



From an article in
"THE GIPPSLAND TIMES"
MARCH 12th 1877

POWER, THE BUSHRANGER

The Argus "Vagabond," during his recent sojourn in Pentridge, obtained the following particulars from Harry Power, the bushranger, who is sick nearly unto death in the prison.

"One can scarce recognise (says the writer) that this light, weak, grey, mean looking man is the desperado who laid the whole colony under contribution, in the full power of his manhood possessing the endurance and hardihood of an Arab. Power's history would make an interesting book.

The following slight sketch of his career and adventures I had from his own lips, verifying many particulars from the warders, some of whom have known him for years, most of them having a great liking for the man."

Harry Power is a County Waterford man, born of decent people. His education chiefly consisted in learning to ride. It is commonly reputed that he is an "old hand," and was sent out to Norfolk Island, but he strenuously denies this.

"I came here from America a free man," says Power, but he is particularly reticent as to his early years. He was engaged driving cattle all over this colony and New South Wales, and afterwards with Captain Denman's party in exploring and cutting a track across the ranges. In a few years he became a splendid bushman, knowing almost every mile of the country.

During all this time he appears to have been getting an honest living, even when he kept a horse yard at Geelong, which is ostensibly a respectable calling. One incident changed his whole career, and the man avers but for this he would have lived and died honestly.



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He was riding one of his own horses, near Sandhurst, when he was bailed up by two drunken German troopers. My own experience of the myrmidons of the law in Germany leads me to credit the following:

—"I was going along quietly," says Power, "when down came the two troopers, hooting and shouting. I saw they were drunk, and pulled on one side, but they stopped me. 'Whose horse is that?' says one. 'It's mine,' says I. 'Are you going to shout?' says the other. 'No,' says I, for I didn't like the — Germans.

'I believe you stole that horse,' says the first. 'You're a liar,' says I. 'You'll have to come along with us,' says the other. 'I won't do it,' says I, getting riled. On that one of them drew his hanger, and said he'd make me. 'You can't,' says I. He charged at me, and I'd only just time to draw my revolver, or he'd have cut me down. I shot him, and then the other fellow rode up and fired at me, and the powder singed my coat. I shot him, and then rode off.

Now, if I had been sensible, I'd have ridden off to the nearest police station and given myself up. But I was frightened, and rode across the colony, thinking to go and stay in New South Wales till the row was over. At the Murray I was stopped. I did not deny my name or resist. They arrested me and brought me down to Melbourne, and I got 10 years. The men were not hurt much, and it was proved they stopped me without cause, or I'd have got more."

Such is Power's account of his first conflict with justice, and warders have told me that it is substantially correct.