable, brooding and sinister life, for instance in "Spirit Led"[25] set near the Gulf:

> The fierce sun was above them, the bare mountains around, they could hear the horses clattering up the range as if anxious to leave the accursed place, and before them lay a skeleton with the shrunken skin still adhering to it in places. . . .

For different reasons these two passages are rather consciously literary, but when the effect aimed for is less intense Favenc can write in the style of the muster and the camp fire:

> We were camped on the Nicholson for the wet season. The cattle had been turned out and we had hard work to keep them together, for, after the rain set in and the country became boggy, the niggers commenced playing up and we had to keep going. It was raining cats and dogs that night, and we were all huddled together round the fire under a bit of a bark lean-to which we had put up.[26]

In some stories he experiments with narrative viewpoint. Several of the desert tragedies, notably "A Haunt of the Jinkarras"[27] and "A Message from the Desert,"[28] are made up in part of first-person transcriptions from a dead man's diary. (Like Rider Haggard, whom he resembles in other ways as well, Favenc was deeply interested in tragic relics, and liked to

calculate the effects of time, sun and wind on leather, metal, cloth, flesh, and bones.) The only other view of the tragedy in "A Haunt of the Jinkarras" is provided by an impersonal newspaper report, a limitation which much enhances the story's final impact. Favenc resorts to the first person most often for the sake of comic irony. In "The Rumford Plains Tragedy" four characters make pseudo-legal statements describing an incident from their different viewpoints and ironically cross-commenting on each other. The full truth is only revealed by the last speaker. The motivation for the statements is obscure and the technique is somewhat too complex for a short story, especially for one which conforms to Archibald's prescription of brevity.[29] "A Tale of Vanderlin Island" offers a more unusual experiment with narrative viewpoint, though it is not written in the first person. Maparunga the canoe-maker watches the first white men who have ever landed in his country stage a duel, a marooning, and finally a suicide. The story is an ironic comment on Europeans, and the underlying impulse is the same as "In the Desert" – the wish to save the primeval land from intrusion. Though Favenc's experiments with narration in these and other stories of the 'nineties are simple, they are mostly successful in that they enhance the freshness and immediacy of his work.

The stories do not all fall readily into genres, but I shall attempt to discuss them here under four headings, in ascending order of merit: horror stories involving aborigines; moralistic or romantic tales; comedies; and tragedies.

Between 1890 and 1895 Favenc published in the *Bulletin* eight anecdotes with the purpose, it seems, of discrediting aborigines by demonstrating their supposed barbarity and callousness.[30] Most are written in the first person and pretend to be reminiscences, features which, together with their brevity, distinguish them from his more literary stories. Morally some are partially redeemed by the fact that the "black atrocity" which they record is precipitated by the folly or carelessness of white men, but in most Favenc allows of no extenuating circumstances. Most bizarre and most prejudiced is "A Memory of North Queensland," in which two aborigines, Sambo, "a smart young fellow" and Frank, a former Native Policeman, act as trackers for a dispersing party. The tribe is warned in advance,

and flees, and the only victim – to the white man's disgust – is a blind old man, who panics and is killed when he falls over a cliff. That night the white men are awakened by uproarious laughter in the trackers' camp:

> To my surprise Frank got up and came over, still on the broad grin.
>
> "My word, Marmie! What you think?" he said, between his chuckles. "Sambo, he been just remember. That one old fellow, tumble down along-a wall" – here he went off into a shriek – "*That fellow, father belonga him*!"
>
> And he doubled up with laughter, to which Sambo responded with shouts of merriment.

Other stories, notably "A Strange Remembrance," place the barbarism in the desert, and partly condone it as the result of privation.

These anecdotes are extreme and amount to propaganda against aborigines, but some of Favenc's longer stories during the 'nineties show that his viewpoint was not entirely uncomplicated. The strand of racism continues in the more literary stories. It is expressed with special virulence in "A Haunt of the Jinkarras." The Jinkarras are an imaginary race, perhaps derived from aboriginal legend, but more likely related to the nineteenth-century interest in Lemuria,[31] of semi-evolved cave-dwellers. (Favenc probably invented them while exploring the caves near the Katherine on his way back from the *Queenslander* expedition):

> As well as we could make out in the murky light, they were human beings, but savages of the most degraded type, far below that of the common Australian blackfellow.

The prejudice surfaces in a much lighter mock heroic manner in his account of a disturbance among aborigines which had a complicated sequel in "The Mystery of Baines' Dog."[32]

> The trouble was first caused by the Malingerites, and, needless to say, it was a case of *cherchez la femme.* One of the youthful members of that tribe had forcibly abducted a maiden of the clan of Layovah, and red war ensued. . . The noise and tumult of battle, "the thunder of the captains and their shouting," coupled with the shrill yells of the gins, were enough to unsettle the temper of any well-regulated beast, and at the end of the engagement, the casualties were – one blackfellow seriously

injured by falling over a stump during the heat of combat, two slightly scratched, and one gin very hoarse through screeching.

Other stories nevertheless develop the theme of the white man's responsibility for the black man's law-breaking beyond its expression in the anecdotes. "Malchook's Doom" tells how a white man tortures an old aboriginal by rolling him in spinifex, then burns him to death and rapes his wife; "The Red Lagoon" describes the massacre of a whole tribe. In both stories the white villains die at the hands of the aborigines, and both imply a doctrine of kind treatment, and an unconscious respect for the aboriginal as a man of secret power. In yet other stories Favenc extends his view of aborigines as victims of the landscape or of the circumstance of white domination. "A Gum Tree in the Desert"[33] tells of an old aboriginal woman camped at an isolated water hole. When two white men, also desperate for water, ride in, she takes refuge in a hollow tree. The men stay for two nights while she slowly succumbs to heat and thirst, and when they leave, she is dead. The story can almost be read as an allegory for the white man's unintentional destructiveness. Favenc's own attitude to the old woman parallels the rough compassion he showed in real life to the women he met near the Bessie Falls in the Northern Territory.

In his more journalistic stories of the 'nineties, the elements of action, romance, and moralism predominate.

Many deal with the discovery of a criminal or the prevention of a crime, and there is a strong moral element: the reader derives satisfaction from the punishment of the guilty and the vindication of the righteous. "The Professor's Discovery" is a simple example.[34] On the played-out Ravenswood goldfield in the 1870s, Professor Marcias, a showman, undertakes to divine water and gold. Instead, his stick points to a buried corpse, and the murderer gives himself away by his attempts to discredit the discovery. The same basic elements reappear in "Bunthorp's Decease" which is much longer, and where plot and characterization are more complex.[35]

Many of Favenc's early stories and serials in the *Queenslander* and the *Sydney Mail* trace the progress of a courtship, though like most contributors to newspapers at the time he

never touches on the realities of sexual relationships. Courtships and romance are much less significant in the stories of the 'nineties. "Sundered Paths," one of the few to deal with the subject, published in the *Evening News* in July 1898, is a rewriting of certain aspects of *Lost in the Winning,* and there has been no improvement in quality. It tells how a husband and wife, separated because of the wife's moral objection to the husband's occupation of blackbirding, are reconciled when he saves the life of their only son in a storm at sea. Suspense is generated by raising doubts as to the husband's and son's survival.

Also among Favenc's journalistic efforts of the 'nineties are stories which divide their interest between the narration of an adventure and sentimental moralizing. In "A Lucky Meeting"[36] two brothers discover the skeleton of a horse and a saddlebag containing a will beside a dried-up section of the Herbert River. Later, by remote coincidence, they hire a stockman, a gentleman who has come down in the world, who proves to be the beneficiary. The will conveys to the young man his father's forgiveness for his early dissipated life. Like Duncan McIntyre, the hero of "That Other Fellow,"[37] this man is excused weaknesses, especially dipsomania, because of his courage and fundamental integrity. The following analysis of McIntyre seems to be related to Favenc's self-image, especially the "charming manners and manly appearance" mentioned by the writer in the *Queenslander* in 1897, and the love of adventure:

> Liquor ever turned him from a generous, easy-going mild-tempered fellow into a mad rowdy, ready to ride a wild race through the main street of a bush township, fight with his best friend, or drink with his worst enemy. Fortunately, his *manly, adventurous character* had prevented him sinking into the ranks of the sponger and the loafer. [My italics]

In the end McIntyre redeems himself by self-sacrifice, in the manner of Sydney Carton though in vastly different surroundings. In both these stories Favenc's youthful sentimentality contrasts with his mature appreciation of the realities of life and death in the bush.

On the other hand many stories reveal his capacity for treating these realities humorously. Favenc's comic tales of the

'nineties can be classified under four heads: ironic revelations by a first-person narrator, already dealt with; comedies of character; comedies of frustration; and macabre comedies.

Some stories recount simply the fates of eccentric residents of the bush. In "The Swell Sundowner" Mr Saurian, an upper-class tramp who is living off an hospitable station manager, finally oversteps himself to the point of standing on his dignity, and threatens to leave.[38] In another story, to the astonishment of his friends, a stockman returns from a holiday in Brisbane with the news that he has joined the Salvation Army, but the need to swear at bullocks when moving sleepers across creeks induces him eventually to throw the Army over.[39]

Somewhat more complex comedies of character trace confrontations either between long-term bushmen, as in the very funny "Mystery of Baines' Dog" or, much more frequently, between "old hands" and newcomers. The newcomers are often in authority, as in the archetypal situation in "Tranter's Shot:"

> The new super was a young man from the South, and Tranter was an old Gulf hand. The new super was a black-protector and temperance-advocate, and objected to swearing. Tranter, to sustain his character as an old Gulf hand, swore the most blood-curdling oaths in his presence, and told the most awful lies he could invent about black atrocities.

In "The Other Mrs Brewer" the situation is varied by a marriage between the old hand and the newcomer: Brewer the station manager goes to comical lengths to induce his young wife to believe that he has never had an aboriginal mistress.[40] In "The New Super at Oakley Downs"[41] and "The Parson's Blackboy" the joke is twisted yet another way, in that the newcomer is a clergyman. In the former, a new manager confounds a long-term employee on a station with zany ideas for mustering cattle; his identity as an insane ex-clergyman is not revealed until the end. "The Parson's Blackboy," which has been the most frequently reprinted of all Favenc's stories,[42] tells how a clergyman is given an aboriginal girl disguised as a boy to guide him around the inland stations, and in consequence is forced to take up a new profession. Both stories express a prejudice against clergymen, which has been shared by other Australian writers.[43] The following description occurs in "The Parson's Blackboy:"

> Now, although beset with the conceit and priggishness inseparable from the early stages of parsonhood, Simmondsen was not a bad fellow, and glimpses of his manly nature would at times peep out in spite of himself.

The derisive quality of Favenc's humour is obvious in stories like "The Second Mrs Brewer," "The Parson's Blackboy," and "Tranter's Shot," which depend on a mild deception or a practical joke. The victims are not regarded with malice, but with a superior amused tolerance, and there are also attempts to take in the reader for his own good, so that the joke will strike him more forcibly in the end. A certain youthfulness is apparent in Favenc's attitude here, as it is in his ideals of manliness and adventure.

Others of his comic stories depend on the proposition that a tiny error can initiate a long and complex train of disasters. The archetype of these stories, which imply a fundamental mistrust of life, is "A Victim to Gratitude."[44] By a small act of kindness to a lady, the narrator, Petrie, is deprived successively of his comfortable lodgings, his fiancée, his business partner and his business, and is at last forced to move from Sydney to a station in Central Australia. The appeal of the story lies in the fantastic plot, the comic situations which result from the series of misunderstandings, and Petrie's dismay at them. "My Only Murder"[45] is a more successful tale, in which not the doer but the recipient of the favour initially comes to grief. On the eve of his wedding the narrator is heroically rescued from the flooded Banderoar River in North Queensland by a bushman called Jenkins. Twelve years later, in Sydney, Jenkins presumes upon the debt to the extent of wrecking the narrator's social life and alienating his wife by his uncouth behaviour. He also persists in the belief that the narrator feels only gratitude towards him. At last the narrator decides that Jenkins must die:

> Once resolved, I acted. I know it was wrong, but I couldn't help it, any more than Deeming could help killing his wives, or Mr Neill Cream could help poisoning all those poor girls in London. Jenkins was a friendless bushman; I was a man with responsibilities and a family. Their happiness stood first, and it was kinder to Jenkins to kill him at once than to undeceive him.

More than a third of Favenc's comic tales in the 'nineties possess an element of the macabre or supernatural. Murder

figures as a solution, not only in "My Only Murder," but in "The Story of a Long Watch"[46] – where it is not actually carried out – and in "A North Queensland Temperance Story,"[47] in which a loquacious and wealthy mother-in-law is pushed into a river infested with crocodiles. In these stories the momentary impulses to mayhem experienced by most people are allowed to run to their natural limit. The fundamental technique is that of the bush joke – the coupling of a dead-pan style with zany exaggeration.[48]

Corpses and cannibals figure in several of Favenc's comic tales already mentioned, including "Tranter's Shot," and "A North Queensland Temperance Story." In the latter the parts of the mother-in-law are recovered from various dead crocodiles. When "The Belle of Sagamodu" opens the narrator and a friend are the prisoners of some South Sea cannibals: "The selfish savages fed us well, and we spent an indolent time, varied by false alarms of approaching feasts."[49] In "A Tragedy in Ten Minutes" a man, asked by a woman in a crowded Sydney street to hold a parcel for her, speculates on whether it contains the corpse of an infant, and his doubts are not resolved.[50]

Some of Favenc's most successful comic stories involve ghosts, and the humour usually consists in characters' extreme reactions to them, of either gibbering terror or complete sang-froid. "An Unquiet Spirit"[51] is an example of the latter. After his death, old Danvers, who in life built up and managed an outback station with great care and efficiency, begins to appear to his son, the narrator, who is in Sydney reading for the bar. The father's purpose in manifesting is to correct the mistakes and omissions of the manager and staff of his station. In an emergency he appears in his old working clothes at a garden party, and the narrator gives him a coin, as if to a beggar: "Now, to pass off the shade of one's father as an intrusive loafer who had to be got rid of at any price is, I think, the greatest piece of moral cowardice a man can be guilty of." The young Danvers falls in love, and everything runs smoothly until a week before the wedding, when the ghost is recognized by the fiancée. She refuses to marry a man "who had a ghostly progenitor popping up at convenient and inconvenient times." In this crisis the narrator arranges that instead of appearing his father should

materialize a letter when he has something to say: "You see it's this way, Dad. I enjoy seeing you immensely, but the women, you know, are prejudiced." The comic technique is once again a contrast between normalcy of presentation and wildly improbable facts.

The elements of crime, the macabre and the supernatural which Favenc was able to twist into successful comedy are significant subjects also in his tragic tales, though usually in those which appeal least to present taste. In some, which are horror stories rather than tragedies, the emphasis is on wondrous happenings. In "Spirit-Led," for example, the final horror is the instantaneous disintegration of a living man to a skeleton, an event somewhat resembling the long-delayed transmutation of Dorian Gray. Other stories, such as "Malchook's Doom" practise a welcome restraint by refusing to arbitrate on whether a ghost is actual or the product of a guilty imagination. Favenc's poem, "The Ghosts of the Desert," first published in the *Bulletin* in 1894,[52] imaginatively explores the relationship between the landscape and the supernatural. The related idea, that the desert contains or creates ghosts which can be perceived by the dying, recurs in several stories. The Red Lagoon is named from a weed which grew over it, following the massacre of the tribe there. Once again the point seems to be the response of the landscape to spiritual laws. On the other hand in the same story Favenc enhances the impact of the grisly spectre which inhabits the lagoon by setting it in the context of normal human exchanges. This is the classic horror technique of reminding the reader of the difference between his daylight and night-time consciousness, of arousing his fear of his subconscious propensities.

Some of Favenc's stories avoid or mitigate the worst faults of horror writing and melodrama, to offer stark portrayals of tragic events. Characterization in these stories is rudimentary, consisting of hardly more than an indication of which characters are sympathetic and which are not. The emphasis in some is on the reality of suffering and the malignancy of fate. In "Pompey," for instance, a white father and his half-caste son unknowingly kill each other. Favenc narrates the events leading to the tragedy, including the formation of the dispersing party,

merely so as to make the motives clear, and without moral or social comment. The extreme simplicity of the narrative is an artistic advantage. A similar effect is achieved in "A Gum Tree in the Desert," already discussed, and in "The Last of his Tribe,"[53] which describes, from the viewpoint of the white man who discovers them, the death from privation of an old aboriginal couple. The mindless brutality of the universe is stressed particularly in "The Burial of Owen."[54] It opens with a brief character sketch:

> Owen MacAlister and his wife were a worthy pioneer couple who had risen to the comfortable position they occupied by dint of hard work and self-denial. The old man was tall, gaunt, and as hard as nails. He had toiled until he had raised a team of bullocks, he had worked until he had two. He had gone on working, until now he had flocks and herds and a large bank-balance.

The couple have a son, Owen, and a daughter, Jennie. Owen buys a cattle-run in North Queensland, and dies of Gulf fever within a year. The narrator, whose name is Craven, returns the son's effects to the father, and gradually comes to the realization that his son's death, and especially a map of the property in Queensland, have sent old Owen mad. In the end he collapses completely. The final paragraph illustrates Favenc's casual style: "I heard him say 'Jennie' and 'Owen!' with such a tone of love in the last name, and one of the grandest old men I ever knew had gone for another incarnation."

A majority of Favenc's tragic stories express not his personal fatalism, but the nineteenth-century faith in ultimate justice. The best of these are saved from banality by the grim events which they narrate. "The Last of Six" superimposes one dire situation on another: the unbearable discomfort of the windless swamp, the bloated corpse which seems to pursue the men in the boat, and the Frenchwoman, her eyes shining with "awful horror," are the present reality; through this surface sporadically the facts of an even more dreadful past – the murder and cannibalism of the escape in an open boat from New Caledonia. The melodrama of the past is restrained somewhat by being only partially revealed. The horrible corpse proves to be that of the murderer, so justice has been done, but the lasting impression is of the woman's terrible grief and the fatality of the voyage.

"A Cup of Cold Water"[55] tells of a man who exacts a poetic revenge on his father's murderer. The desert is made the instrument of both the murder and the revenge. The account of the father's death, Favenc's best exploitation of this situation, is written in the present tense for immediacy, and the fate of the corpse is vividly evoked:

> Four months have passed, the weather has been unchanged. Day after day a cloudless sun has looked down on the lonely body, gradually shrivelling up into a withered mummy: day after day has seen it untouched by bird or beast; even the scavenger crows have shunned the spot, and the dead white man has lain in solitude all the time.

The technical interest of Favenc's stories of the 'nineties derives from a simple contrast between the casual and the dramatic. He can describe landscape simply or in purple passages. His humour usually depends on the tension between a matter-of-fact style and an improbable subject matter. He can present his tragedies either with restraint or with melodrama. It is unlikely that he cultivated these contrasts deliberately or analysed them once they existed. In fact more insight can be gained by comparing his stories with the productions of recent naive painters in Australia. He resembles them in his technical simplicity: complexity was not encouraged either by popular taste at the time or by the policies of the *Bulletin* and other papers. Also like the naive painters, for instance Henry Bastin and Sam Byrne, Favenc evolved his unique response to landscape over many years. Some of the landscapes he encountered had never been seen by Europeans before, and certainly no attempt had been made to record responses in any art form. Finally, the particular qualities of naive painting are creativity and individualism, and these are also to be found in Favenc's stories.

After 1888 his historical writing was based on *The History of Australian Exploration* and not on new research. In 1891 he began a magazine for children, entitled *The Story of Our Continent Told with Brush and Pen.* The first issue, in the first of several proposed series, each to consist of twenty-one issues, is held by the British Library. Probably no more were printed. The manifesto of the journal reads as follows:

> It is not published as another unnecessary addition to the many existing histories of Australia. It is a story of the more romantic incidents of the past, selected, both on account of their suitability for treatment at the hands of artist and author; and as typical of the particular epoch of our history to which they belong.

The artist in question was Percy F. Spence, whose sketches enliven many of Favenc's books and stories. The "romantic incident" chosen as centre-piece for the first issue was the wreck of Pelsart's ship, the Batavia, on Houtman's Abrolhos in 1629, and the subsequent mutiny of most of his crew – a sequence which seems to have stirred the author's imagination.

Among his other writing for children are two stories included in the undated collection, *Tales for Young Australia,* by "Mab" and James and Joseph Fotheringhame – probably all pseudonyms for Favenc and his wife. "All about Dream Island" is an allegory of exploration by two young dreamers, a boy called Jambaree and a girl called Kickshaw. "The Two Fairies," which tells of an alliance between an English and a black Australian fairy, is an interesting attempt to reconcile divergent elements in the culture of white Australian children in Favenc's day.

Among the three volumes which he edited in 1895 under the pseudonym of Armand Jerome was the first issue of *Australian Boys and Girls: An Illustrated Annual of Stories by Australian Writers.* It contained Louis Becke's "Swain the Half-Caste," Ethel Turner's "The Gloves of Gregor McAllister," and Favenc's "Mount Madness," illustrated by Walter H. Bone. In "Mount Madness" three Europeans and their aboriginal "boy," exploring the far west in search of grazing land, come upon an insane and naked white man named Jackson. Jackson has been mistreated by half-castes, the result of inter-breeding a generation earlier between some escaped convicts and a local tribe. The explorers wipe out the half-castes to avenge Jackson and some murdered aboriginal slaves.

This violent story is Favenc's second and less successful attempt to base a fantasy for children on the *Queenslander* expedition. His first attempt was the serial, "The Burning Mountain of the Interior," contributed to the *Queenslander* in 1890 in a curtailed form,[5] [6] and republished in 1895 as a com-

plete novel, *The Secret of the Australian Desert.* This tells how Morton, the owner of a station in Central Australia, his neighbour, Brown, and young cousin, Charlie, and tracker, Billy Button, set out northwards towards the MacDonnel Ranges in quest of Leichhardt's lost expedition. After many adventures they are present at the death of the last of Leichhardt's companions, then a very old man, and they find a journal which tells of the fate of the others. The adventures chiefly concern aboriginal tribes who are in part cannibals, in part what Favenc seems to have regarded as civilized, and wholly unlike any tribes known ever to have existed. Part of Favenc's aim, in which he succeeded very well, seems to have been to create a feeling for the unknown, such as would be immediately recognized by a science fiction reader today, and which probably inspired the early European myths about unexplored territory. The mysterious discoveries which create this feeling in *The Secret of the Australian Desert* – the well-made road which brings the adventurers from the place where the distinguished aboriginal dead are hung in trees; the devil's footprints across the limestone plain; the boiling springs; and the painted caves which conceal the all-important journal – are the most successful features of the novel.

For about the first third, events seem to move to a goal, but then there is a falling-off into arbitrary journeys and episodes. As in the short stories, little attention is given to characterization, and courage and adventurousness are the only moral qualities consciously praised. The internal dimension is in fact far more limited than necessary in a book for children. The values unconsciously expressed are those which Favenc reveals also in other contexts. An hierarchic world view emerges in which it is implied that maturity (Morton and Brown) should govern youth (Charlie); that the educated middle class (represented by Stuart, the diarist of Leichhardt's party) is superior to the uneducated lower class (represented by Murphy, the sailor); and that white should rule black. Apart from the knowledge gained, Morton and his party are richer at the end by a reef of gold, a ritual satisfaction, probably, of Favenc's own wish for wealth.

The diverse influences on the novel are worth unravelling.

The resemblance to the *Queenslander* expedition in the first part, where the plot is tightly controlled, is very close: Morton's party equals Favenc's in number and in racial division, and it is halted for a time in a camp without water on the edge of an apparently impassable desert. The author's interest in Leichhardt surfaces again. (In 1893 he had contributed a different fantasy on the discovery of the lost expedition to the *Queensland Punch*; in this case the find was made on the upper Burdekin.[57]) The plot bears many resemblances, too, to Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines,* published ten years earlier. Finally, the discovery of the tribes, whether evolved independently or borrowed from Haggard, seems to be a response to contemporary interest in Australia in lost civilizations. The lost tribes parallel the Jinkarras in Favenc's story, and are related to the myth of Lemuria, except in that their portrayal is uninfluenced by evolutionary theory. The reviewer for the *Bulletin* quoted earlier in this chapter stated that "in the glimpses of the mysterious race which primevally peopled Australia" – the ancestors of the aborigines encountered by Morton's party – there was interest for "mature minds."

Favenc seems not to have been discouraged by the reception of *The Secret,* since in the following year he published two more novels, *Marooned in Australia,* in London, and *The Moccasins of Silence,* in Sydney.

Marooned in Australia is a much more integrated work than Favenc's first boys' book. It is written in the first person, professedly by Diedrich Buys, one of the mutineers whom Pelsart abandoned on the west coast after regaining control. Diedrich is exonerated from deliberate participation in the mutiny, though his companion, Paul, later proves to be treacherous. After two years among the "Indians" near the Abrolhos they begin to travel north, in the hope of eventually reaching Java. After a further two years of hardship they come upon a head carved in relief in a rock – the same which George Grey had sketched in the journal of his expedition in 1837 and which Favenc had reproduced in his *History*[58] – and footprints of people wearing shoes. These turn out to be the Quadrucos, a friendly race totalling about eight hundred whose ancestors, according to their tradition, came from overseas in canoes. The carved head

is the work of a Quadruco artist, two generations previously. Diedrich's description runs as follows:

> They were of a light colour, with dark hair and eyes, and as I said before, beardless. They were well built, averaging about five foot eight or nine; extremely good-looking, especially the women. ... Their dress, which was woven out of the woolly pod of a bush, was a single garment like a long shirt, with a girdle round the waist; it reached a little below the knee, and was the same in both sexes. The men wore a turban, but the women wore only ornamental head-dresses of flowers and feathers. They had little occasion to work, the valley being so fertile, and the hunting was merely a pastime and an exercise. The men had but one wife and family affection seemed very strong between them. They had a simple kind of religion, which I don't think was much thought of, and consisted merely in a belief in a Great Spirit, who was sometimes kind, and sometimes angry. They had plenty of dances and games, but very few rites or ceremonies.[59]

The Quadrucos live in houses of mud brick, coated with a kind of whitewash to preserve them from the rain. The walls are very thick to keep in coolness, and the interiors are darkened to discourage the stinging flies. The houses are surrounded by flowering trees and shrubs; the walls slant inwards at the top and stairs are cut in them to give access to the roofs, which are flat. The whole account of this civilization is not very complex, but many more details are given than of the lost tribes in *The Secret.*[60]

In 1503 the French navigator, Paulmier de Gonneville, landed, according to Diedrich, near Quadruco Bay, and erected a giant wooden cross. This began a legend among the people, and Diedrich and Paul are accepted in the first place as members of de Gonneville's returning party. Later they train the Quadrucos in war against the Mongol pirates who periodically raid the coast, and they marry Quadruco women. Their comparatively peaceful life is then interrupted by the arrival of a Dutch ship, commanded by Captain Hoogstraaten who stands, Favenc assures us in his preface, for Tasman on his second voyage to Australia, though this did not actually occur until 1644. After numerous adventures peace is re-established, but soon a tidal wave floods the valley of the Quadrucos and only Diedrich survives. He buries his wife and her brother, piling huge stones

on their graves, and thus creating the structures commented upon in the nineteenth century by George Grey. Later he is rescued by the Dutch captain, de Witt, on yet another anachronistic voyage to the north-west coast, and returns to Holland.

In *Marooned in Australia* Favenc uses the knowledge gained in his expedition of 1888 only in Chapter II, which describes Diedrich's and Paul's first impressions of the country and their journey northwards. The theme of exploration, so central to *The Secret,* is explicit only in the journey and in the discovery of the carved head, though it is implicit in the accounts of the many ships which visit the coast. There is much more history in *Marooned in Australia* than in *The Secret*, but more liberties are taken with it. The weight of Favenc's interest seems to have moved from exploration to lost civilizations.

The Moccasins of Silence defeats expectations by having nothing to do with history. It is set partly in contemporary Sydney and partly on Thursday Island and the adjacent seas, and deals with the search for Reginald Annett and some priceless diamonds in his possession. The searchers are Annett's family, including his daughter, Ruth, and her fiancée, a bushman named Lestrell, and their rivals, a Sydney businessman and his accomplice, Madame da Lucca. The second group is motivated by a wish to possess the diamonds and, in the case of Madame da Lucca, to possess Lestrell. Her passion is a constant source in the novel of melodramatic scenes. Three key events deal with the fulfilment of a curse placed on a pair of stalking shoes by an aboriginal medicine man – once again Favenc's portrayal of aborigines has minimal reference to reality. Despite the elements of structure imparted by the curse, *The Moccasins of Silence* seems to have been hastily written. The reviewer for the *Bulletin,* who was determined to make the best of it, was forced to admit that "the fine plot might with advantage have been extended to treble the space: it has hardly room to turn in, and the telling seems sometimes bald and abrupt."[61]

The half-dozen poems which Favenc published in the *Queensland Punch*, the *Bulletin* and the *Queenslander* during

the 1890s are preoccupied with the passing of time, both from a personal and a national point of view. In "Bush Reveries" the ghost of the irredeemable past is associated with dawn by the lonely bushman – "He who watches apart, far from other men;" noon is associated with the laborious present; and hope comes only in the evening, which is also the time of death.[62] "The Australian Desert: a Dream of the Future"[63] paints the desert in the present – "An iron land beneath brazen skies"–, recalls those who have died to conquer it, and holds firmly to hope for the future:

> The time draws near when the low, bare hills
> Will echo the songs of a thousand rills.
> Deep down in the beds of the old-world streams,
> They sleep unheeded and dream their dreams;
> Till the magic drill bids them wake again,
> And they rise to water the thirsty plain.

The mood in "The Ghosts of the Desert" is less optimistic. The first part tells of a rider forced to camp in the desert without water for his horses. That night he has a vision of departed spirits – the thousands who have died to open up the country – worshipping in a vast cathedral on the plain. They suffer still because their dream of a new nation has not been fulfilled. The land is held by banks and by "guinea pig" lords. The cities are crammed with vice and the bushman has given place to the tramp. Time is not a stated issue in the poem, except in that Favenc seems to have shared the view of many of his contemporaries and of later commentators, that the 'nineties was a time for reflecting on the nation's progress.

In 1896 he contributed to the Christmas Supplement of the *Queenslander* the best of his efforts in verse, "The Watchers,"[64] where time is once more a central concern. Three men are crossing the desert on foot, with two unseen companions:

> For one was old, who had never been born,
> Although mortal look he bore:
> His wings were draggled, the pinions torn,
> He carried a scythe that was notched and worn;
> And he turned an hour-glass o'er.

But the hole was dry, the bed was bare;
The bones of a wild dog rotted there.

Percy F. S. Spence's illustration for "The Ghosts of the Desert," from the *Bulletin*, December 15, 1894.

But the other had a more ghastly form,
That no man could live and see:
His fleshless bones had never been warm;
He lived in carnage, disease and storm,
And a constant grin wore he.

(A less vivid personification of Time appears in Favenc's first published poem of the 'nineties, "1890-1891," in the *Queensland Punch.*[65]) The sky darkens and thunder can be heard, but Time turns his hour-glass. Can the men be saved? The answer is given in the last stanza, and Favenc practises unusual restraint in refraining from further comment:

Death chuckled and held his dart up first,
Time turned his hour-glass round;
The storm-clouds eddied, and raged, and burst,
But never could slake a dead man's thirst –
Three dead men lay on the ground.

In 1893 Favenc contributed a zany article to the *Queensland Punch,* recommending the cultivation of oysters in fresh water in Central Australia:

> Why should not an oyster evolve from brackish water to fresh; why should he alone be denied a pastoral life? Oysters have beards, why should not proper care and selection develop wool? Why should not even a future rival for sheep spring up if the matter were properly taken in hand?

His other articles during the 'nineties are authoritative pieces on bush life, dealing with navigation,[67] drunkenness and fighting among bushmen,[68] and bush slang.[69] A lengthy review refutes Cardinal Moran's opinion, in his *History of the Church in Australia,* that Quiros' "Espiritu Santo" was to be identified with Port Curtis.[70] In "The Geographical Paradox of Australia," published in the *Review of Reviews,*[71] Favenc argued that the climate, topography, fauna and aboriginal population of the continent were more uniform in a north-south than in an east-west direction, a fact which distinguished it from other land masses. In a more complex article in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* in 1893,[72] he argued that the aborigines of eastern Australia were more advanced than those of the west, as indicated by the finish of their implements for war and hunting, the elaboration of their peaceful ceremonies

and rites, and their personal ornamentation. He casually blamed the destruction of tribal culture in general on "the blight of our contact," thus repeating an insight which runs in minor key through all his writing on aborigines.[73]

Favenc was forty-four in 1890 and his natural conservatism had been reinforced by years in North Queensland and other outlying parts. His many stories of the decade differ from his earlier work in quantity and quality, rather than in range or attitude, though his short, sharp comedies and tragedies are a new departure. Leon Cantrell lists the main concerns of Australian writers in the 'nineties as: writing in Australia, city life, lyricism, politics and nationalism, the city versus the bush, and life up the country.[73] Favenc's work confines itself to the conservative end of this spectrum. He is profoundly interested in "life up the country" (though this phrase is alien to him), and perhaps his writing about it amounts to a "celebration," though he is not particularly concerned with its Australian quality. His approach to the bush is reminiscent rather than ideological, in the manner of naive artists. In his earlier fiction, as well as in his work of the 'nineties he enters occasionally into the city versus bush debate, but his interest is confined to their relative capacity to form character. Nationalist leanings are apparent in his writing from the beginning, and are developed in the 'nineties in poems such as "The Australian Desert" and "The Ghosts of the Desert," but they are certainly not a constant preoccupation of his prose. Many of his stories of the 'nineties are of literary and historical interest, as well as being representative of conservative writing for the *Bulletin* in the decade.

CHAPTER 6

LAST YEARS IN SYDNEY

The last years of Favenc's life cannot have been entirely happy, for a number of reasons. His explorations had been largely forgotten: the journalist who recorded Amy Favenc's success in needlework and design described her father as "at one time a well-known explorer;" and when G. McIver sought his interview with Favenc in January, 1907, he explained that he was motivated by the rapid destruction of information on the old explorers and pioneers. He elicited only the basic facts about Favenc's expeditions, and some account of his dealings with aborigines, which are now available in much more detail from other sources. However, he unconsciously gives an impression of Favenc in his home in Darlinghurst, surrounded by rare portraits and photos of explorers long dead. He was then only sixty-one, and may well have sympathized with George Bass, whom he had once described in an article as "a man born out of his time."[1]

The photos were reproduced, nevertheless, in 1908, in *The Explorers of Australia and Their Life Work,* the first monograph in a proposed series, "The Makers of Australasia," edited by Dr James Hight, of Canterbury College, New Zealand University (now Canterbury University) and published by Whitcombe and Tombs of Christchurch. This book was Favenc's last major use of the information he had gathered for his *History.* It summarizes the main explorations treated there and adds brief biographies of the explorers, mostly based on obituaries, but containing useful summaries of achievement, as follows:

> Oxley died at Kirkham, his private residence near Sydney, on the 25th of May, 1828. Though his judgment was at times at fault, as will be seen later on, he was essentially a successful explorer; for, although he did not in every case achieve the object aimed at, he always brought back his men without loss, and he opened up vast tracts of new country. John Oxley's personality is not very familiar, but the portrait presented to the reader in this volume was taken in the prime of his life, before he suffered the scars of doubtful battle with the Australian wilderness.[2]

As the title suggests, *The Explorers* cuts across the strictly chronological account of the *History* to arrange itself around personalities – a means of capturing interest and simplifying reference. John Forrest explained in his introduction that the work was condensed "for use in schools and for general readers." Favenc's preface suggests that he had come to realize the centrality of the explorers in the formation of a national consciousness. His book was reviewed at length and very favourably in the *Sydney Mail* and the *Australasian.*[3]

Most of Favenc's literary experience after 1900 was not so happy. Wide recognition did not come, and a strident disappointment is evident in a few of his surviving letters. In an undated note to "Bolger," the context of which has been lost, he wrote:

> I am not going to have d-d flapdoodles written about me, to be everlastingly chaffed about it afterwards. You can show this to Mr Archibald as he knows well that I detest the idea of appearing either in the Bulletin's "Chamber of Horrors," or that of any other paper. There's no advertisement in it worth a cent. Every murderer and harlot has the same privilege.[4]

Similarly, on 6th April, 1906, he wrote from Darlinghurst to Jeffrey, the editor of the *Evening News,* to defend an idea for an article:

> I must have expressed myself badly. I meant a suggestion for a subject. The subject is, the first Xmas dinner eaten in the Australian Interior. 1813. It has not been hackneyed, for the very good reason that nobody knew about it, because Evans' diary of the discovery of the Macquarie has not been published.[5]

Favenc was clearly not in regular employment at the *Evening News* at this date. He may well have ceased to be so as early as 1897, when both he and his wife were reported to be seriously ill, though the report may have been exaggerated.[6]

The letter to Jeffrey must have been favourably received, because three days later Favenc wrote again, enclosing a typescript of the article, notes for an illustration to accompany it, and a rough sketch of the "old military type" of saddle used by Evans and his party. The notes seem to have been based on fairly extensive research:

THE LATE ERNEST FAVENC, explorer, author and journalist.

> Very open forest country, on the bank of the river fine gum trees, but by no means thickly growing. Also Mimosa trees in patches. Range of hills in distance but not mountains. Bright clear day. . . .

> Men would wear either Scotch twill shorts or Parramatta frocks (something like Norfolk jackets), cabbage-tree hats or wide brimmed felt ones, with low crowns and wide brims. One or two of the men could have leggings on, half-way up the thigh, like an English gamekeeper's. About the camp would be a saddle or two, see sketch. One shot-gun leaning against a tree, single barrel, flint lock. A surveyor's chain rolled up, a bucket, wooden, not unlike a ship's pail.

After 1900 he continued to write brief articles and letters tailored for the *Bulletin,* especially the "Aboriginalities" page. The largest group of these were fantasies on Australian geography: he points to the ease with which the floodwaters of the Diamantina, Cooper's Creek and other channels could be dammed to carry cattle through the dry season;[7] writes of the work of volcanoes in forming the continent; [8] describes the earthquake to come, which will join Spencer's Gulf and the Gulf of Carpentaria;[9] and speculates on filling Lake Eyre with ocean water through a canal from South Australia.[10] In an article in the *Bulletin* in September, 1902, he suggested that the rock paintings discovered by Grey were aboriginal copies of a portrait of the madonna brought to the north-west coast by de Gonneville or some Spanish explorer.[11] Ironically, in view of his own current and past fantasies, five months later he was writing to the *Bulletin* to dismiss a story about a lost tribe which had been suggested by the *Jewish Chronicle* in London:

> These exploring stories that occasionally get foisted on to gullible editors are generally too absurd to contradict, but this one about finding an aboriginal Jewish tribe one thousand miles beyond the Leopold Range is so absolutely absurd that one would think the most credulous mortal would scarcely have taken it seriously.[12]

Other articles in the *Bulletin* dealt with aboriginal language — place names and pidgin.[13] As well, he contributed a tongue-in-cheek, but basically complimentary analysis of the aboriginal character:

> When you meet the real myall . . . you find him, according to his lights, a well-bred gentleman. . . They desire you to be seated (i.e. squatted), and always pull two or three tussocks of grass for you

> to subside upon. When you inquire the name of the creek, river, or water-hole you are on they give it to you at once; and when you try to imitate the sounds they laugh pleasantly as if to say, "Not bad, for a first attempt." Do you desire to know if there is water, they reply by signs that there are seas, lakes, rivers. Are there fish in them (a question generally put to judge of permanency)? Immense quantities, you are told – not with the view of deceiving you, but out of politeness.[14]

Some long articles on exploration and overlanding by Favenc appeared after 1900 in papers other than the *Bulletin.* They concentrate on the area west of Sydney – Ensign Barralier's claim to the first crossing of the Blue Mountains;[15] the west coast – imaginative treatments of the early Dutch discoveries;[16] and North Queensland.[17] Of a series on overlanding contributed to the *Town and Country Journal* in 1904, three articles deal with Sydney and Melbourne, with the settlement of the Lachlan, the Murray and the Darling, with the opening up of the upper Fitzroy and the Darling Downs; and three with pioneers of North Queensland, all of whom Favenc must have heard of or met in his early years in the region.[18] He provides a portrait of Edward Cunningham; sketches the explorations of Dalrymple and of Mackinlay; narrates the journey of the Jardine brothers; and describes Mark Watt Reid, "one of the first North Queensland overlanders with cattle to Woodstock, near Townsville." Nostalgia and regret are the dominating tone of the articles.

Favenc's production of short stories seems to have declined after 1900. Of the thirteen which I have found, three are set in Sydney, and the rest in the remote areas favoured in his earlier fiction. Descriptions of landscape are relatively few and brief.

There are two comic stories about ghosts. In "McWhirter's Wraith" an early Scottish pastoralist returns from the dead, materializes himself so that he can enjoy Dundee whisky and "singit sheep's head," and embroils himself with a neighbour who knew him during life. "The Girl Body-Stealer" narrates how a man goes to great trouble to leave his body, only to have it stolen by the spirit of a girl. He is then forced to take over someone else's body, and so on. Both stories, especially the

second, derive their humour from their improbability, but there is also comedy of situation and character. They were published in *Phil May's Illustrated Annual*[19] and though they are more circumstantially told, they are not as lively and direct as Favenc's *Bulletin* stories of the same type, such as "An Unquiet Spirit."

Others of his late stories also follow an earlier pattern in having crime as their subject. In "The Abduction of Nettletop"[20] and "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing"[21] horse-theft is linked with romance, and the latter also focusses on the by now stock character of the gentleman sundowner. "Chance Acquaintances" tells, more originally, of a white-collar thief who manages to pass himself off as the policeman who is pursuing him, and even collects the reward and testimonial for his own capture.[22]

"In North-Western Australia" is a tale of death in the desert, and "The Eternal Feminine" is a melodramatic family tragedy. They were published in the *Bulletin* in 1900 and 1902 respectively,[23] and are similar in form and content to Favenc's earlier tragedies in that paper. In the stories which he published in *Phil May's Annual,* the *Australasian* and *Rowlandson's Success* horror and the supernatural predominate, together with the intention to thrill the reader which is evident in certain of his works throughout his career. "A Fatal Gamble" and "On the Island of Shadows" pursue the subject of escapees from New Caledonia.[24] In the first, two men in an open boat spin a coin to determine which shall die so as to leave provisions to save the life of the other. The second recounts the insane visions of an escapee marooned alone on an island off the Barrier Reef: every night he watches the ghosts of Spanish sailors re-enact a tragedy of two hundred years earlier. This is the only late story possessing an historical dimension.

In "Under the Coolibah"[25] a squatter comes to a gruesome end as punishment for a callous act to an old aboriginal woman, and the survivor in "A Fatal Gamble" promises to avenge his companion and himself on the false witness responsible for their original imprisonment. The question of justice is however less

prominent in Favenc's later stories than in those which he contributed earlier to the *Bulletin*. Of the late horror stories, only "What the Rats Brought" offers a new kind of plot.[26] The scene is Sydney in 1919. Rats escaping from a derelict ship bring plague to the city and it spreads through the whole country. Hundreds of thousands die; all business and activity end and religious mania is common; world ports are closed to Australian ships; in Sydney the rats multiply and thousands of giant vampire bats feed on the dead bodies. The narrator is present at a scene where a man watches his enemy die, fighting off the bats. At last a great tempest and flood strike the city, purging it of the plague but causing catastrophic damage – "Martin Place was choked with the ruins of the tower and many other buildings." The closing sentence is ominous for Favenc's time:

> All this is the record of the Australian nation; mine are but some reminiscences of a time of horror unparalleled, which no man anticipated would have visited the Southern Continent.

The story seems to be an extension of his geographical fantasies of these years, such as the earthquake prediction.

In December 1900 Favenc published in the *Evening News* a very poor nationalist poem, "A Song of the Century," in which Australia praises her "children," the states, for the exploration and development which have been carried out. "In the Great Drought," first published in 1903, is a lament of the spirits of aborigines destroyed by the white man's passion for land and gold. Both poems were reprinted in *Voices of the Desert.* The theme of the destructiveness of gold appears in *Marooned on Australia* – a goldmine near the valley of the Quadrucos motivates the incursions of the Dutch mariners – and in a story, "The Auriferous Gin," which was reprinted in 1920.[27] This is actually a comedy of frustration, in which two prospectors are misled by a rumour into a lengthy search for gold in the north-west. Gold is seen as the root of evil in two further poems in *Voices of the Desert,* "The Madman's Dream of the Golden Mountain" and "The Spirit of Gold." The moralism is highly conventional, but it is at least expressed in some unusual landscapes and situations.

Voices of the Desert was favourably reviewed in the *Bulletin*, the *Australasian*, the *Queenslander*, the *Sydney Mail* and the *Spectator*.[28] Probably the reviewers refrained from attacking it out of deference to the ideal of the bushman-pioneer. This feeling was expressed openly in the *Sydney Mail*:

> *A cloudless sky o'erhead, and all around*
> *The level country stretching like a sea – . . . .*
>
> Thus we are ushered into the desert and its mysteries, and the poems which follow are instinct with the mystic spirit of the place and the poetry which is at the heart of the bushman and explorer.

Yet another reviewer had the courage to print a truer judgement:

> We cannot honestly say that this "voice" is reproduced here with any striking success. There is a mediocrity in the versification which goes far to defeat the author's object; there is also a profusion of commonplace epithets, and a lack of such a sense of humour as would have saved him from placing words like
>
> *What is yon star that now, though quickly westing,*
> *shines still so clear?*
>
> in the mouth of one who is, presumably, a kind of bushman.[29]

Bushmen however had their romantic side, as Favenc's own character demonstrates.

Early in 1901 he went on a trip to the South Seas. The result was a series of articles on New Guinea and the Solomon Islands,[30] but apparently no new fiction. He wrote of the annexation of New Guinea by Queensland with personal feeling and a clearly imperialist attitude. He considered the implications for the new Commonwealth of the recent settlement of the Dutch on the south coast of Papua, and demanded that the Australian government should annex the New Hebrides. He also regretted the loss to British imperialism of northern New Guinea, New Britain and New Ireland. An account of the exploration of New Guinea appeared in his articles, together with descriptions of past cannibal feasts on the neighbouring islands. On the other hand, he also exclaimed over the beauty of native New Guinean decorative art.

There were very few new departures in Favenc's writing after 1900. *The Explorers of Australia* and *Voices of the Desert*

merely summarized and collected work published earlier. In 1898 his *New Standard Geography of Australasia,* a text book, had been produced as far as the proofing stage by George Robertson, but publication had not proceeded because of the need for extensive revision.[31] Facts from it were summarized in a booklet, *The Physical Configuration of the Australian Continent,* published in 1905. This drew also on the geography which Favenc had acquired while writing his *History,* and on such works as "The Great Austral Plain." It is very authoritative, presenting facts clearly and with precision, and is illustrated extensively with original maps by professional cartographers. Despite its general objectivity, it allows space for a limited expression of Favenc's personality and ideas. In the introduction, for example, he finds it paradoxical that Australians in 1905 travelled less than they did forty years ago, "although the means of transit are now so varied and abundant; but then the rambling, roving spirit is dying out with the growth of generations." In the text he rejoices at the shrinking of the desert, "encroached on and invaded by the pioneers," a statement true in principle, but a map designates as actual desert only a slender strip of territory in the east of Western Australia.

Favenc's writing seems to have entered a new phase, more or less with the turning of the decades. In the 1870s he wrote fiction and poetry mainly for the *Queenslander*; in the 'eighties, when spells in Sydney alternated with expeditions, he wrote history and accounts of his explorations; the 1890s saw the production of his best short stories and his only novels; after 1900 he wrote almost nothing which was conceptually new, though some of his stories and factual books were interesting for different reasons.

The newspaper which reported Favenc's departure for New Guinea included the information that he had "long been ill." In May, 1905, he spent time seriously ill in Royal Prince Albert Hospital, and in December he was in St Vincent's Hospital at the point of death as the result of a fall which had fractured his thigh.[32] He was reported to suffer chronically from Bright's disease, heart disease and jaundice, conditions which could be attributed, as the journalist suggested, to the hardships of bush life and his expeditions. The liver complaint was probably also

related to drinking alcohol. Two vivid personal descriptions by contemporaries give an impression of Favenc in his last years. McIver confirms the suggestion of physical prowess in his youth:

> In appearance Mr Favenc is a typical Australian bushman, frank and genial in his manner and a glance at his symmetrical frame is sufficient to show that he was once, if not now, possessed of great physical strength and powers of endurance.[33]

The second description ended Favenc's obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

> For so many years he had been in broken health. The figure of a tall thin stooping man, drawn face, and short grey beard, making its way with the help of a stick, and strangely feeble steps down Kellett-street and William-street to the Park and city of a morning will have been noticed by many. But those who come that way to town will miss that figure now.[34]

This urbanized portrait contrasts poignantly with the adventurous mobility of his youth.

He finally succumbed to his many illnesses on 14th November, 1908, in Lister Hospital, West Sydney, his last hours having been brightened, as another obituary-writer put it,[35] by the knowledge that he was selected by the Golden Roll of the Royal Geographical Society – the twelfth Australian explorer to be so honoured. The *Bulletin* commented, rather pompously: "Ernest Favenc, graceful writer and intrepid pioneer, set out last Saturday along the well-blazed track that leads to the bourne where ink is not, and exploring is a work of supererogation."[36]

NOTES

Chapter One

1. Morris Miller, *Australian Literature, 1810-1938.* Revised and extended by Frederick T. Macartney. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1956, p. 173; H. M. Green, *A History of Australian Literature.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1962, vol. I, pp. 570-1; "Ernest Favenc," *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* vol. 4: 1851-1890. Section editors, Bede Nairn, Geoffrey Serle, Russel Ward. Melbourne University Press, 1972, p. 160; *The Australian Encyclopaedia.* Sydney: Grolier Society of Australia, 1958, vol. IV, pp. 20-21.

   Most recent writers on Australian history have not dealt with Favenc, but a brief biography appeared in Erwin H. J. Feeken, Gerda E. E. Feeken, and O. H. K. Spate, *The Dictionary of Exploration of Australia.* Melbourne: Nelson (Australia), 1970, pp. 197-8.

2. Obituary, *Sydney Morning Herald,* November 16, 1908, p. 6. The places of birth and education are given in another obituary, dated by hand, November 16, 1908, in W. J. Evans. "Newspaper cuttings of George Essex Evans." Mitchell Library, QA821 E 92.1 2A1. *Australian Boys and Girls: An Illustrated Annual of Stories by Australian Writers.* Sydney: Gordon and Gotch, 1895, which Favenc edited under the pseudonym of Armand Jerome, contains a brief biography, probably written by himself, which confirms Cowley as the place of his early education (p. 46).

3. An undated letter from Ernest to Jack Favenc, held by the Mitchell Library, mentions their sister, Ella. The Library also holds a letter, dated January 20, 1871, written at Bowen by Ernest Favenc to his sister Edith. "It's raining as hard as it can," he complains, "just when I wanted it to be fine; and I stand a good chance of being detained here for an indefinite time, which is not by any means a desirable prospect – so I must take it out in growling."

4. Anne Allingham, "*Taming the Wilderness.*" Studies in North Queensland History, no. 1. Second edition. Townsville: James Cook University, 1978, p. 68.

5. *Australian Boys and Girls* I, p. 46. Favenc's early experience of station life on the Upper Burdekin is confirmed in G. McIver's interview with him in "Australian Pioneers. Paper 1. January, 1907" (Mitchell Library).

6. One of his experiences is recalled in an article entitled "My Acquaintance with Death Adders." *Sydney Mail,* September 10, 1881, p. 446.

7. November 19, 1908, p. 18.

8. *Australian Boys and Girls* I, p. 46.

9. "Princess Jezebel in Charge," a story printed in the *Bulletin* on 16th January, 1892 (p. 22), is narrated in the first person by "a lately emancipated jackeroo," promoted to deputy manager. Presumably it is based on a reminiscence.

10. August 21, 1875, p. 9; August 28, pp. 10-11; September 4, p. 9; September 11, pp. 9-11; September 18, pp. 9-10; October 2, p. 9; October 9, pp. 9-10; October 16, p. 9; October 23, p. 10; October 30, p. 9; November 6, p. 10; November 13, pp. 9-10; November 20, p. 10; November 27, p. 9; December 4, p. 9; December 11, p. 10; December 18, pp. 9-10.

11. Early settlers in North Queensland concluded, often after heavy losses, that cattle were more suited to their properties than sheep. (Allingham, pp. 104-111, 116-117).

12. Chapter X. *Queenslander,* October 23, 1895, p. 10.

13. "Forgotten History. An Atrocity Story." *Bulletin,* May 17, 1890, p. 8.

14. "Forgotten History;" and "A Memory of North Queensland." *Bulletin,* June 23, 1894, p. 24.

15. Untitled article on the native police in Queensland. Newspaper cuttings, Mitchell Library, Q 980, 1 F.

16. *Australian Boys and Girls* I, p. 46.

17. Edward Cunningham was with the party which accompanied Dalrymple overland from Rockhampton to Port Denison in 1861. Almost immediately he set out westwards with four other squatters and, in an exploration which lasted four months, selected the land which was to form Burdekin Downs station, "which probably included the region which later became the Charters Towers goldfield" (Allingham, p. 28). Later he purchased a third share in Woodhouse station, also on the Burdekin but closer to the coast. He managed Woodhouse until his death in 1898. (M. J. Fox, ed. *History of Queensland: Its People and Industries,* vol. II. Brisbane, 1921, pp. 708-9; G. C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away.* Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972, pp. 20, 25-27.)

18. August 16, 1879, pp. 201-2; August 23, pp. 233-4; August 30, pp. 265-6; September 6, pp. 297-8; September 13, pp. 329-30; September 20, pp. 361-2; September 27, pp. 393-4; October 4, pp. 425-6; October 11, pp. 457-8; October 18, pp. 489-90; October 25, pp. 521-2; November 1, pp. 553-5; November 15, pp. 617-18; November 22, pp. 649-50; November 29, p. 681; December 6, pp. 713-14; December 13, p. 745; December 20, pp. 777-8; January 3, 1880, pp. 9-10; January 10, pp. 41-2; January 17, pp. 73-4.

19. *Australian Boys and Girls* I, p. 46.

20. "The Overlanders." *Town and Country Journal,* May 18, 1904; May 25, 1904; June 1, 1904; June 7, 1904; June 15, 1904; June 22, 1904.

21. April 29, 1876, p. 11; May 13, 1876, pp. 13-14; May 20, p. 13; May 27, p. 23; June 17, pp. 13-14; July 1, p. 14; July 15, p. 14; September 9, pp. 11-12.

22. David Adam, ed., *The Letters of Rachel Henning.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1963, p. 101.

23. "A Drover's Diary" III. *Queenslander,* May 20, 1876, p. 13. Twenty years later Favenc wrote a letter to the *Bulletin* on the hardships of droving (November 10, 1894, p. 24), and he dealt with the overlanders and Connor's Range again in an article published only a few months before he died: *Australian,* May 9, 1908, pp. 1170-1.

24. Anne Allingham, pp. 187-9, 204.

25. "A Lay of Ravenswood." *Queenslander,* December 16, 1871, p. 7. "The Professor's Discovery. A Tale of Old Ravenswood." *Bulletin,* May 24, 1890 (p. 20), is set in the goldfield "after its best days had fled."

26. Article on the native police. See note 14, above.

27. February 6, 1875, p. 7; February 13, p. 8; February 20, p. 7.

28. *Queenslander,* December 26, 1874, p. 8.

29. Chapter XVIII. "George Gives No More Trouble." *Queenslander,* December 11, 1875, pp. 10-11.

30. *Queenslander,* May 20, 1876, p. 13.

31. *Queenslander,* July 1, 1876, p. 14.

32. November 11, 1871, p. 6.

33. *Queenslander,* February 17, 1872, p. 8.

34. *Queenslander,* February 3, 1872, p. 6.

35. "Morning and Evening Meditations." *Queenslander,* April 20, 1872, p. 6; "1873-1874." *Queenslander,* December 27, 1873, p. 7.

36. *Queenslander,* December 30, 1871, p. 6.

37. *Queenslander,* May 13, 1876, p. 12.

38. "Night at the Yamba Crossing." May 20, 1876, p. 13; "In the Desert." May 3, 1879, p. 553; "*Gloria Mundi.*" June 14, 1879, p. 745; "An Episode of Bush Life." May 1, 1880, p. 553.

39. "Dead in the Queensland Bush." September 30, 1876, p. 103; "Haunted." March 17, 1877, p. 202.

40. *Voices of the Desert.* With Illustrations by Percy F. S. Spence (London: Elliot Stock, 1905), pp. xii-xiii.

41. *Queenslander,* May 1, 1880, p. 553; "A Bush Tragedy." *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 52-6.

42. *Australasian Sketcher,* September 30, 1876, p. 103; "Dead in the Bush." *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 46-7.

43. *Australasian Sketcher,* March 17, 1877, p. 202; *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 28-30.

44. *Queenslander,* June 14, 1879, p. 745; *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 74-75.

45. Preface to *Voices of the Desert,* p. xiii.

46. "Natural History of a Thousand Years Ago." *Queenslander,* February 3, 1872, p. 6.

47. *Bulletin,* December 16, 1893, p. 8.

48. "A Loafer, on Human Nature." *Queenslander,* May 25, 1872, p. 7.

49. "The Medium." *Queenslander,* February 12, 1876, pp. 9-10.

50. *Queenslander,* July 15, 1876, pp. 9-10; August 12, pp. 9-10; August 19, pp. 9-10.

51. *Queenslander,* October 30, 1880, p. 553; November 6, pp. 585-6. Republished, with the title, "The Compact." *Evening News,* December 15, 1900.

52. Cf. Paterson's poetic defence of the bush against Lawson in the well-known *Bulletin* debate in 1892, and Morant's poem, "At the River Crossing." *Bulletin,* August 5, 1899.

53. Leon Cantrell, ed. *The 1890's.* Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1977, Introduction, pp. xx-xxi.

Chapter Two

1. "The Queensland Transcontinental Railway." *Sydney Mail,* May 28, 1881, p. 864. Earlier articles in the series were published on May 7 (p. 740) and May 21 (p. 824). Though the articles are unsigned they are in Favenc's style, and cuttings of them are preserved among his other works in the Mitchell Library.

2. I, October 26, 1878, p. 107; II, November 2, pp. 138-9; III, November 9, p. 171; IV, November 16, p. 212; V, December 14, p. 339; VI, December 21, p. 366; VII, April 26, 1879, p. 531; VIII, May 3, pp. 562-3; IX, May 10, p. 588; X. May 17, pp. 619-20; XI, May 24, p. 658; XII, May 31, pp. 683-4; XIII, June 7, p. 716; XIV, June 14, p. 747; XV, June 28, p. 812; XVI, July 5, p. 12; XVII, July 12, pp. 43-4.

3. First edition, Sydney: Turner and Henderson, 1888, pp. 274-6.

4. Published in London by Whitcombe and Tombs, 1908, pp. 224-7.

5. "By Coach to Blackall." *Queenslander,* November 23, 1878, pp. 237-8.

6. Favenc recorded this incident "almost exactly" twenty years later in the *Bulletin* (July 9, 1898, p. 14), and fictionalized it in his novella, *Grim Reality*, in the *Sydney Mail* in 1881 and in his short story, "Steelson's Cords," in the *Bulletin* in 1893.

7. *Queenslander,* October 26, 1878, p. 107.

8. *Queenslander,* December 14, 1878, p. 339.

9. A report of an unofficial letter from the expedition, dated August 24, was printed. Favenc wrote:

> I am very pleased with H—, who is a first-rate fellow and well suited for the work; poor B— says that 1400 miles and not a public house on the road is past a joke altogether.

Briggs' entry for July 26 reads:

> The leader and second in command of expedition cannot agree as to their respective duties. Is collecting firewood the duty of surveyor and second?

10. Report on August 13; *Queenslander,* November 16, 1878, p. 212.

11. Entry for August 20.

12. Report on August 17; *Queenslander,* November 16, 1878, p. 212.

13. Journal entry for September 17.

14. Report on September 17; *Queenslander,* December 21, 1878, p. 366.

15. *Queenslander,* April 26, 1879, p. 531.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Queenslander,* May 10, 1879, p. 588.

19. *Queenslander,* May 24, 1879, p. 658.

20. "My Acquaintance with Death Adders." *Sydney Mail,* September 10, 1881, p. 446.

21. *Queenslander,* May 24, 1879, p. 658.

22. *Queenslander,* May 31, 1879, p. 684.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Report on January 5; *Queenslander,* June 14, 1879, p. 747.

25. Cuttings, Mitchell Library, Q 980.1 F

26. Editorial, *Queenslander,* January 18, 1879.

27. *Queenslander,* June 28, 1879, p. 812.

28. Favenc's journal, 17th and 18th February, 1879.

29. Letter to the *Bulletin,* May 19, 1900, p. 19.

30. *Queenslander,* July 5, 1879, p. 12.

31. *Queenslander,* July 12, 1879, p. 44.

Chapter Three

1. Interview by G. McIver, January 1907, p. 5. H. J. Gibbney, "Ernest Favenc, " *Australian Dictionary of Biography.*

2. May 22, 1897, p. 1123.

3. Anne Allingham, pp. 81-82.

4. "Newspaper Cuttings of George Essex Evans."

5. *Art and Architecture: Journal of the Institute of Architects of New South Wales,* vol. 4, no. 6, November-December 1907, pp. 224-5.

6. The Fryer Library holds a letter, dated 1st November, 1905, from Mrs Favenc to A. G. Stephens, dealing with the possibility of an advertisement for *Voices of the Desert* and reassuring Stephens about Favenc's health. It is written on the letterhead of the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal.*

7. pp. 225-7.

8. In "The Fate of the Prout Brothers." *Sydney Mail,* July 2, 1881 (p. 24), Favenc wrote:

> The favourable terms offered by the South Australian Government induced many people, especially in Queensland, to take up country in the Northern Territory. This country was taken up on the map; the South Australian government, in their praiseworthy desire to promote settlement, leasing it at a mere nominal rental, and the lessees having three years' grace to stock it. The whole of the country between the Queensland boundary and the Telegraph line was thus taken up without anything of it, as a matter of fact, being known.

9. Mitchell Library, Q 980.1 F.

10. Undated letter to Bolger, from 11 Orient Chambers: "I am not going to have d—d [*sic*] flapdoodles written about me, to be everlastingly chaffed about it afterwards." (Mitchell Library MS. Af 3/2).

11. "Found." *Sydney Mail,* August 20, 1881, p. 317.

12. *Sydney Mail,* January 1, 1881; January 8, p. 52; January 15, p. 92; January 29, p. 172. Reprinted, *Australasian Sketcher,* January 15, 1881, p. 23; January 29, pp. 42-3; February 5, pp. 55, 58.

13. *Sydney Mail,* January 8, 1881, p. 65.

14. "Found." *Sydney Mail,* August 20, 1881, p. 317; "Dame Eleanor Cobham." *Sydney Mail,* March 11, 1881, p. 373.

15. See Chapter 4, below.

16. *Sydney Mail,* February 5, 1881, p. 205; *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 63-4.

17. Respectively, "Bound to the Mast." *Sydney Mail,* December 18, 1880, p. 1150 (*Voices of the Desert,* pp. 57-9); "Death's Toast." *Sydney Mail,* January 8, 1881, p. 45 (*Voices of the Desert,* pp. 65-7); "Poem Inspired by Discovery of a Lost City by the Lorillard Exploring Party in Mexico." *Sydney Mail,* "The Meddler." May 21, 1881, p. 817; "The Hawker's Legacy." *Sydney Mail,* "The Meddler." August 20, 1881, p. 320; "Dame Eleanor Cobham." note 14, above.

18. "The Swimmer," 11.87-8.

19. *Bulletin,* April 16, 1881, p. 14.

20. *Sydney Mail,* December 24, 1881, pp. 1050-1.

21. p. 1053.

22. "The Meddler." *Sydney Mail,* May 21, 1881; June 4 and 18, 1881; July 30, 1881; August 13, 20 and 27, 1881; September 10, 1881.

23. *Bulletin,* March 26, 1887, p. 14.

24. *Bulletin,* March 3, 1888, p. 18.

25. *Australasian Sketcher,* January 29, 1881, p. 43.

26. See p. 12, above.

27. "The Attack on Barrow Creek." *Sydney Mail,* May 14, 1881, p. 781. (Illustrations by Favenc: "Graves of the Victims" and "Barrow Creek Station, Central Australia"). Cf. Geoffrey Blainey. *The Tyranny of Distance.* Melbourne: Sun Books, 1966, p. 223.

28. "The Fate of the Prout Brothers." *Sydney Mail,* July 2, 1881, p. 24.

29. *Sydney Mail,* September 30, 1882, p. 544; October 10, p. 625; October 21, p. 696.

30. *Sydney Mail,* January 6, 1883, pp. 14-15.

31. *Sydney Mail,* November 24, 1883, p. 976; December 1, p. 1024.

32. p. 153.

33. pp. 154-5.

34. Preface, p.v.

35. pp. 163-4.

36. p. 163.

37. p. 170.

38. Vol. II, p. xxxii.

39. *A History of Australian Literature,* vol. I, p. 37.

Chapter Four

1. "The Far Far North III." *Sydney Mail,* September 9, 1882, p. 417; IV, September 16, 1882, p. 460.

2. Presented to the Mitchell Library by her son and grandson in 1976. A report on the journal, by Anne Robertson, Field Librarian, State Library of New South Wales, was printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald,* May 13, 14 and 20, 1976.

3. "The Far Far North I." *Sydney Mail,* August 26, 1882, pp. 340-1.

4. "The Far Far North II." *Sydney Mail,* September 2, 1882, p. 377.

5. Entry for January 18, 1883.

6. Entry for January 27.

7. Entry for April 10.

8. Entry for February 8.

9. "White Versus Black." *Sydney Mail,* September 30, 1882, p. 544.

10. From March 25 to 31.

11. Brigss' journal, entries for February 7 and 12, 1879. The identification is confirmed by Caroline in her entry for May 14.

12. "The Far Far North III."

13. In the *Bulletin,* January 30, 1892 (p. 17), Favenc gave, under the heading "A Narrow Squeak," what he asserted to be a true account of a night attack by aborigines on a party of whites camped near the Nicholson River. The hero of the incident, an old friend of Favenc's, said that he saved his life and those of his companions by firing at his attackers through his mosquito net, which was opaque from the outside. He said that the aborigines were armed with two-headed clubs.

14. Entry for May 1.

15. Entry for July 7.

16. *Sydney Mail*, November 10, 1883, p. 873.

17. Exploration Pamphlets 5, no. 15, 1883.

18. *Queenslander,* October 4, 1884, p. 547. (Article reprinted from the *Sydney Morning Herald.*)

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Sydney Mail,* November 24, 1883, p. 969. According to Favenc's journal, this lagoon was passed on June 1.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 970.

22. *Sydney Mail,* December 1, 1883, p. 1014.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Sydney Mail,* December 8, 1883, p. 1072.

25. Reproduced in the *Sydney Mail,* December 15, 1883, p. 1113.

26. Entry for June 16.

27. *Sydney Mail*, December 15, 1883, p. 1113.

28. *Sydney Mail,* December 22, 1883, p. 1160; correlates with journal entry for June 24.

29. Entry for June 25.

30. *Sydney Mail,* December 22, 1883, p. 1160.

31. Entry for July 4.

32. Caroline's letter to her father, dated July 12.

33. Entry for August 9.

34. "An Exploring Trip." *West Australian,* March 22, 1888.

35. "From Melbourne to the Gascoyne." *Melbourne Argus,* September 29, 1888, p. 11.

36. October 6, 1888, pp. 747 and 749.

37. October 17, 1888.

38. "Explorations in the Region of the Upper Gascoyne and Ashburton Rivers, West Australia." *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* IX, 1889, 490-5.

39. *Ibid.,* p. 492.

40. "From Melbourne to the Gascoyne." *Melbourne Argus,* November 24, 1888, p. 6.

41. "Explorations in the Region of the Upper Gascoyne and Ashburton Rivers." p. 493.

42. *Queenslander,* May 22, 1897, p. 1123.

43. p. 34.

44. K. Fitzpatrick, ed. *Australian Explorers: A Selection from their Writings, with an Introduction.* London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 136.

45. p. 46.

Chapter Five

1. Using the pseudonym of Armand Jerome, Favenc wrote: "Personally, Favenc is generally popular, and has, perhaps, a more extended circle of acquaintances than any man in Australia." *Australian Boys and Girls* I, p. 46.

2. George Mackaness and Walter W. Stone, *The Books of the* Bulletin *1880-1952. An Annotated Bibliography.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1955, p. 5.

3. Manning Clark. *In Search of Henry Lawson.* Melbourne: Macmillan, 1978, p. 81.

4. "An Australian Boys' Book." *Bulletin,* November 23, 1895.

5. Jim Manion. "Louis Becke." *LiNQ,* 9, no. 3, 1981, pp. 149-50.

6. A. Grove Day. *Louis Becke.* Melbourne: Hill of Content, 1966, pp. 39-40. Day derived the story from Philip Gallagher in the *Sydney Morning Herald,* August 15, 1953.

7. *Australian Boys and Girls* I, p. 46.

8. Favenc. "Pidgin Talk." *Bulletin,* July 14, 1904, p. 17.

9. "A Tale of the Western Desert." *Antipodean* 2, 1893, pp. 103-7; "A Waif of the Desert." *Sydney Mail,* Christmas Supplement, December 21, 1895, pp. i-iii.

10. "The Spell of the Mas-Hantoo," in *The Last of Six. Tales of the Austral Tropics.* Bulletin Series no. 3. Sydney: Bulletin Newspaper Company, 1893, pp. 54-62.

11. "Potted Man. A Tale of the Cannibal Islands." *Bulletin,* April 30, 1892, p. 22; "The Belle of Sagamodu." *Bulletin,* March 4, 1893, p. 2; reprinted in *My Only Murder and Other Tales.* Sydney: George Robertson, 1899, pp. 201-10.

12. *Bulletin,* March 8, 1890, p. 13; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 108-17.

13. *Tales of the Austral Tropics* (reprinting of *The Last of Six,* with a slightly different selection of stories). London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1894, pp. 209-29.

14. *Bulletin,* March 7, 1891, p. 22.

15. *Bulletin,* December 11, 1897, p. 39.

16. *Bulletin,* April 19, 1890, p. 8. *The Last of Six,* pp. 1-8; Colin Roderick, ed. *Australian Round-Up: Stories from 1790-1950.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1953, pp. 83-87; Cecil Hadgraft and Richard Wilson, eds. *A Century of Australian Short Stories.* London: Heinemann, 1963.

17. *Bulletin,* June 21, 1890, p. 23; *The Last of Six,* pp. 118-21.

18. *Bulletin,* April 2, 1892, p. 22; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 211-17.

19. *Bulletin,* August 11, 1894, p. 23-4; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 11-25.

20. *Bulletin,* December 1, 1894, p. 24.

21. *Evening News Supplement,* December 11, 1897.

22. *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 49-54.

23. *The Last of Six,* pp. 50-3.

24. *Bulletin,* June 7, 1890, p. 8; *The Last of Six,* pp. 29-34.

25. *The Last of Six,* pp. 35-49.

26. "Malchook's Doom: A Story of the Nicholson River." *Bulletin,* January 23, 1892, p. 21; *The Last of Six,* p. 84.

27. *The Last of Six,* pp. 19-28.

28. *Chamber's Journal* 70, 1893: Chapter 1, November 4, pp. 695-8; Chapter 2, November 11, pp. 712-15; Chapter 3, November 18, pp. 728-30; Chapter 4, November 25, pp. 743-6.

29. Christopher Isherwood's use of the technique in his short novel, *A Meeting by the River* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), is highly successful.

30. "Forgotten History." *Bulletin,* May 17, 1890, p. 8; "A Strange Remembrance." *Bulletin,* December 6, 1890, p. 8; "A Narrow Squeak." *Bulletin,* January 30, 1892, p. 17; "An Aboriginal Othello: A Yarn from Spinifex Land." *Bulletin,* April 2, 1892, p. 8; "In the Night." *Bulletin,* December 17, 1892, p. 23; "A Memory of North Queensland." *Bulletin,* June 23, 1894, p. 24; "In the Bamboos: A Tale of the Northern Territory." *Bulletin,* December 1, 1894, p. 24; "A Black Heathen." *Bulletin,* November 9, 1895, p. 28.

"Long Jim's Appetite." *Bulletin,* February 2, 1890, p. 19; "Potted Man: A Tale of the Cannibal Islands;" and "The Belle of Sagamodu" depend on Favenc's view of the cannibalism of aborigines and islanders, but most of the comedy derives from the strange behaviour of white men.

31. See J. J. Healy. "The Lemurian Nineties." *Australian Literary Studies* VIII, May, 1978, 307-16.

32. *Bulletin,* December 17, 1892, p. 18; *The Last of Six,* pp. 67-80.

33. *Bulletin,* December 16, 1893, p. 8; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 237-43; *Bulletin,* March 20, 1919, p. 36; *Bulletin,* August 26, 1959, p. 36.

34. *Bulletin,* May 24, 1890, p. 20.

35. *Bulletin,* December 17, 1892, pp. 10-11; *Tales of the Austral Tropics,* pp. 231-66.

36. *The Last of Six,* pp. 108-17.

37. *Bulletin,* December 17, 1892, p. 15; *The Last of Six,* pp. 127-41.

38. *Queensland Punch,* June 10, 1892, p. 66.

39. "A Salvation Stockman." *Bulletin,* October 8, 1892, p. 19.

40. *Bulletin,* December 14, 1895, p. 14; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 33-40.

41. *Bulletin,* March 29, 1890, p. 8; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 64-74.

42. "How the Reverend Joseph Simmondsen Lost His Character." *Bulletin,* May 21, 1892, p. 22. Reprinted with the title, "The Parson's Blackboy," in *The Last of Six,* pp. 102-7; A. G. Stephens, ed. *The Bulletin Storybook.* Sydney: *Bulletin* Newspaper Company, 1901, pp. 35-9, republished as *The Old Bulletin Reader.* Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1973, pp. 40-44; George Mackaness, ed. *Australian Short Stories.* London and Toronto: Dent, 1928, pp. 121-5; Walter Murdoch and H. Drake-Brockman, selectors. *Australian Short Stories.* London: Oxford University Press, 1951, pp. 19-23; Cecil Hadgraft and Richard Wilson, eds. *A Century of Australian Short Stories.* London: Heinemann, 1963, pp. 34-7.

43. The false amnesiac and thief in Lawson's "The Man Who Forgot" is described as follows:

> He talked freely about his case when asked, but if he addressed anyone, it was with the air of the timid but good young man, who is fully aware of the extent and power of this world's wickedness, and stands somewhat in awe of it, but yet would beg you to favour a humble worker in the vineyard by kindly accepting a tract, and passing it on to friends after perusal.
>
> (Colin Roderick, ed. *Henry Lawson: Fifteen Stories.* Sydney, 1959, pp. 30-31.

Similarly, Collins, the employer of child labour in "Two Boys at Grinder Brothers," "preached in the park every Sunday." (*Ibid.*, p. 82)

Cf. Also Marcus Clark's portrait of the Rev. North; and, much later, Katharine Susannah Prichard's brief account of the Rev. Hawkins in *Working Bullocks* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1944, pp. 220-1). Prichard shares Favenc's view that parsons were anomalies in the bush.

44. *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 218-229.

45. *Bulletin,* December 16, 1893, p. 9; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 1-10.

46. *Bulletin,* December 14, 1895, p. 15; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 132-44.

47. *Bulletin,* January 21, 1893, p. 2; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 230-6.

48. The technique is not always associated with the macabre in Favenc's fiction. Cf. the description which opens "The Reformation of Miverson's Parrot," collection of cuttings, Mitchell Library QA 823/F. Also the yarn about a cockroach so gigantic that it defeated a bandicoot in a fair fight: "Travellers' Tales," *Bulletin,* April 21, 1894, p. 23.

49. *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* p. 202.

50. *Bulletin,* March 4, 1893, p. 23.

51. *Bulletin,* November 3, 1894, pp. 23-4; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 75-89.

52. *Bulletin,* December 15, 1894, p. 7; *Review of Reviews,* January 20, 1895, pp. 35-6; *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 3-8.

53. *Bulletin,* December 12, 1896, p. 11.

54. *Bulletin,* December 15, 1894, p. 22; *My Only Murder and Other Tales,* pp. 41-8.

55. *Bulletin,* May 10, 1890, p. 8; *The Last of Six,* pp. 8-18.

56. *Queenslander,* March 15, 1890, p. 497; March 22, pp. 546-7; March 29, pp. 593-4; Sequel: "The Mystery of the Pocket Book and What It Led To," April 5, p. 642; April 12, p. 689; April 26, p. 786; May 3, p. 833.

57. "Leichhardt's Last Camp: A Legend of the Upper Burdekin," *Queensland Punch,* January 1, 1893, pp. 6-7.

58. pp. 408-10.

59. pp. 46-7.

60. J. J. Healy does not mention the Quadrucos, who are Favenc's main contribution to myths of lost civilizations in Australia.

61. January 4, 1896, Red Page.

62. Bush Reveries: I. Day Dawn – the Past. *Queensland Punch,* February 2, 1891, p. 14; II. Noontide – the Present. March 3, 1891, p. 32; III. Eve – the Future. April 1, 1891, p. 42.

63. *Bulletin,* December 19, 1891, p. 23; "An Ideal of the Future." *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 20-22.

64. *Queenslander* Christmas Supplement, p. 18; *Voices of the Desert,* pp. 9-11; Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing, eds. *Australian Bush Ballads.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1955, p. 123.

65. January 1, 1891, p. 161.

66. "Oyster Culture." *Queensland Punch,* February 1, 1893, p. 20.

67. "Lost in the Bush." *Bulletin,* November 10, 1894, p. 22.

68. "Bush Orgies and Fighting." *Bulletin,* November 10, 1894, p. 24.

69. Paragraph on Professor Morris's *Dictionary of Austral English. Bulletin,* January 8, 1898, Red Page.

70. "A New History of the Discovery of Australia." *Bulletin,* May 14, 1898, p. 15.

71. September 20, 1895, pp. 256-7.

72. "The Influence of Geographical Position on the Development of the Australian Natives." *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* II, July to December, 1893, 316-20.

73. p. xii.

Chapter Six

1. "Australian Sailors of the Past." Mitchell Library cuttings, Q 980.1 F.

2. p. 24.

3. *Sydney Mail,* May 13, 1908, p. 1248; *Australasian,* May 30, 1908, p. 1353.

4. Manuscript in the Mitchell Library.

5. Mitchell Library, manuscripts of various authors, c. 1892-1959, in possession of the Lindsays.

6. Report in the *Queenslander,* February 13, 1897. Favenc wrote to A. G. Stephens on 4th June, 1897, presumably in reply to a letter from Stephens referring to a similar report. Favenc's letter is held by the Fryer Library:

> My attention was drawn – (that is the correct phrase) to that romantic par some time ago. I am not dead! and so far, has [*sic*] no prospect of the Domain before me for a few weeks! Save me from my friends; but who this particular friend is I have puzzled my brains in vain to identify. It is some one who knew me about sixteen years ago, as about that time I did some alleged drawings for the Sydney Mail. That is the only clue I have, beyond, that it looks very like a woman's style, but that does not help me to fix it. Give it up!

7. "A Desert – and Why?" *Bulletin,* June 7, 1902, Red Page. (Imaginative schemes for water conservation are still common in Australia late in the twentieth century.)

8. *Bulletin,* June 14, 1902, p. 14.

9. "The Coming Earthquake." *Bulletin,* October 11, 1902, p. 17.

10. "Lake Eyre." *Bulletin,* October 30, 1902, p. 29.

11. "Some Curious Rock Paintings." *Bulletin,* September 20, 1902, Red Page.

12. *Bulletin,* February 28, 1903, p. 16.

13. *Bulletin,* May 19, 1904, p. 17; June 9, 1904, p. 16; July 14, 1904, p. 17.

14. *Bulletin,* June 29, 1905, p. 17.

15. "The Conquest of the Blue Mountains." Mitchell Library, Q 991.5 W.

16. "Tales of the Dutch Discovery." *Australasian,* December 10, 1904, p. 1434.

17. "The Overlanders and Connor's Range." *Australasian,* May 9, 1908, pp. 1170-1.

18. "The Overlanders." *Town and Country Journal,* May 18 and 25, June 1, 7, 15 and 22, 1904.

19. "McWhirter's Wraith." *Phil May's Illustrated Summer Annual,* Coronation Year, pp. 12-16; "The Girl Body-Stealer." *Phil May's Illustrated Winter Annual,* 1901-1902, pp. 3-8.

20. *Sydney Mail,* October 9, 1907.

21. *Dalgety's Review,* December 1, 1903, pp. 77-80.

22. *British Australasian,* January 25, 1906, p. 19. (Story summarized from the *Town and Country Journal.*)

23. "In North-Western Australia." *Bulletin,* March 3, 1900, p. 32; "The Eternal Feminine." *Bulletin,* January 25, 1902, p. 31.

24. "A Fatal Gamble. A Story of the Great Barrier Reef." *Australasian,* May 4, 1907, p. 1074; "On the Island of Shadows." *Phil May's Illustrated Annual,* 1900-1901, pp. 13-18.

25. *Rowlandson's Success* 1, 1907, pp. 83-8.

26. *Phil May's Illustrated Winter Annual,* 1903-1904, pp. 14-20.

27. *Sydney Mail,* October 27, 1920, p. 12.

28. *Bulletin,* November 2, 1905, Red Page; *Australasian,* November 4, 1905, p. 1127; *Queenslander,* November 4, 1905, p. 22; *Sydney Mail,* November 8, 1905, p. 1199; *Spectator,* November 11, 1905. Cf. Newspaper Cuttings of George Essex Evans, Mitchell Library.

29. Newspaper Cuttings of George Essex Evans.

30. The articles on New Guinea were entitled "The Land of Fire" (Mitchell Library newspaper cuttings, vol. 52, pp. 100-112) and "Dutch New Guinea and Merouka" (Mitchell Library, Q 980.1 F). Those on the Solomon Islands were entitled "To the Happy and Unhappy Isles" (Mitchell Library, Q 980.1 F).

31. The only copy ever bound of this book, much annotated, is among Favenc's papers in the Mitchell Library.

32. On November 1, 1905, Bessie wrote, in reply to an enquiry from A. G. Stephens:

> Mr Favenc was the same when I saw him yesterday. At least the Dr and nurse said their [*sic*] was no difference, but knowing him as I do, I think he would not have been so energetic in wondering why he *could* not die, had he not been a little better.
>
> (From original letter in the Fryer Library)

33. Interview, p. 2.

34. November 16, 1908.

35. Newspaper Cuttings of George Essex Evans.

36. Obituary, November 19, 1908, p. 18.

SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. COLLECTIONS AND MONOGRAPHS:

Poetry

Voices of the Desert. With illustrations by Percy F. S. Spence. London: Elliot Stock, 1905.

Novels

The Secret of the Australian Desert. Illustrated by P. F. S. Spence. London: Blackie, 1895. New edition, London: Blackie, 1910. Swedish version, *Odemarkens hemlighet: äventyr unden en upptäcktsfärd i Australien,* translated by R. Melander. Fritzes Scout Bibliotek 14. Stockholm: C. E. Fritz, 1918.

Marooned on Australia. The Narrative by Diedrich Buys of his Discoveries and Exploits in Terra Australia Incognita about the Year 1630. Illustrated by P. F. S. Spence. London: Blackie, 1896 and 1897. Second edition, London: Blackie, 1905. Swedish version, *I kung Zolcas land,* translated by S. Melander. Fritzes Scout Bibliotek, 27. Stockholm, C. E. Fritz, 1926.

The Moccasins of Silence. Edited by Armand Jerome. Sydney and Melbourne: George Robertson, 1896.

Short Stories

The Last of Six. Tales of the Austral Tropics. Bulletin Series no. 3. Sydney: *Bulletin* Newspaper Company, 1893. Republished, with a somewhat different selection of tales, under the title, *Tales of the Austral Tropics.* London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1894.

My Only Murder and Other Tales. Sydney and Melbourne: George Robertson, 1899.

Tales for Young Australia [co-authors: "Mab" and James and Joseph Fotheringhame]. Sydney: Empson and Son, n.d.

Histories

The Great Austral Plain, its Past, Present and Future. Sydney: H. R. Woods, 1881.

Western Australia, its Past History, its Present Trade and Resources, its Future Position. Sydney: Turner and Henderson, 1887.

The History of Australian Exploration from 1788 to 1888. Compiled from State Documents, Private Papers and the Most Authentic Sources of Information. Issued under the Auspices of the Governments of the Australian Colonies. First edition, Sydney: Turner and Henderson, 1888. Second edition, London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden and Welsh, 1888. Third edition, Amsterdam: Mendian, 1967 [a facsimile reprint of the edition of 1888.]

The Explorers of Australia and Their Life Work. London, Melbourne, Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1908.

Geographies

The New Standard Geography of Australasia. Sydney: George Robertson, 1898. [A single copy is held by the Mitchell Library at 980 129 A1. A hand-written note reads: "Only this copy bound. Proofs must be much revised."]

The Geographical Development of Australia. Sydney and Brisbane: William Brooks, 1902. (Brooks's Australian School Series. A Century of Progress. 1788-1888. Mitchell Library, Q 980.1 F.)

The Physical Configuration of the Australian Continent. With Illustrative Maps and Diagrams. Sydney and Brisbane: William Brooks, 1905.

Magazines and Other Editing

The Story of Our Continent Told with Brush and Pen. Illustrated by Percy F. S. Spence. [Only no. 1 appeared.] Sydney, Melbourne and London: R. A. Thomson, 1891.

Australian Boys and Girls. An Illustrated Annual of Stories of Australian Writers. [Only no. 1 appeared, edited by Armand Jerome.] Sydney: Gordon and Gotch, 1895.

Our Celebrities. An Art Annual of Australian Favourites, no. 1 [Edited by Armand Jerome.] Sydney: Gordon and Gotch, 1895.

A Counterblast to Spookland, or Glimpses of the Marvellous. [Editor's notes by Armand Jerome.] Sydney: W. M. Maclardy [printers], 1895.

II. ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE MITCHELL LIBRARY:

Letters to John Murray (Af3/1); Bolger (Af3/2); D. S. Mitchell (Af3/3); Edith (Af3/4 and Af3/5); Randolph Bedford (Af3/6); Jack (DOC 586a).

Poem, Leichhardt. DOC 586b.

The Miner's Plate; A Romance of Kangaroo Point [stories]. B741

Diary of the *Queenslander* Transcontinental Expedition through the districts between the Barcoo River and the Overland Telegraph Line to Darwin, September 15, 1878-February 20, 1879, by Ernest Favenc. B882-B884.

Briggs' Journal, Moreton Bay to Port Darwin, 1878-9. C 409-410.

Diary of Emily Caroline Creaghe, woman member of the Exploration Party partnered by Ernest Favenc and Harry A. Creaghe and accompanied by Lindsay Crawford, 1883.

Diary of Expedition in the Northern Territory from Powell's Creek to Daly Waters, 28th May-15 July, 1883, by Ernest Favenc.

MS. of "Corporal Frank," sent to A. G. Stephens, probably about 1900. ML MSS. 2547

Letters to Jeffrey, dated 6th April and 9th April, 1906. Typescripts of historical sketch, "The First Christmas Dinner in the Australian Interior," and of "Details for Picture;" manuscript giving instructions for sketch, with sketch of packsaddle. ML MSS 1969/12

Letter to Jeffrey, 15th May, 1906.

III. ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE FRYER LIBRARY:

Letters to A. G. Stephens: June 4, 1897; November 1, 1905 (from Mrs Ernest Favenc); March 28, 1907; and letter to W. MacLeod, April 11, 1906.