

## Clement Wragge at Home.

By "AUSTRALIAN NATIVE."

The name of Clement L. Wragge, F.R.G.S., F.R. Met. Soc., Queensland Government Meteorologist, is a household word throughout Australasia. It is scarcely less well-known throughout the British Dominions; it is familiar to every shipmaster sailing under the Union Jack—indeed, to the majority of mariners who sail under the flag of any civilised nation; it is not strange to the inhabitants of the islands throughout the South Pacific; and it is a name which is taken cognisance of by the scientists of America, of Europe—in fact, the name of Clement Wragge has resounded to every corner of the globe. In person he has made four voyages between the old and the new worlds; he has travelled throughout the European continent; he has explored Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North America; he has traversed the Flinders ranges and Murray scrub, and there are few districts of Queensland's vast territory that he has not visited. In a word, he is a true cosmopolite; and as even the most inveterate roving citizen of the world has a lurking fondness for one spot which he can call "home," Clement Wragge proves no exception to the rule. Let us follow him to his home.

Capemba—for such is the name of the residence under notice—is situated upon the summit of a razor-back ridge that trends from the Brisbane suburb Too-wong towards Indooroopilly; and viewed from the main road it presents the appearance of a veritable Eastern bungalow. The few windows that abut are bordered with primary colours—red, blue, and yellow—upon a stone-coloured ground; and thus a warm, effectual background, in the true Eastern style, is formed for the variegated green foliage of the graceful jacaranda, of tropical tree ferns and South Sea Island palms; of giant aloes, from New Caledonia; of a typical Queensland hedge-row, consisting of bignonia, passion, granadilla, and many other creepers; and of bananas—a maze, a labyrinth, a jungle of vegetation representing naught but plants whose habitat is in tropic climes. And this, too, on the brow of a hill, and planted in soil—no, in trenches excavated from a bare, hungry, sous-looking schistose country rock! "You look surprised?" smiled Mr. Wragge.

"Yes, indeed! And you have planted so closely, too."

"Of course I follow nature in regard to close planting; but the whole secret of this marvellous growth is deep cultivation and perfect drainage. This schistose rock crumbles into fine soil when worked, and I use little, if any, manure."

Truly, an object lesson in cultivation.

"My friends," continued Mr. Wragge, considered me mad when I commenced to plant bananas and tropical fruits, such as the pan pan and custard apple, on the top of the hill; but," and here he picked up a terrestrial self-registering thermometer from its position on a black-painted board lying on the surface of the ground, "my observations with this taught me that the place for tropical plants was on the high ground, and that the place for European plants was on the low-lying flats or bottom terraces, which are subject to frosts. Sugar planters should make more use of the terrestrial thermometer, for it would teach them the best position in which to plant cane."

Narrow winding paths lead down the slope to a circular fountain, which is uniquely ornamented with clam shells, and it is seen that the overflow is utilised for irrigating the European plants below. Returning to a drive, we went our way to a new bush-house, and here, and in its vicinity, it is practically demonstrated that the most tender tropical plants thrive remarkably well. In a word, they are grown so closely together that one keeps the other warm.

"Come and have a look at the stars," was Mr. Wragge's next invitation.

"But it is daylight!"

He simply smiled—a superior sort of a smile; and led the way to a picturesque round house, built upon the front lawn. No furniture adorns the interior, but in the centre a very large telescope is mounted upon an iron pillar. Screws here, and screws there, which, when properly manipulated, allow the

clear morning at about one hour before daybreak, when the moon is about five days old, you will see a glorious sight."

"About one hour before daybreak?"

"Yes."

Deponent said he would consider the invitation.

"One hour before daybreak—ugh!"

Upon the walls of this round house there hang the wet and dry bulb thermometers, which Mr. Wragge



MR. CLEMENT WRAGGE, THE QUEENSLAND METEOROLOGIST.

observer to "lay" the instrument at any desired angle; and delicately adjusted declension and other 'ension circles, with the degrees marked thereon, enable anyone conversant with the position of any given star to find it accurately even in the daytime. A pair of doors opening outwards in the roof of the building suffice to disclose the skies to view, and as the whole roof revolves the one pair of doors are sufficient.

"It is too cloudy to see the stars to-day," Mr. Wragge remarked, "but if you will come here some

used in the Observatory on the summit of Ben Nevis; and it is noticeable that the figures on the instruments have been renewed, owing, it was stated, to the fact that the extremes betwixt cold and heat had made the porcelain peel. Just one other souvenir hangs upon the walls—a pipe presented to Mr. Wragge by a Munich savant."

"Let us go into the house."

Across the lawn and up the steps to a deep, spacious foliage-clad verandah, which encloses three sides of the house. Apart from the striking depth of

this verandah, it is remarkable for the collection of Australian aborigines' weapons of offence with which the walls are embellished, and the front door is framed with a *chevaux de frise* of spears.

Stepping over the threshold into the hall, the visitor at once notes that the Capemba drawing-room is virtually the whole front of the house, hall included, for on neither side of the hall is there a partition—that is, where the stereotyped partitions should be there is on either side of the hall an archway extending the whole length from front to back walls. Yet, although the rooms on either side are distinctly differently furnished, there is no incongruity in the *tout ensemble*.

Within his drawing-room Mr. Wragge has collected mementoes of his travels. Views of Milan and Venice recall vivid memories of happy days spent in those cities; sketches of Palestine and the Pyramids awaken thoughts of explorations amid historical ruins; a grass blanket from New Caledonia, which serves as a floor-rug, carries him back to the horrors of Ile Nou; and beautifully carved and chased nautilus shells make him speak of French libérés doomed to live their lives in exile upon a charming island in the South Pacific, but which is, withal, a prison from which they would gladly escape. In all truth, this drawing-room betokens the owner as a much-travelled man.

Through a doorway into the back corridors, and again the visitor is astonished. Glass cases, running from end to end, and on either side, are filled with a heterogeneous collection of geological specimens, birds' eggs, &c., whilst glass jars galore filled with various species of reptiles adorn the tops of the cases. And upon the walls above are more native weapons, dilly-bags, &c.—the most notable collection being "After the fight," Cardwell, which consists of broken spears, swords, shields, and the spoils of war from a *mavali*'s camp.

The doorways of the drawing-room and all rooms leading therefrom are draped with Fiji cloths—cloths hammered out to a thin texture from a bark very similar to the Queensland *ti-tree*; and one cloth measuring some 12ft. by 12ft. makes an admirable wall tapestry. To say the least, these cloths have a unique, uncommon appearance.

The dining-room is as it should be—cosy and comfortable; but even here Mr. Wragge has surrounded himself with trophies of travel. Above a handsome sideboard placed in an alcove there is a representative collection of native weapons—womeras and spears from the Gulf of Carpentaria; swords and shields from the Johnston and Cardwell districts; dilly-bags and yam sticks from the Cook; waddies, nullas, and boomerangs from the Western Downs; stone axes from the Flinders; plain spears, fish spears, pronged spears, and painted war spears fill in the interstices, and the whole trophy is surmounted with a nigger's skull. Even the bookcase is not unadorned, for on the top are pitchers from Egypt, and along the upper plane is fastened a fascinatingly pretty skin of a giant carpet or rock snake.

Having arrived at the dining-room, Mr. Wragge's little black gin, aged about 10, a native of Rockingham Bay, deemed it a fitting opportunity for exhibiting her *savoir-faire* by laying the cloth and bringing in afternoon tea; and whilst discussing the cheering cup I ask my host, "Say a word on your work."

"Well, the Chief Weather Bureau at Brisbane makes observations over the area embraced between the parallels of 40deg. north latitude and 55deg. south latitude, and within the meridians of 30deg. east longitude and 130deg. west longitude. That is the area embraced by the Isobaric Chart now being prepared. What Washington is doing in this direction for the Northern Hemisphere, Queensland is doing for the Southern Hemisphere."

"Then you must have observers and correspondents outside Australia?"

"Oh, dear, yes. All ships that trade to Australia,

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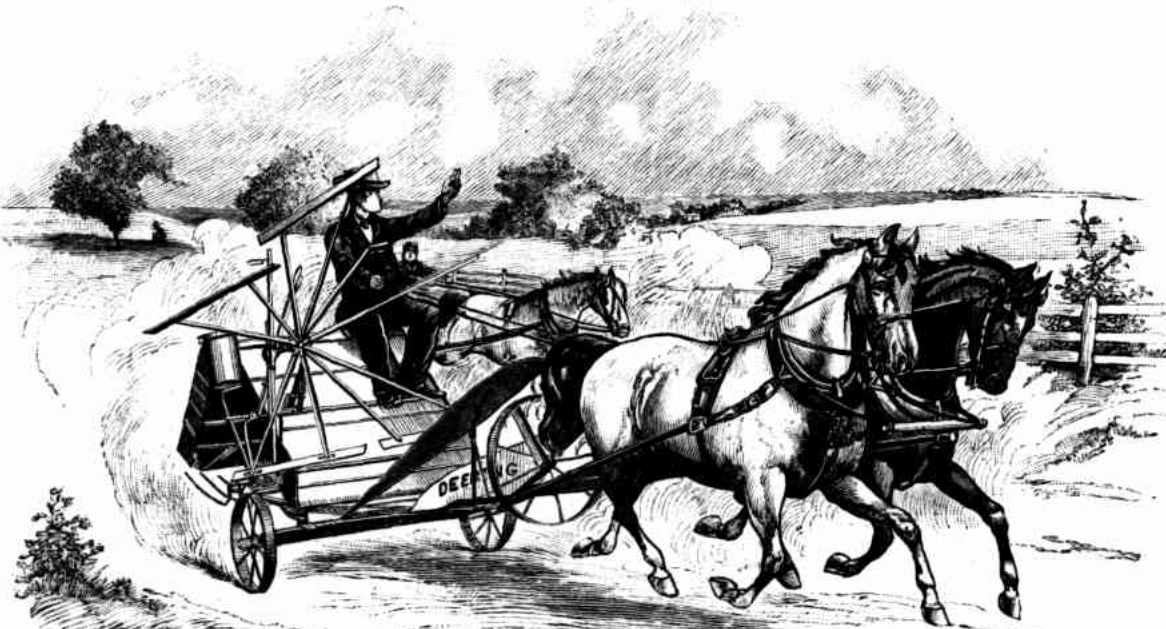
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