

THE LATE MR. JOHN FOORD.

One by one the old identities of the district are being swept away. It seems only a few days ago, since we wrote of the death of Mr. Robert Brown, of Collendina station, and that event comes back to us with a strange distinctness as we peruse the few sentences which chronicle the death of one whose life-history was so interwoven with that of his pre-deceased friend. They were boys together; they grew up to manhood together; they settled in the same district, following similar parents, and in death they have not been long divided. The subject of our present writing expired at his residence yesterday afternoon, in the manner described elsewhere. The announcement of his decease was a shock to all; for his presence amongst us had grown to be a part of our daily existence, and if the well-known form of John Foord had been missed for a day, many were the enquiries sure to be made for the health of the "old man." It is not our intention, at so short a notice, to attempt anything in the way of a biographical sketch at present, especially as the materials for such work are not to be easily collected. We believe we are right, however, in stating that Mr. Foord, was born in 1819, at Brighton, England. He died, consequently, in his 64th year. When he was about eight years of age, he arrived at Sydney with his parents. There his father joined the late Mr. Baylies, senior, in establishing a coach factory, and the young man, after obtaining such an education as was possible in those early days, served his apprenticeship to coachbuilding at the same time that the late Mr. Robert Brown was acquiring the trade of a blacksmith. About the year 1839, he relinquished the calling of coachbuilder, and came overland with cattle. He passed some time in the Manaro Plains district, and eventually settled in Wahgunyah, in that or the succeeding year. Here he married, and reared five sons and four daughters. For a time he was most prosperous. He built the present Wahgunyah Flour Mills, and traded largely in wheat. But reverses came. He one year purchased heavily, giving as much as 12s. per bushel for wheat. The market fell suddenly, and he was almost ruined. Soon after, the diggings at Rutherglen were discovered, and the excesses which were customary in those days of "gold," the high hopes which had birth from the unexpected successes of others, and, above all, the wild race for wealth in which all started, partly wrecked his steady-going principles and gave his life a new colour, while the change was not beneficial to his physical constitution. People who know him in those days describe him as a "splendid specimen of a man;" but worry and disappointment began to leave haggard marks upon his face before the rush to Rutherglen had become a thing of the past, and when the present writer first met him (nine years ago) his step had lost its buoyancy, and he had begun to be considered "old." His son Traton fell a victim to lung disease, and, shortly afterwards, his eldest son, Frederick, died while on a trip to the Darling river. Still he bore bravely up against misfortune after misfortune, and while he felt the world as it were closing in upon him, he yet had a warm heart—masked sometimes by a gruff demeanour—for all who sought alleviation from distress. He was never a niggard. His faults had principally an opposite tendency, and with all his outward roughness he was in reality soft-hearted to a degree that none suspected but his most intimate friends. At the same

time he was a bitter enemy to cant and hypocrisy, and his denunciations of either were generally forcible if not elegant. What was noble and manly always commanded his approval, and, if his ideas of religious matters were not in strict accordance with the narrow views of the very orthodox, who shall say that he was wrong in that respect? He will be missed by all classes, by people of all shades of religious and social views. He had a kind, if sometimes a bantering, word for all; he had a keen appreciation of the humorous, and those who would place his faults before his virtues—for he had both—should hear Ayrshire Robert preach:—

Who made the heart—'tis He alone,
Deeply can try us;
He knows each chord,—such varying tone,
Each spring—in various bias;
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it,
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's recoiled.