Chamier the Epicurean: The Life and Works of George Chamier (1842-1915)

Sean Roderick Sturm

The world’s a labyrinth, where misguided men
Walk up and down to find their weariness;
No sooner have we measured, with much toil,
One crooked path, in hope to gain our freedom,
But it betrays us to a new affliction.

George Chamier, The Story of a Successful Man
(VII)¹

We shall all reach the final goal soon enough, in any case;
why not take it easy, and enjoy ourselves by the way?

—George Chamier, A South-Sea Siren (113)

¹ “Beaumont” (actually John Fletcher), “The Night-Walker, or, the Little Thief,” The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher, with an Introduction by George Darley, vol. 2 (1611, rev. 1640; London: Edward Moxon, 1840) 680 (IV.vi.21-25), quoted as the epigraph to chapter VII of SSM.
Abstract

George Chamier (1842-1915) was an engineer and novelist, who was born and died in England, but spent most of his life on an eccentric orbit around the outskirts of the British Empire—through New Zealand, Australia and China and back to England again. After he had established himself as an engineer in Australia, he looked back on his life in a trilogy of autoethnographical novels, which work through the problem of how an “unsettled settler” such as he might get settled in the settler colonies. *Philosopher Dick* (1890) and *A South-Sea Siren* (1895) are set in the eighteen-sixties in North Canterbury, New Zealand on a back country station and in a small town respectively; *The Story of a Successful Man* (1895) is set in the eighteen-seventies in “Marvellous Melbourne.”

This thesis, “Chamier the Epicurean,” examines Chamier’s life and (fictional) works in the light of two key questions. The first is:

How can we understand the distinctive critical perspective on life in the settler colonies in the early days of European settlement that his novels articulate?

The “outside insideness” of his position as an unsettled settler can account for the critical purchase he has on his own culture. Such a perspective is unusual in the history of local settler literature, not just because it is critical of settler society or “unsettling,” but because it is critical in an unusual way: Chamier unsettles *himself* by problematising his own position as a settler, thereby generating a critical autoethnography—to borrow Deborah Reed-Danahay’s definition, a critical “self (auto) ethnography” that is also “the ethnography of [his] own group,” his own *ethnos* (people).

And the second question that informs this thesis is:

How can we understand the relation between his life and works, given the degree to which the former seems to inform the latter?

In the novels, he makes sense of his life in hindsight as a sentimental education. He has his autoethnographical “stand-ins” take on a series of sentimental personas in the attempt to get themselves settled as they move through the Australasian colonies in an ironic appropriation of the grand narrative of settlement as a progress from frontier to town to city. To see his life in hindsight as “mapped out” in this way was a gesture of aesthetic
settlement that enabled Chamier to achieve an Epicurean equanimity he was able to find only fleetingly in the scramble of life in the settler colonies.
Acknowledgements

Above all, I need to acknowledge my wife Jacqui Anderson Sturm and our children Freya and Sasha for keeping me company on my eccentric path. I could not have completed this thesis without the confidence that they travelled beside me. I thank my parents Rod and Jennifer Sturm and Margaret Ushakoff for looking out for me personally and financially and my uncle Terry Sturm for lighting the way ahead.

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Lastly, I am indebted to Carol Franklin, whose paper at the 1994 Conference of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature first announced the discovery of George Chamier’s lost third novel, on which the argument of this thesis relies.

_He aha te mea nui o te ao? Māku e kī atu he tangata, he tangata!_
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a. 283 Glebe Road, Glebe Point, Sydney.  

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62 Queensborough Terrace, Westminster (now Kings Hotel).

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*Philosopher Dick*: front cover and spine.

57

*A South-Sea Siren*: front cover and spine.

58

*A South-Sea Siren* (2nd ed.): hardback and paperback.

59

Sample chapter heading of *Story of a Successful Man.*

60

*War and Pessimism*: front cover and spine.

Abbreviations

1 Texts by George Chamier (for in-text citation)
Chamier on Australian Timber.

Capacities Required for Culverts and Flood Openings.

“Hanyang Iron and Steel Works.”

Letters to the Survey Department.

Letter to J. H. Grainger.

Philosopher Dick: Adventures and Contemplations of a New Zealand Shepherd.

Property in Water.

The Story of a Successful Man: An Australian Romance.

A South-Sea Siren. 2nd ed.

“A South-Sea Siren.” Good Reading about Many Books Mostly by Their Authors.

The Utilisation of Water in South Australia.

War and Pessimism, and Other Studies.

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Auckland University Press Correspondence: “New Zealand Fiction: Series 1 . . .”


Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain). Letter to the author (15 June 2005).

Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain). Minutes and Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers.


Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain). Proceedings.

South Australia Parliament. Parliamentary Papers, South Australia (Bound Cumulations).
Textual Note

All references to *A South-Sea Siren* (1895) cite the more readily accessible second edition (1970). All references to *The Story of a Successful Man* (1895), which was published only in serial form, cite chapter numbers rather than page numbers for ease of reference.
I

Europe
1912-15, 1842-59
England: Full Circle to the Centre

1912-15

I am personally all right, as to health but I have found the winter in London very dull & depressing. I suppose this awful war has much to do with it, the fogs aiding and loneliness capping it all. . . . Under ordinary circumstances 8 months in Europe would have been all right, but now, Alas! it is not inviting. Here in London I am not in my element & awfully solitary. . . . I have passed my time here & found agreeable occupation in painting. Having joined an old established Art School, & working there steadily 3 hours a day—figure drawing, & am supposed to have made remarkable progress. . . . To start hard study, in a new line, at 72 is plucky, but I don’t believe in any “Age limit.” I mean to be young & lively till I send in my checks. And I don’t mind when that happens—This, I consider, the true Epicurean Philosophy to which I belong. My brothers are all, or fast becoming, fossils. A man to be happy must have a hobby—Mine is painting, which is inferior to music, yet a blessing. My brothers are bored to death, & their only occupation is worrying over their health—Malades imaginaires to a great extent. I see very little of them & we have nothing in common. I have also few friends—So my existence is lonely, altho’ I get on fairly well even with a British Company! With the French I am much more sympathetic. . . . The only subject now, the only concern, the all pervading anxiety is this dreadful War—A monstrous thing to shock the World—a disgrace to humanity. (Letter to Grainger 1-3)

This is an excerpt from the last extant letter George Chamier wrote—to his friend Jack Grainger in February 1915. At seventy-odd, he had come full circle to England, where he was born but had spent only about the first two years of his life. He had been living with his daughter Daisy’s family at Shameen (Shamian), near Canton (Guangzhou) in south-eastern China, but after a tour of Europe with her and the children in 1912, he had decided to stay in England while they looked for a “decent habitation” in Nanking (Nanjing) near Shanghai, where her husband Frank Grove had
gone to work (Letter to Grainger 2). He made his will, found a place to live—in bachelor rooms in a terrace house near Hyde Park—and started going to art classes to study figure drawing (read: nude portraiture), at which he was “supposed to have made remarkable progress” (Letter to Grainger 3).¹

But England did not agree with him. It brought home to him how little he felt at home, how little he fitted in there. He found the weather “depressing”; he had few friends; he did not get on with his hypochondriacal brothers who lived there (Letter to Grainger 1). Worst of all was the “dreadful War,” against which he found his “Epicurean philosophy” scant defence (Letter to Grainger 4, 3). In his essay “The Moral Aspect of War” from a few years earlier, he had argued that war “transgresses the eternal law of justice,” that it is “retrogressive” and immoral: “[w]here might is right there every moral standard fails” (WP 7). Now the general enthusiasm for war stirred his characteristic sceptical wit: “the only joyful people to be found in England just now are the recruits. Soldiering is the grandest thing out!” For his part, he could not feel enthused that his only living son Charles, a promising singer and actor, was off to the front with Lord Kitchener’s New Army, “the First Hundred Thousand” (Letter to Grainger 4).

Chamier’s family do not seem to have seen him in quite these terms. Frances Warner, his granddaughter, remembered him as the genial paterfamilias seen in a late portrait (fig. 1), “a small man, somewhat portly as he grew older, with twinkling eyes full of humour. His hair was curly and he wore a beard.”² She saw him as a typical Victorian gentleman—intellectual, hobbyist, but a little out-of-place in Australia:

[He] was not a rugged out-of-doors man at all. He was an intellectual, more dedicated to his books, his games of chess, his sketching in water colours than to the great out-back of Australia, at that time a dangerous and barren wasteland for which he could have felt no affinity. He was loquacious and persuasive in argument.³

Given his Continental upbringing and education, she found it “difficult to imagine how he could have been happy in Australia so far away from the culture that he loved

¹ For Chamier’s will of 27 Sep. 1912, see the Appendices; for his London residence, see Letter to Grainger 1.
² Frances Chamier Warner (née Grove; Chamier’s granddaughter), Daisy Chamier: My Mother’s Story, ms., 3. A memoir of Chamier’s daughter Emily or “Daisy” by her daughter, it includes the only substantial anecdotal biography of Chamier.
³ Frances Warner 2.
but he seems to have had an equable temperament, to have been happy in his marriage and in his hobbies of reading, writing, painting and caring for his aviary.”

Fig. 1. George Chamier in later life, Jenny Chamier Grove Collection, Kew, Surrey. (Reproduced by permission of Jenny Chamier Grove.)

Warner passes over the scepticism that belies, or rather, tempers this “equable temperament,” though she does hint that he liked an argument. What was written of Chamier’s grandfather John Chamier was also true of him, that his writing “abound[ed] in that pungent sort of wit for which his family has been long celebrated; yet less caustic than his conversation, which occasionally to a stranger might appear tinged with spleen.” His sceptical wit was often mistaken for cynicism, but he would not have gone as far as to say that it was a “malicious wit,” as an epigraph in Successful Man (IX) from Cervantes’s The Wanderings of Persiles and Sigismunda has it: “I have... a certain satirical spirit, and a black-biting [sic] one; a ready pen, and a free tongue. I delight in malicious wit, and for a bon mot would sacrifice, not

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4 Frances Warner 3.
only one friend, but a hundred.” 6 But he did entertain a lasting “antipathy to religious
cant and moral hypocrisy,” as he puts it in the dedication to his non-fiction collection,
*War and Pessimism*; he was a lifelong “*Aléthophile*” or truth-lover, as his great-
grandfather Jean Deschamps called himself (*WP* iv). 7 And the wit was as often as not
good-humoured mockery—frequently directed at himself—rather than spleen, in
keeping with Horace’s injunction that serves as an epigraph in *Successful Man* (XIII):
“Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem / Dulce est desipere in loco” (L. “Mix a little folly
with your schemes; it is sweet to play the fool sometimes”). 8

Warner also misses the tone of world-weariness or -wariness—“pessimism”
Chamier called it—that colours the wit. Whether that pessimism was inborn—akin to
the sceptical Chamier wit—or learned through what Tim, his narrator in *Successful
Man*, calls the many “ups and downs” of his life, it was informed by his reading of
Schopenhauer and constitutes his philosophy of life: a kind of sceptical fatalism (*SSM
II*). Schopenhauer’s essay “On the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the
Individual” is the key to understanding Chamier’s fatalism. I will read
Schopenhauer’s distinction between “demonstrable fatalism” and “transcendent[al]
fatalism” as an heuristic that enables Chamier to understand his life both as it
unfolded and in hindsight, informing both his critical position and what I will call his
trilogy of novels of sentimental education:

a. as his life unfolded in a series of modest failures in life and art, he could
see it as *demonstrably fated*—likewise the demonstrable “fatal”
inadequacy of settler society and its (and his own) responses to the place to
be settled and its peoples that he later documented in his fiction;

b. in hindsight, he could see his life—through his fiction—as taking an artful
shape, as *transcendentally fated*. 9

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Stanley (London: J. Cundall, 1854) 85 (Chamier has modernised the spelling and punctuation; “black-
biting” should read “back-biting”).
7 For *La Société des Aléthophiles* (Fr. “the Society of Truth-lovers”) that Chamier’s great-grandfather,
Jean Deschamps helped found in 1734, see Jean Deschamps, *Life and “Mémoires Secrets” of Jean Des
Champs, 1707-1767: Journalist, Minister, and Man of Feeling*, ed. Uta Janssens-Knorsch, Huguenot
Society, ns 1 (London: Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1990) 24; Uta Janssens-
Grossen,” *Christian Wolff, 1697-1754: Interpretationen zu Seiner Philosophie und deren Wirkung, mit
8 Horace, Ode 4 (“Spring Thoughts for Virgil”), *Odes and Epodes*, ed. Niall Rudd, Loeb Classical
9 Arthur Schopenhauer, “Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the
Individual [Über die Anscheinende Absichtlichkeit im Schicksale des Einzelnen],” *Parerga and
As a result, neither disillusionment at his fate nor failure seemed to dent his good humour, so perhaps Warner was right that equability or what Chamier called “equanimity” was, to borrow Schopenhauer’s phrase, the “fundamental tone” of his temperament, the keynote of his character by which the “manifold events and scenes” of his life can be seen as “at bottom like variations on one and the same theme” (SSS 12).

The doubt Warner raises as to how Chamier could have been happy or preserved his equanimity through the ups and downs of his life out in the Australasian colonies is apposite. As his hero Raleigh puts it in _Philosopher Dick_, it was the desire “to get away from the world—a craving for change—a morbid disgust for conventional life—that [had] brought [him] out” to the colonies (48). He had rejected the Old World with its round of conventional life (and war) for life “off the beaten track” (SSS GR 107). But if the New New Worlds of the Australasian colonies had seemed to offer the potential for change, they turned out merely to invest the old in new guises, as he says of the Canterbury settlement:

The new settlement . . . had a fair and fresh field to thrive upon, free from all the corruption and hereditary taints of the Old World; but . . . the Englishman, away from his native land, carries with him all the customs, tastes, and prejudices, and most of the vices of his nationality.

Thus life in the colony, whenever circumstances would permit, was but a rather servile imitation of life in the Mother Country; there was little or no attempt to revert to a purer, simpler and more primitive mode of existence. (SSS 197)

How he was able to adapt himself to life in the Australasian colonies—how he became settled or “colonised,” as Raleigh calls it—despite his unsettling “disillusionment” and what he made of life there is the burden of my story (PD 149, 76).

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By the time of his last letter, Chamier had collected his non-fiction in *War and Pessimism* (1911) and given up writing for painting, having seemingly failed in his literary life. But in hindsight, it is neither here nor there whether a “literary career [was] the distinction which he most coveted,” as Raleigh has it in *A South-Sea Siren* (314). The writing served another purpose altogether. It was through his trilogy of novels—*Philosopher Dick* (1890; 1891) and *A South-Sea Siren* (1895), set in the North Canterbury settlement in the eighteen-sixties, and *The Story of a Successful Man* (1895), set in Marvellous Melbourne in the eighteen-seventies—that Chamier made sense of his life lived “off the beaten track” out in the colonies (*SSS GR* 107). If the life plainly shapes the works, the works also shaped the life in hindsight. Chamier took to heart Schopenhauer’s insight in his essay on fate: “If we very carefully turn over in our minds many of the scenes of the past, everything therein appears to be as well mapped out as in a really systematically planned novel.”11 Or, as he put it in “A South-Sea Siren,” his 1895 essay on the writing of the New Zealand novels, “it struck me, in after years, that this . . . existence might be interesting, and even amusing, to describe, in the shape of a novel”—or trilogy of novels, as it turned out (*SSS GR* 107). In this way, the trilogy reveals the working out of an artful life, a radically literary life.

In all this, we should not forget that Chamier was something of “shammer,” an expert in disguise, however much of himself he seems to reveal in his writing. Perhaps, as Raleigh says that he himself does in *Philosopher Dick*, “[h]e sketched himself, as he liked to picture himself—laying on the colours pretty thick at times—making himself out to be just the sort of being which in reality he was not” (345). Certainly Chamier was a shammer in life: his granddaughter tells the story of how the judge at a case at which he was pleading on behalf of his employers, “annoyed at my grandfather’s skill in talking his way out of difficulties, exclaimed, ‘This man’s name should not be Chamier, it should be mere-sham’” (the name is usually pronounced “SHAM-ee-er” or “sha-MEER” in English).12 He can be just as “shammy” in his fiction, but the deception serves to fashion an outward self that is both well-imagined,

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11 Schopenhauer, “Transcendent Speculation” 204.
12 Frances Warner 2-3. In so-called London “alley” slang in the time of his eponymous ancestor Anthony Chamier, Chamier was pronounced “charmer” or “shammy” (see John Taylor, *The Identity of Junius with a Distinguished Living Character Established; A Supplement to Junius Identified: Consisting of Fac-similes of Handwriting and Other Illustrations* [London: Taylor & Hessey, 1816] 68, 81, 82, 86, 167).
that takes an artful shape, and is adaptive, that recapitulates the history of its
evolution. *My Chamier is also something of an imaginary being—a “chimera,”* as his
forebear the theologian Daniel Chamier (1565-1612) was once described. After Jorge
Luis Borges’s definition of the chimera, he is a “heterogeneous” beast: a “patchwork”
of engineer, novelist, philosopher—a true colonial amateur—and family man, and
something of a “fancy,” an imaginary construct pieced together after Chamier’s
example.\(^\text{13}\)

Chamier was relieved from the limbo of London when Daisy cabled him to
come spend the summer at the sea resort of Tsingtao (Qingdao) on the Shandong
Peninsula in the north of what is called Eastern China. He wrote to Grainger:

> She has just cabled me to come in April & to spend the best months
> with her at Tsingtao purged of Germans. It is a nice place for a sea
> resort. I gladly accepted & have booked my passage by the Fushimi
> Maru to sail on the 13 March. So unless my ship is torpedoed I may
> hope to be in China by end of April. *(Letter to Grainger 2-3)*

He left for China on the *Fushimi Maru* on 13 March 1915.\(^\text{14}\) He made it there, but
“was seized with an attack of apoplexy [a stroke] shortly after the vessel entered the
river” at Shanghai on Saturday 24 April.\(^\text{15}\) He died in the hospital there the next day,
aged 73.\(^\text{16}\) The following Monday, 26 April, he was buried at the Bubbling Well
Cemetery in a modest ceremony attended by Daisy and her husband, Frank Grove, A.
C. Clear of the Engineering Society of China, and some fellow engineer friends.\(^\text{17}\) It is

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\(^{13}\) *Le Nouveau Panurge* (1615), quoted in *Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 3 (1905): 415-16; Jorge

passengerListShowTranscript.action?uvn=866000023&vsn=17>.

\(^{15}\) “Obituary: Mr. George Chamier,” *North-China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette: the Weekly Edition of the North-China Daily News* [Shanghai] 1 May 1915: 286. The obituary gives the
only account of the circumstances of his death and burial, as the Burial Register was destroyed during
the Japanese occupation of 1932 (Major Alan Harfield, Area Representative for Indonesia, Malaysia
and Singapore, British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia, letter to the author, 20 June 2006).

\(^{16}\) Chamier’s death was registered at the British Consulate, Shanghai (*General Register Office Consular
For some reason, the Institution of Civil Engineers recorded the date of death variously and incorrectly:
as 27 April (*Minutes of Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* [London] 201 [1916]: 414)
and 13 November 1915 (ICE [Great Britain], letter to the author, 15 June 2005). An obituary also
appeared in the *Adelaide Observer* 19 June 1915: 45.

\(^{17}\) Chamier’s grave no longer exists: the Bubbling Well Cemetery was reclaimed for redevelopment in
the winter of 1953-54 and the graves were removed to the Dazang Cemetery (Jing’an Park occupies the
site); all details other than names were obliterated (“Bristol University—History—Chinese Maritime
perhaps fitting that he died on the outskirts of the Empire, where he spent his entire adult life and he was most at home: an unsettled settler on an eccentric orbit.

*Detour 1: Chamier the Epicurean I—a Critical Position*

The object of a true critic should be to discover what problem the author (consciously or unconsciously) has posed himself, and to see whether he solved it or not.

—Paul Valéry, *Tel Quel* 1 (1929)

My interest in the story of how Chamier was able to adapt himself to life in the Australasian colonies lies in finding out what enabled the distinctive critical perspective on settler society articulated in his novels. Carol Franklin frames his critique in postcolonialist or postmarxist terms: the texts are “counter-discursive,” that is to say, “more resistant than complicit, less radically compromised than many of their contemporaries” in “colonialist and capitalist discourses.” I will call his perspective that of the “unsettled settler,” unsettled because it is critical of and alienated from settler society, but that of a settler nonetheless. Such a perspective is unusual in the history of local settler literature, not just because it is critical or “unsettling,” but because it is critical in an unusual way: Chamier unsettles himself by problematising his own position as a settler, by putting himself in a “critical position,” as Raleigh’s position is described in *Philosopher Dick* (76). It is Chamier’s positionality, his *tūrangawaewae* or where he stands, that is at issue here. Or to put it another way, echoing Valéry, I want to discover what problem Chamier posed himself more or less consciously about his life as a settler in or through his works and whether

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he solved it, and thereby to read Chamier’s life and works in a way that fits both with how he might well have understood them and with the “facts” such as we can know them.  

There are two moments of this critical position; both turn on the idea of “autoethnography.” While settler romances and memoirs of adventure are often described as autobiographical, as Chamier’s have been, I would describe his novels as autoethnographical. Chamier is neither a colonising ethnographer, nor a proto-postcolonial writer, because indigenous peoples are at most only a hypothetical presence in the novels—in fact, there is a conspicuous absence of ethnocentric representation and rhetoric in his writing. Instead, I read him as a critical autoethnographer of settler society: he turns his gaze on himself as unsettled settler and through that lens on the self-justifying and othering—or “(auto)ethnocentric”—settler gaze. He is not an autoethnographer in Mary Louise Pratt’s original sense of “the [colonised] other” who writes back “in response to or in dialogue with . . . metropolitan [ethnographical] representations,” and not quite in James Buzard’s derived sense of the “metropolitan autoethnograph[er],” the writer of “conqueror’s autoethnographies [or] autoethnographies without prior, offensive ethnographies.” Rather, in the novels he generates autoethnography in Deborah Reed-Danahay’s terms: autoethnography as “self (auto) ethnography” that is also “the ethnography of one’s own group,” one’s own ethnos (people)—one enables the other. The story Chamier tells of himself as unsettled settler, as he more or less consciously seems to have understood himself, tells us a lot in passing about how more settled settlers understood—or did not understand—themselves, and perhaps still do.

In what can only be “a short account of his chequered career,” as Raleigh describes his own story, I will focus on the mobility that generates this critical position (PD 345). By mobility I do not mean an unlimited mobility like that made

21 Valéry 558.
fashionable lately as “nomadism,” a kind of endlessly deferred settlement, but a limited mobility, best described as a kind of outside insideness vis-à-vis the mutual claims of the Empire and settler society, intellectual and religious orthodoxy, even literary genre. As Paul Willemen has written (quoting Mikhail Bakhtin), this distance, an experience of “otherness or outsideness,” can be productive: “a sense of non-belonging, non-identity with the culture one inhabits, whether it be nationally defined, ethnically or in any other way, is a precondition for ‘the most intense and productive aspects of cultural life.’” He suggests that this is just as true when the culture one inhabits is one’s own—hence my term “outside insideness.” This “sense of non-belonging, [of] non-identity with the culture one inhabits” can account for the critical purchase Chamier has on his own culture.

Though Willemen is writing about what he calls “third cinema,” a so-called postcolonial phenomenon, the conditions that would generate such a position were no doubt not uncommon in the dislocated space of the colonial settlement. In Disorienting Fiction, James Buzard describes British nineteenth-century novels that perform “metropolitan autoethnography” as developing a very similar position, one that “anticipates modern . . . ethnography in reverse, by construing its narrator’s (and many characters’) desired position vis-à-vis the fictional world it depicts as that of an insider’s outsideness,” whereas the position of the so-called “Participant Observer” in ethnography demonstrates “an outsider’s insideness.” I read Chamier similarly: his position is, to borrow Buzard’s formula, “outside enough to apprehend the shape of the culture (and its possibilities of reform), yet insistently positioned as the outsideness of a particular inside, differentiating itself from the putatively unsituated outsideness of theory or cosmopolitanism as conventionally represented.” The “outsideness of [Chamier’s] particular inside” is the “critical position” of the unsettled settler (PD 76, 509). As Joan Stevens writes of Raleigh, he “not only lives

27 Buzard, Disorienting Fiction 12, 10 (emphases given).
28 Buzard, Disorienting Fiction 12 (emphasis given).
the settler’s life; he also stands aside and philosophically analyses its qualities.”

John Owens puts it more evocatively: he is “in, but not quite of this world,” the world of the Canterbury novels. This gets at why the novels are relevant as more than historical documents. As Peter Alcock argues in “Informing the Void,” the novels of Chamier—and Samuel Butler, another unsettled settler—“hold literary value for us today just in so far as they [are] ‘unrepresentative’” or outside. And they are “unrepresentative” because “they are not party to that ‘conspiracy to defraud themselves of actuality’” that marks the “literary ‘officialese’” of “our Victorians and Edwardians.” Stevens, Owens and Alcock locate Chamier in a New Zealand context, but though there are more novelists of this ilk among Chamier’s contemporaries in Australia, like Joseph Furphy and Patrick Eiffe, the purchase of this critical position on settler society makes it no less valid there.

This limited mobility or outside insideness plays out in the life of Chamier in three main ways, as

a. *mobility per se*: what can be sifted out of the facts, anecdotes and apocrypha about him that have come down to us are his movements through the Empire, especially within the Australasian settler colonies, which evince a mobile relation to nation and place, not to mention a willingness to up and shift;

b. a *mobile intellect*: a scepticism not just about orthodoxies, intellectual and religious, but about relations of power, especially the geopolitical forces and fantasies that are at work in the space of the settlement; and, as later chapters will describe,

c. a *mobile style* of writing: a style at once “hypergeneric” and heterogeneous, whereby he freely adapts metropolitan genres to a local setting, suiting the style of each novel to the “style” of settlement in which it is set and to its position in his autoethnographical trilogy.

Thinking positionality in terms of mobility offers an alternative to thinking it psychoanalytically or in terms of identity politics, “postcolonial” or otherwise. To

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take as an example the first mode of mobility, mobility per se, I will plot Chamier’s movements in at least three ways: temporally, in terms of the time spent in each place; semantically, in terms of the reasons why he stayed someplace or up and shifted; and spatially, in terms of the journeys he took between places.

But what is most instructive in the trajectory of Chamier’s life is the fact of mobility, mobility per se: the fact that his movements evince a mobile relation to place and nation—and imply an awareness of mobility on his part. The way movement within the Empire is stereotypically pictured as a one-way (downward) traffic between the metropolis and periphery, with settlers heading out in search of real or virtual booty for the metropolis and metropolitan hands always on the tiller, is a narrow and deterministic understanding of the way things played out in colonialism, akin to that other straight line story of the growth of the settlement as a straightforward teleological narrative of development. Thinking in terms of the Epicurean picture of the cosmos would seem more appropriate to Chamier and his “Epicurean philosophy”: Epicurus has atoms always in motion and moving downward in parallel, the odd swerving atom disturbing the rigid paths of determinism and ensuring that free will of a sort is possible. Chamier is that stray atom, moving around the outskirts of the Empire on a “crooked path,” like an alternative “centre” in the space of relative freedom his position offers him (SSM VII, XXX). This image captures the idea of the eccentric—that is, “ex-centric” or away from the metropolitan centre—and apparently erratic mobility that characterized his life and works. Much of his movement will be sideways within the Empire and the colonies, rather than up and down, and always athwart the geopolitical forces at work in imperial and colonial space. To take just two examples, in Canterbury, like his stand-in Raleigh, he moves in a kind of push-pull centripetal relation with settler society, mimicking in microcosm the push-pull that exists in colonial life between Home and here. Then, in the Australasian colonies, like his stand-ins Raleigh and Tim, he moves by steps from back country to front country in Canterbury, then to the burgeoning colonial metropolises of Melbourne and Sydney, with a back step to Adelaide in between (the stand-ins go no further than Melbourne). The endpoint of his movement becomes the colonial, not the imperial metropolis.

If this eccentric mobility seems rather too unforced in hindsight, from day to
day Chamier struggled—though not too hard, naturally—to preserve his equanimity,
that kind of laissez-faire fatalism more typically described as Epicurean and summed
up in Raleigh’s characteristic appeal in Siren: “We shall all reach the final goal soon
enough, in any case; why not take it easy, and enjoy ourselves by the way?” (SSS
114). This Epicureanism is not simply enjoying “cogitating on the blissful sensation
of the present moment and the mutability of all things” or living in the present
moment, as Raleigh would sometimes have it; it is realising “[u]pon what slight and
trivial conditions . . . our happiness depend[s],” that failure at the whim of fate is an
ever-present possibility (PD 134, 135). That said, Chamier seemed to take a perverse
enjoyment in living on an eccentric orbit. As is said of Raleigh in Siren, “[he] was
somewhat different from the everyday run of men, and he affected a still greater
divergence”—like a wilfully stray Epicurean atom (SSS 116). This perversity
exemplifies Chamier’s penchant for what Hegel calls “tarrying with the negative,” a
kind of “negative capability” or openness to unknown quantities, the corollary of
which is his readiness to challenge what he knows, to be unsettled and to unsettle
himself. As Joseph and Johanna Jones suggest, most settler novelists “present
positive ideas in very positive ways,” whether it be the utopians like Julius Vogel or
the reformers like Susan Mactier, that is to say, “they are satirical about what they
dislike, enthusiastic about their schemes of social paradises to come, or indignant
about social abuses as they see them.” Chamier’s unsettling criticism of settler
society is never indignant nor serves as a means for him to posit some idea of a better
place to come, and when he is satirical, he is mockingly so. More importantly, he does
not exclude himself from his critique—his position is one that always calls itself into
question. The fact that he is as willing to unsettle himself as to unsettle others is his
point of difference as a critic of settler society and autoethnographer of the unsettled
settler.

33 Epicurus 40.
(sec. 32); for “negative capability” see John Keats, The Letters of John Keats: A Selection, ed. R.
35 Joseph and Johanna Jones, New Zealand Fiction, Twayne’s World Authors Ser. 643 (Boston: G. K.
Hall, 1983) 19.
Detour 2: Chamier—Life and Works

Our existence here . . . is in itself a work of fiction. We are all walking novels in 3 vols., bound in cloth—most of it heavy reading, clumsy dialogue, vulgar sentiment, questionable incident, ill-drawn character, and lame conclusion.

—E. R. Mitford (attrib.), “Colonial Literature” (1867) 

It was the Auckland University Press’s second edition of *A South-Sea Siren* (1970), edited and introduced by Joan Stevens, that decisively brought Chamier’s New Zealand novels into the ambit of the literary-historical canon, in New Zealand at least. It remains the only modern edition. Stevens’s introduction set the boundaries of future literary-historical readings of the life and works; in particular, as the only biographical account of any substance, it bedded in a certain narrative of the interrelation of the life and works, not to mention some minor errors of fact. For the most part, it offers a simple chronological account of Chamier’s life with some back story about his forebears and treats the novels as a single bildungsroman telling the story of the “development” of the young Chamier-Raleigh. It considers the novels relatively artless—“clumsy” is her word—and finds their principal virtue to lie in what Eric McCormick had early on called their “critical realism” about settler society in Canterbury; as Stevens puts it, *Siren* in particular “would not be worthy of resuscitation . . . were it not for its evidence about New Zealand in the eighteen-sixties.”

Luck played a large part in the rescue of the life of Chamier from obscurity, as a contemporary review suggests:

> When *A South Sea Siren* was chosen for reissue, little was known about Chamier. Only two [minor] mentions of him could be found in New Zealand. . . . Joan Stevens . . . tried Sydney for information. . . . Finally a clue turned up. The letters ICE connected with his name

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37 Joan Stevens, Introduction xii.
suggested the records of the Institution of Civil Engineers in London might help. They did.\textsuperscript{39}

The discovery of this clue to some extent determined the nature of Stevens’s biographical account. Her facts were to come in the main from the Institution of Civil Engineers records and the \textit{Biographical Register of the Dictionary of Australian Biography}, which focusses on Chamier’s work as an engineer in South Australia, where he carried out his most well-known engineering work. In addition, the Canterbury Public Library provided the merest of details on which to anchor the biographical evidence from his New Zealand novels; the British \textit{Dictionary of National Biography} and William T. Courthope’s \textit{Memoir of Daniel Chamier . . . with Notices of his Descendants} (1852) provided some more substantial background information about the extended family.\textsuperscript{40} If the story of Chamier’s life falls into a loose spatiotemporal sequence of chapters—Europe, Canterbury, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, China, Europe—Stevens’s biographical account concentrates on the second and fourth chapters set in Canterbury and Adelaide, where the weight of her evidence lies, and says little or nothing about the other chapters: Chamier’s intellectually formative early life in Europe; his time in Melbourne, where \textit{Successful Man} is set, and in Sydney, where the novels were mainly written; and the final chapter of his life in retirement when he travelled to China, collected his non-fiction and returned to Europe.

What is most interesting in Stevens’s reading of Chamier’s life is her description of his intellectual “development” as recorded in the novels, which she reads as a “Philosopher’s Progress,” a kind of colonial bildungsroman.\textsuperscript{41} She argues that the resulting novels are written with the “perspective which the passing of some twenty-five years away from the country had given him,” that is, a perspective “focused and clarified in the ironic judgement of later life.”\textsuperscript{42} She sees his “final

\textsuperscript{41} Joan Stevens, Introduction xii, xvi.
\textsuperscript{42} Joan Stevens, Introduction xviii-xix.
philosophy,” as revealed in his non-fiction, as “the conclusion naturally reached by
the well-read, thoughtful, and defensively ironic man whom we find earlier in the
Richard Raleigh of the two novels,” who “has canvassed various systems and rejected
them in favour of a stoic acceptance of ‘pessimism.’” And his irony and
pessimism—his “philosophy”—lie behind what she describes elsewhere as his
ground-breaking “interpreting” (critically interpretative) reading of settler society,
which for her demonstrates a “moral concern . . . which sets George Chamier above
the mere yarn-spinners of his day” and evinces “detached interpretation . . . by the
standards of a social and personal idealist.”

Broadly speaking, I will follow Stevens’s lead, other than to position Chamier
within the discourse of settlement and more fully embed the works in the life and vice
versa to account for their interrelation. I would argue that it is the perspective of the
unsettled settler, in particular the unsettled settler as autoethnographer, rather than that
of the “social and personal idealist,” that sets him apart from other colonial novelists.
Essentially, Stevens sees Chamier/Raleigh as a displaced metropolitan critic of settler
society: unsettled maybe, but not a settler. She hints in passing that he “not only lives
the settler’s life; he also stands aside and philosophically analyses its qualities,” but
does not suggest how this split position might work. Dennis McEldowney hints at
this problem in a letter to John Reid in the AUP correspondence about her reading of
Chamier’s novels: “I might myself have stressed rather more the Philosopher’s
unusual alienation from the social mores of his time, far more than Tom Arnold’s, and
even more than Butler’s. This strikes me as adding to the interest of his novels as
novels, not merely as social document.” Chamier’s alienation is not just “unusual”
in its degree, nor is it representative of the displaced metropolitan critic—the “new
chum” as well-meaning snob perhaps. It is better described as an “outside insideness”
vis-à-vis the mutual claims of the Empire and settler society, intellectual and religious
orthodoxy, even literary canon and genre, that stems in part from a willingness to
question his own position, to unsettle himself as well as others. Furthermore, we are
better served to read the novels, as McEldowney suggests, “as novels”—but settler

\[43\] Joan Stevens, Introduction xi.

\[44\] Joan Stevens, Introduction xviii; for the “interpreting” novel, see Joan Stevens, The New Zealand
Fiction,” An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, ed. A. H. McLintock, vol. 2 (Wellington: R. E. Owen,
1966) 327.

\[45\] Joan Stevens, “Literature: Fiction” 327.

\[46\] R. D. McEldowney, letter to J. C. Reid, 7 Feb. 1969, AUP Correspondence.
novels, in other words, to see them as doing a different job from metropolitan novels and thereby not so much displaced and artless as artfully adaptive. To read the novels this way is to position them—for better or worse—in what Chamier called with more than a hint of irony “the enterprising movement” of the settlement of the Australasian colonies (SSS GR 106).

More problematically, Stevens does not have a convincing story about the relation between Chamier and his hero, and between Chamier as hero—Chamier/Raleigh—and his mature self. Firstly, she assumes that the life and the novels merely intersect at the level of fact, that Chamier’s life simply informs that of Raleigh. Secondly, she assumes that the novels represent Chamier’s mature perspective throughout, that the irony of both the narrator and Raleigh is simply the wisdom of hindsight: “the perspective which the passing of some twenty-five years away from the country had given him.”

It is true that all his novels were published, if not written, within a five-year period in the early eighteen-nineties, when Chamier was about fifty, looking back on his early life in the Australasian colonies in the eighteen-sixties and -seventies. The problem is that Stevens too easily conflates Raleigh and Chamier and simply assumes that the mature position Chamier sums up in his late essay “Pessimism” (1911) is “the conclusion naturally reached by the well-read, thoughtful, and defensively ironic man whom we find earlier in . . . Raleigh.”

I take another sort of irony to be at work here, an overarching aesthetic irony that makes sense of Chamier’s novels as a trilogy and enables him to make sense of his life. The “conclusion” he reaches is not so much “natural” as aesthetic, the outcome of his fashioning his life as a work of art, as “a work of fiction,” to use Mitford’s phrase. When the novels are read as an autoethnographical trilogy, their apparent artlessness reveals the working out of an artful life. It is the novels that get Chamier to the mature position of “Pessimism”; they represent a “novel attempt . . . at describing [his] melancholy self,” as Raleigh says of his attempts at writing (PD 199).

To this end, Chamier makes sense of his life in hindsight as a narrative of sentimental education. He reads the settlement of a “new” place as a test of sentiment: of both sympathy with nature and human sympathy as settlers attempt to keep mind and body together in the face of what Philip Fisher has called the “hard facts” of the new place.

47 Joan Stevens, Introduction xviii.
48 Joan Stevens, Introduction xi.
and its peoples. He has his autoethnographical protagonists—Richard Raleigh in *Philosopher Dick* and *A South-Sea Siren*, and Tim in *The Story of a Successful Man*—test out various sentimental personas in an attempt to get themselves settled, insofar as they can as unsettled settlers, in the various settlements in which they find themselves.

Chamier’s reading of different species of settlement in the trilogy can be schematised as in table 1. Here I am adapting Philip Fisher’s terminology: a “hard fact,” here the fact of settlement, that requires cultural reworking, the locations or “privileged settings” where the reworked “new fact” is put into place, and the “popular forms,” in Chamier’s case a European form and his local adaptation of it, that embody this new reality.

Table 1
Chamier’s Settler Trilogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>novel</th>
<th>mythical location</th>
<th>actual location</th>
<th>sentimental persona</th>
<th>European form</th>
<th>local form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Philosopher Dick</em></td>
<td>the back country station</td>
<td>Horsley Down (“Marino Station”), North Canterbury, NZ</td>
<td>the romantic hero (Rousseau, Byron)</td>
<td>the picaresque</td>
<td>the “rolling stone” novel or pioneer memoir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Siren</em></td>
<td>the small town</td>
<td>Leithfield (“Sunnydowns”), North Canterbury, NZ</td>
<td>the errant hero (Fielding)</td>
<td>the comic romance</td>
<td>the colonial comedy of manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Successful Man</em></td>
<td>the colonial metropolis</td>
<td>Melbourne (“Marvellous Melbourne”), Australia</td>
<td>the domestic hero (the womanly man)</td>
<td>the sentimental biography</td>
<td>the biography of the “representative settler”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each novel

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51 Fisher 5, 9, 10.
a. puts its protagonist, be it Raleigh or Tim, to test in a different location, each setting unsettling in its own way, whether it be the back country station, the small town or the colonial metropolis, and enabling Chamier to satirise a different species of settlement;

b. serves as a different phase in his narrative of sentimental education, to which end he has his protagonists try out one or more sentimental personas in each novel, all variants of the man of feeling: the Rousseauian or Byronic romantic hero (of sensibility in extremis), the errant hero (of latitudinarian sensibility) à la Fielding, and the domestic hero or womanly man as hero (of sentimental domesticity); and

c. adapts a different sentimental form to a local setting, for example, translating the picaresque into the “rolling stone” novel or pioneer memoir.

Lastly, this narrative of sentimental education

d. is structured according to what has become a grand narrative of settlement: a centripetal movement toward the city, that is to say, toward social cohesion—and in the trilogy, toward formal cohesion or closure.

The trilogy progresses from the back country station of “Marino Station” (Horsley Down) in Philosopher Dick to the country town of “Sunnydowns” (Leithfield) in Siren to the colonial metropolis of “Marvellous Melbourne” in Successful Man, just as Chamier did in the eighteen-sixties and -seventies. In its geographic movement, it represents what Patrick Evans has described as “a remarkably sophisticated anticipation of the large thematic movement of New Zealand writing in the twentieth century”—and of what has become a grand narrative of settlement as a “centripetal” (centre-seeking) movement toward the city, a process of development from frontier to town to city. Philosopher Dick gives us Raleigh as an isolated sensibility in the mold of Rousseau or Byron’s Manfred, alienated from settler society and attempting to get himself settled by communing with nature in the back back country; Siren has him undergo a series of philosophical and romantic adventures in the small town of Sunnydowns in the “front country,” not unlike one of Fielding’s errant heroes, and end up heading for a kind of ironic sentimentality as a way to get by in settler society. These two novels form Chamier’s Canterbury diptych. Successful Man completes the trilogy. It provides an endpoint to Raleigh’s

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52 Patrick Evans, Penguin History 60.
sentimental journey with its movement to the colonial metropolis of Melbourne—though the hero is no longer called Raleigh. Here we see the sentimental domesticity of the anti-hero and narrator Tim—who is Chamier—opposed to the hypermaterialism of the hero Fred Power—who is what Chamier might have been, had he became an out-and-out capitalist like some of his fellow engineers.

It is in Tim’s split narrative in *Successful Man* that Chamier works out an aesthetic solution to the problem of how the unsettled settler can get settled. Tim plays two narratorial roles in his story: as narrator-protagonist telling the story from the inside as it happens and as constructor-narrator telling the story from the outside in hindsight. In keeping with this *outside-inside* position, Chamier has Tim adapt himself to settler society in Marvellous Melbourne by means of a double strategy:

a. Tim’s ethos of sentimental domesticity enables him to get by in day-to-day life—but also gives him critical distance on goings-on in settler society;

and

b. his self-reflexive construction of his own narrative in hindsight gives him “aesthetic distance” on his life.

This aesthetic solution to the problem of his unsettlement goes to show that for Chamier life can only be made sense of in hindsight and, by implication, when aestheticised or transformed into an object of art. The position of Tim as constructor-narrator vis-à-vis his narrative, especially *his own* narrative, *The Story of a[n] [Un]successful Man*, as it were, is writ large in that of Chamier vis-à-vis his own life as represented in his autoethnographical trilogy. Like Tim, Chamier plays constructor-narrator in the story of his life; if Tim constructs a story of himself as a successful narrator, through his trilogy Chamier constructs a story of himself as a successful author—of his own life at least.

Though Chamier was able to make sense of his life with hindsight in this way, life on the ground was always more of a scramble. He uses as the epigraph of *Successful Man* Schopenhauer’s description of “acquired character,” that is, of how we acquire or build a character or self over time more or less in accord with our “real” self (our “empirical character”)—how we come to be who we were meant to be: “For as our physical path upon earth is always merely a line, not an extended surface, so in life, if we desire to grasp and possess one thing, we must renounce and leave
innumerable others on the right hand and the left.”⁵³ For Schopenhauer, the ideal life would describe “a straight line,” not “a wavering and uneven one.” The alternative (though Chamier leaves this out) is “like children at a fair, [to] snatch at everything that fascinates us in passing,” in which case “we then run a zigzag path, wander like the will-o’-the-wisp, and arrive at nothing.”⁵⁴ The “hero” of Successful Man, Fred Power, who is a self-made man and aspirational role model for his fellow Victorians, exemplifies the straight line life: he closes out all else but business, monomaniacally concerning himself only with the means to his ill-defined end of “success.”

But the straight line life is not a recipe for happiness for Chamier. Like Tim, his stand-in in Successful Man, he “scrambles” through his “ups and downs,” and though unsuccessful in business, he is relatively successful in life (SSM II). If his life line is erratic, something of a “zigzag path” around the outskirts of the Empire, he does not “arrive at nothing”; over time, he achieves an Epicurean equanimity, to use a word that echoes through Chamier’s writing like a mantra. This equanimity echoes the recipe for laissez-faire living given in Siren by Delamer, the “man of the world”: “life is all ups and downs, cloud and sunshine, good and bad luck. Nearly all these troubles and vexations about which men rave and go frantic pass over in no time, and things right themselves of their own accord” (SSS 309).

Chamier’s life of ups and downs—but more down than up, as it were—falls into four chapters, bookended by short intervals spent in England:

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⁵⁴ Schopenhauer, World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 303 (sec. 55; World as Will and Idea, vol. 1, 392).
England 1842-44 (age 0-2)

I Europe 1844-59 (2-17)
   1 Paris 1846-58
   2 Dresden, Saxony 1858-59

II New Zealand 1859-69 (17-27)

III Australia 1869-1908 (27-64)
   1 Tasmania, Western Australia 1869-71
   2 Victoria 1871-77
   3 South Australia 1877-90
   4 New South Wales 1890-1908

IV China 1908-1912 (64-70)

England 1912-15 (70-73)

Fig. 2. George Chamier: locations.
Perhaps the trajectory of Chamier’s life is better described as roundabout—minus the brief excursions back to Europe: out from Europe to the Australasian colonies of New Zealand and Australia, and back again via China for the final London episode. Given that he spent most of his adult life in the New New Worlds of the Australasian colonies—from the ages of seventeen to sixty-four, his life up until his departure from the Old World in 1859 seems merely preparatory; but it left him with a legacy, familial and intellectual, the claims of which he contested throughout his lengthy journey through the colonies and back to his place of birth.

*England: Home?*

1842-44

*William and Emily Chamier return to England*

George Chamier was born on 8 April 1842 at Cheltenham, a once fashionable but then declining spa town, west of the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, that was famous for its Regency architecture.\(^{55}\) He was the middle child of the seven children, all boys, of William Chamier I (1801-59) and Emily Chamier née Crookenden (1818-89). He was probably named after his uncle George Fitzwilliam Chamier (1793-1816), who died young at Bombay, though the name foreshadows Chamier’s later partiality to things Georgian (to be named for Cheltenham’s association with the mad King George III, its patron, would have been a less fortunate omen).

William and Emily Chamier had returned to England from India in 1839. Family tradition has it that they left India because William “lost his leg to a tiger,” after which “extreme shock both physical and spiritual” he is said to have found religion, to have “got the call” to the priesthood.\(^ {56}\) What Mark Twain later called the land of “two million gods” certainly left him with “ill health and troubled spirit,” as Frances Warner suggests, but there were simpler motives for the move.\(^ {57}\) The spectre would have hung over William of the too early death from the rigours of India of his


\(^{56}\) Frances Warner 3, 4; Anthony Chamier, e-mail to Amy Chamier and the author, 10 Dec. 2005.

\(^{57}\) Mark Twain, *Following the Equator* (1897; Whitefish: Kessinger, 2004) 237; Frances Warner 4.
younger brother Edward (1807-36), who was also employed in the Bombay Establishment of the Honourable East India Company’s Civil Service. And Emily had never really gotten over the death in infancy of their first child Charles in 1835, supposedly as a result of the unhealthy climate and environment out in India. When she fell pregnant again in late 1838, she insisted that she go Home for the birth. They decided that William would leave what seemed like a dead-end position with the East India Company and undertake religious training in England—though he remained officially in the East India’s Company’s employ until 1840 or 1841.  

Whatever William’s state of mind and body, Emily gave birth to several children in quick succession, each in different towns, as William took a series of short-term clerical training positions. Their second child William Brook Chamier (“Willy”) was born in September 1839 at Leamington Spa in Warwickshire, and Edward Chamier III in September 1840 at Weymouth in Dorset. In 1842, George was born—and William found his first permanent position at St Peter’s at Walton, near Wakefield in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The family moved to live nearby at Woodthorpe, where another son, Daniel, was born in May 1843. They then moved on to Sandall Magna in Yorkshire until April 1844. Emily’s mother, Mary Ann Crookenden, had come to live with them in September 1842 after the death of her husband and stayed with them for three years. As she always over-wintered in Europe, it was perhaps at her suggestion that

the family accompanied her to France, Switzerland and Saxony in 1844-45. William had ulterior motives: he was on the look-out for a clerical position on the Continent. If this trip did not represent their final departure, the seed was planted then that the family would emigrate to Europe, though they retained their house at Wakefield until 1846. It seems that William and the family stayed in England only long enough for him to complete his training and make a start in his new career. When the English Episcopal Church—now St Michael’s—in the centre of Paris came up for sale in early 1846, William bought it and the family emigrated to France, whence the Chamiers had come as Huguenot exiles two centuries earlier. It was to become their second home.

“Georgy,” as Chamier was known then and through his teens, spent only the first few years of his life in England and visited only occasionally after that. He grew up in the English colony in Paris, English by nationality but French, or more precisely, Continental by inclination and habit. The Chamiers had always been proud of their dual heritage as once-exiled French Huguenots and naturalised English citizens. With Georgy, the French, or rather, Continental and the English aspects of this inheritance serve as the positive and negative poles of his character: the Continental pole represents personal and intellectual freedom or mobility; the English one represents the British Establishment, which for him took the shape of what P. J. Van Der Voort has called the “Chamier tradition” (the East India Company, the Church, the Army), traditional education and religious worship, and the broader workings of the imperial apparatus, in particular, the social hierarchies and political and psychological economies of colonialism. He constantly felt the pull of the one and the push of the other.

The French aspect of this inheritance would have become more available to Georgy in Paris—the language, the literature and the way of living—and would no

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*Causes with Tables of the Names of Cases, and Indexes of the Principal Matters* (London: Butterworths, 1860) 441-60 (4 Nov. 1859; 1 SW & TRANS. 441); Richard Searle and James Charles Smith, *Monthly Reports of Cases Decided in the Court of Probate: and in the Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, Commencing Michaelmas Term, 1859* 1.1 (London: Stevens & Norton, 1860) 3-19 (July 12 and 14, Nov. 4 1859).

64 “Crookenden v. Fuller,” *Law Times* 71. The Chamiers may have lived in Norfolk at some point prior to 1847 (Emily’s family, the Crookendens, were from nearby), because a record exists from 1857 of Bank of England stock in the name of “Rev. William Chamier, of Lynn, Norfolk,” on which the dividends had not been collected since 5 January 1847 (“Bank of England.—Unclaimed Stock,” *Times* 21 Oct. 1857: 1).

doubt have distanced him from his fellow English “colonists” or expatriates, often in seemingly trivial ways, not least when they mispronounced or anglicised his name, as they invariably did. Similarly, his Huguenot heritage would have been brought home to him in France, particularly through his uncle Henry, who also lived in Paris and was a keen genealogist and historian of the Huguenots. Though by Georgy’s time the émigré Huguenot community was much less close-knit than it once was, being a Huguenot was synonymous with personal faith, iconoclasm and tenacity in the face of persecution, and exile (from France) and international mobility, values and themes that would resonate with Georgy over time.66

But the English aspect of this inheritance also made itself felt. William and Emily may have thought that their lives had taken a swerve out of the Imperial traffic when they moved to France, but the English colony in Paris, centered on the British Embassy and its agencies, was an arm of the British Empire no less than the India of the East India Company, and William would find himself again entangled in its workings when he tried to make a living as a clergyman and came up against the whims of the Ambassador. Georgy watched and learnt. But working with or within the machinery of Empire would not have been new for William or Emily: ethnically, they can be characterised as agents of or actors in what Robin Cohen has called the British “imperial diaspora,” that is, the process of “settlement for colonial . . . purposes.”67 Both were born into wealthy non-aristocratic families that made their money in the colonies and were all-too-aware of the workings of the imperial apparatus, though they were not a little alienated by the inflections of their respective histories: in William’s case, Anglo-Indian, French Huguenot, downwardly mobile in an upwardly mobile family, not to mention stubborn by temperament; in Emily’s case, Anglo-Caribbean and marrying beneath herself. And there was always the final sanction of the Empire: though many Chamiers and Crookendens prospered and rose up the ranks of the professions, the East India Company and the British and Indian Armies, advancement was limited for them because they were not “real” gentry. Alienation may have run in Georgy’s blood, but his parents also bequeathed their son a talent for what he would later call “adapting himself to circumstances,” for always

66 Anthony Chamier notes that only one of William Chamier’s siblings married a Huguenot: his sister Frances Amelia Chamier (1791-1879), who married George Du Pré Porcher (c.1789-1861), son of Josias Du Pré Porcher (1760-1820) who was a close friend of John Chamier (e-mail to the author, 11 Dec. 2003). It was this family connection that George Chamier followed to New Zealand.
landing on his feet, that enabled him to travel a more “ex-centric” path than them, to live at a further remove from the metropolitan centre than they ever did and to define himself by that distance (PD 163). To prove these various inheritances, we need to understand the respective histories of William and Emily.

The Chamiers and the Crookendens

Fig. 3a. William Chamier. 1st Judge. Minister British Embassy Church Paris, [c.1840], Fiona Pastor Collection, Jersey. (Reproduced by permission of Fiona Pastor.)

Fig. 3b. Emily Chamier, 1830, personal photograph by Daniel Chamier, 1891, Jenny Chamier Grove Collection, Kew, Surrey. (Reproduced by permission of Jenny Chamier Grove.)

In the marriage of William Chamier and Emily Crookenden, two vectors of the colonial Empire meet: India (or Asia) and the Caribbean (or the Americas); Georgy

68 The inscription, which I take as the title, is wrong: it was a family tradition that William Chamier was “Chaplain to the British Embassy in Paris,” as reiterated in Chamier’s obituary in the North-China Herald, but this was false (“Obituary: Mr. George Chamier”). “1st Judge” refers to his service in the East India Company. Judging by his dress, the portrait must have been taken before he was ordained in 1842 (Anthony Chamier, e-mail to the author, 8 Dec. 2005).
completes the triangle when he heads off for the Antipodes in 1859 to make a life for himself. William Chamier was born in London in 1801, the son of John Ezechiel Deschamps Chamier of Hanover Square (1754-1831) and Georgiana Grace née Burnaby (1764-1826). Emily Crookenden was born in Norwich, the daughter of Thomas Crookenden (c.1765-1842) and Mary Ann née Fuller (1788-1858), both of Suffolk. In her summary of the “talented ancestry” of the Chamiers in her introduction to *Siren*, Joan Stevens emphasizes the paternal line. She lists Daniel Chamier III (1661-1698), his grandson Anthony Chamier I (1725-1780), broker, Deputy Secretary at War and Under-Secretary of State, MP and artistic patron, his nephew John Ezechiel Deschamps Chamier (1754-1831) of the East India Company and amateur scholar, and his sons Henry Chamier I (1795-1867) of the East India Company and Captain Frederick Chamier I (1796-1870), naval commander and author.\(^69\) Aside from the first, Daniel Chamier III, who in 1693 founded the first Huguenot Church in London, the Temple of Leicester Fields, they are all figures that will populate Georgy’s family gallery and prove exemplary for him (positively and negatively).\(^70\) Stevens ignores the “maternal” lines of the Chamier family that add imperial breadth and weight to the picture: it must be borne in mind that the distaff side is often the imponderable in all these genealogical equations, but important in the Victorian upper- and upper-middle class family in which children spent the bulk of their early formative years with governesses and/or tutors usually under the supervision of their mothers, and especially weighty with the Chamiers. The distaff side of the family is significant in Chamier’s story in that it constitutes the Caribbean vector of his inheritance and contributed to the upward mobility of both Chamier’s father and grandfather, who made marriages to women easily their equals in status and probably in wealth—only for Chamier and his brothers to head downward: out of the Empire or into its far reaches in the Antipodes, and away from the Chamier tradition.

\(^69\) Joan Stevens, Introduction x.

\(^70\) There were many other illustrious clergymen in the Chamier and family (and the Deschamps family too), the most significant being another Daniel, this Daniel’s grandfather, the Huguenot theologian and martyr Daniel Chamier I of Montauban (c.1565-1621). He defended—to the death—the Edict of Nantes (1598), which guaranteed a degree of religious freedom for the Huguenots. He was slain in the bastion of Paillas whilst assisting in the defence of Montauban against the forces of Louis XIII (see Courthope’s *Memoir* and Daniel Chamier and Charles Read, *Journal de Son Voyage à la Cour de Henri IV et Sa Biographie*, ed. and intro. Charles Read [Paris: Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français, 1858]).
The figure who looms largest in this family gallery is William’s father, John Chamier, born Jean Ezékiel Des Champs (or Deschamps) in London in 1754. In him, the dual heritage of the Deschamps and the Chamier family would be united. He was the son of the Reverend Jean Des Champs (1707-67), a pupil of Christian Wolff at Marburg, onetime chaplain to the Queen of Prussia and tutor to Prince Henry (brother of Frederick the Great) at Mecklenburg; he came to England in 1747 and became minister of the French Church of Savoy in the Strand, London.

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71 The spelling of John Chamier’s names often varies: his father always knew him as “Jean,” but elsewhere he is “John”—especially after his assumption of the name Chamier in 1780; “Ezékiel” (after his godfather Ezékiel Barbault) is variously given as “Ezekiel” and “Ezechiel”; the surname “Des Champs” has often been and is now usually written after the Huguenot fashion in a partially anglicised form as “Deschamps”; I follow this convention.

Chamier would probably have read his great-grandfather’s substantial memoir, the *Mémoires Secrets*, written from 1723 to 1746; its brief sequel, *Suite des Mémoires*, written from 1746 to 1767 and transcribed in part by John Chamier, is a much more straightforward chronicle and less remarkable. Both works had been handed down in manuscript to Chamier’s uncle Henry, who also lived in Paris. Though it went unpublished until 1990, the memoir is a significant early example of the “confession” and may well have been a model for Chamier’s enterprise to make fiction of his own life.

John was educated from 1767 to 1771 at the Charterhouse School under the patronage of Queen Charlotte and as a scholar of ancient and modern literature was originally intended for the Church. On finishing school at eighteen, he rejected that career and in so doing passed up the chance to go to Oxford University, remaining throughout his life an autodidact and amateur scholar. In a letter to his son Henry, he described his decision: “I having no wish for Clerical Habits, became anxious for a more independent Career, & my mind from the consequences of reading & conversing about the East Indies, became fixed with the desire of going there, & being the Artizan of my own fortune.”

His son William would do likewise—though perhaps not to assert his independence—and regret it, coming around to the clergy in middle age; his grandson Georgy was always very much “the Artizan of [his] own fortune” and would stay well away from the clergy. John pressed his uncle Anthony, then Secretary of State, to get him a nomination for India and he joined the East India Company in 1772, beginning as a “Writer” (clerk) at Fort St George in the Madras Presidency (now Chennai). So began the Chamier tradition of “going to India.” Four of his sons, not to mention two of his sons-in-law and several illegitimate sons, would all join the Company and pass on the tradition to their sons in turn.

Later John Chamier served at Vizagapatam (Visakhapatnam—usually known then by its British colonial name of Waltair) on the Coromandel or south-eastern

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73 Jean Deschamps published several other works, the only one readily available now being his interpretation of Wolffian rationalism, *Cours Abrégé de la Philosophie Wolffienne en Forme de Lettres*, 2 vols in 3 (Amsterdam: Arkstee et Merkus, 1743-1747; Hildesheim; New York: Olms, 1991).
74 Jean Deschamps, letter to Henry Chamier, 30 May 1829, Deschamps, *Life and “Mémoires Secrets”* 58.
75 Voort 16. There had been one earlier Chamier to go to India: John Deschamps’ maternal uncle, John Chamier II (1723-70), who rose from Writer to manage an East India Company silk “manufactory” and then took up diamond-trading.
Coast in the Bay of Bengal and Masulipatam (Machilipatnam) a little further south; then, taking up an appointment at the Madras Presidency, he progressed to Chief Secretary, then a Member of the Council (1801-05). In 1753, he had married Judith Chamier (1720-1801), sister of Anthony Chamier, a broker by trade, “Tony Shammy” in “alley” slang (Cockney). Anthony was a friend of Samuel Johnson and Joshua Reynolds, and a founding member of the Johnson’s Literary Club in 1764. After making his money as a broker, he entered politics, becoming Under-Secretary of State in 1767, Member of Parliament for Tamworth in 1780, and Deputy Secretary of War, which appointment raised the ire of “Junius” (Philip Francis). John returned from India in 1779 to ease his uncle Anthony’s passing; Anthony, now the last surviving male member of the Chamier family in England, died in 1780 without issue and left John his sole heir and possessor by Royal License and Authority—in fact, by injunction under his will—of his name and armorial bearings. For this reason, George Chamier ought really to be described as a Deschamps-Chamier, of which his grandfather John was the first.

![Arms of Chamier](image.png)

Fig. 5. Arms of Chamier, College of Arms, London, 13 June 1851, Anthony Chamier Collection, Ross and Cromarty. (Reproduced by permission of Anthony Chamier.)

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By 1785, John was back in India at Fort St George, now called John Chamier and possessor of a substantial fortune. He married Georgiana Grace Burnaby of Broughton Manor in Oxfordshire (1764-1826), eldest child of Admiral Sir William Burnaby, Baronet (died c.1877), and Grace Burnaby née Ottley (1738-1823), both of Surrey. The Burnabys and the Ottleys were hands-on colonists. William Burnaby was Commander-in-Chief at Jamaica and in the Gulf of Mexico (James Cook served under him there from about 1865). He compiled the Belize settlement’s common law or “Burnaby’s Code” in 1765 and led the defence of the Crown colony of Pensacola in what became Florida against the invading Spanish “invaders.” He returned Home to take his reward: he became High Sheriff of Oxford in 1764 and a Baronet in 1767. The Ottleys had plantations in St Christopher (later called St Kitts) in the Leeward Islands. The Caribbean vector of Georgy’s inheritance embodied those familiar twin motive forces of imperial mobility: conquest (by force or the force of law) and trade.

Georgiana gave birth to eight children in India, the ninth and last, Frederick, being born in Southampton in 1796. Three of their four sons went into the Civil Service of “John Company,” as the East India Company was known: Henry, Chief Secretary to the Government at Madras, William and Edward at Bombay; Frederick served in the Royal Navy. There were four daughters: Georgiana, Emma, Caroline and Amelia. Parallel to this legitimate line of English Chamiers (or more correctly, Deschamps-Chamiers), John engendered one or more other lines of illegitimate Anglo-Indian Chamiers. Up until his marriage, according to a perhaps apocryphal family tradition, he maintained a zenana (Hindu: harem) in what became the Chamiergunj on the Adyar River four miles south of Fort St George, fathering a son by a Carnatic school (South Indian “classical”) “dancer” Devikie Rani Rao. Whatever the case, he was censured in the seventeen-eighties by the East India

80 Cokayne 147.
81 Katherine Prior, Report on Indian-Born Descendants of John Ezechial [sic] Deschamps Chamier (1754-1831) and John Chamier (1723-1770), ms. (London: K. Prior, 2004) 1; Colin Chamier, letter to Anthony Chamier, 26 Aug. 1991. Prior refutes this tradition: she considers that the tradition either relates to John Chamier’s uncle John or that the tradition was a back-formation from the name of Chamier’s Road, Adyar (1)—though no Chamier actually held land there, according to Henry Davison Love’s Vestiges of Old Madras, 1640-1800 (vol. 2 [London: Government of India, 1913] 563).
Company for being too close to an Indian Royal Family—which could relate to either a commercial or personal “transaction.” After his marriage he had an Anglo-Indian mistress Sophia Cookson (c.1776-1832), upon whom between 1799 and 1805 he fathered at least four illegitimate half-siblings to the British Chamiers, three boys and one girl. According to Katherine Prior, his “Indian-born descendants operated as a close-knit family unit. . . . This willingness to look out for one another was not always found among Anglo-Indian families”—and apparently the legitimate Chamier branch would look out for them too.82 John Chamier’s son Henry was aware of the existence of his father’s mistress Cookson and even operated her pension after John Chamier’s departure, in fact, even after his death.83 So, “although,” as his obituary records, “his features were far from handsome, and his countenance somewhat bordering on austerity, he was through life a decided favourite of the fair sex”—or as his nemesis Lord Wellesley had less charitably put it in 1801, “an idle, silly, and ridiculous, coxcomb.”

John Chamier served as Station Chief (Chief “Factor”) of Vizagapatam from 1795 to 1801.85 In 1801, he took up a new appointment as Secretary to the Governor and provisional Member of the Council at Madras. This appointment occasioned the enmity between himself and Wellesley: officially, because Wellesley thought it was the result of “secret intrigues” at Home; unofficially, because he considered Chamier an upstart.86 In 1803, he became a full Member of the Council. He had worked himself up by fair means or foul to perhaps the highest position a non-aristocratic man might expect to achieve in the Company—but it was also a delicate position between the aristocratic grandees who ran the Company and the run-of-the-mill (but jealous) mid-level John Company men, which would occasion antipathy from above and below. He returned Home for good early in 1805 to “retire” relatively young and live at Hanover Square (though he made an unsuccessful attempt to get himself elected to

82 Prior 2.
83 Prior 3-4. There was at least one other mistress: in his will, John Chamier left £100, a substantial bequest in those days, to an unmarried distant cousin Clementina Ragueneau in Beverley, Yorkshire, for a “mourning ring” (Anthony Chamier, e-mail to the author, 3 Sep. 2006).
85 Ingram 332.
86 Wellesley, letter to Henry Dundas, 30 Sep. 1801, Ingram 333.
the Court of the Company in London). His reputation as a sensualist was (somewhat) tempered in retirement. His obituary records that

Mr Chamier retired early from the world and confined himself for many years to the tranquil enjoyments afforded by a well-stocked library, and a domestic circle devoted to his comfort and happiness. . . . His habits and peculiarities in retirement were those of a philosopher and a man of science.

He continued his interest in amateur scholarship, in his retirement spending up to eight hours a day in his library indulging his love of ancient, French and philosophical literature. He also became something of a patron of the arts and “charities,” serving from 1806 to 1824 as Treasurer of St George’s Hospital and Churchwarden at St George’s Church.

His obituary would have it that he spent time with his children in retirement, but I suspect that they saw him mostly at church, as he was often closeted with his books or out clubbing; their mother may have been a stabilising force in the “domestic circle,” presumably silently long-suffering but a beautiful and remarkable woman in her own right. I have noted his “pungent . . . wit,” but this was apparently balanced in his maturity by what struck his contemporaries as his genteel or sociable manner: “no man had more of what is emphatically called by our neighbours [the French], _le ton de la bonne compagnie_,” reads his obituary. Lord Chesterfield in his _Letters to his Son . . . On the Fine Art of Becoming a Man of the World_ (1750) calls this _ton_ (manner) “leger [sic] et amiable” (light and likeable)—and holds that it manifests itself in one’s “air, address [and] manners.” As befits someone to whom success seems to have come relatively easily, he had a casual attitude to social hierarchies and held sway instinctively but forcefully in his sphere of influence.

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87 Prior 2-3.
88 “Obituary.—John Chamier, Esq.” 181.
90 See Courthope, _Memoir_ 80-85.
91 “Obituary.—John Chamier, Esq.” 182.
Though John Chamier died in 1831, well before Georgy was born, he cast a long shadow through the family—it was to his authoritative presence that the men of the family of the following two generations would have deferred. Georgy would have been able to look over his memoirs and papers, which were preserved by his uncle Henry; no doubt he would have liked his grandfather’s Augustan mix of wit and gentility, which exemplifies the kind of laissez-faire intellectual mobility he would strive for, and in his own life he would follow his model of the amateur autodidact.\textsuperscript{93}

For his son William, John Chamier cast a darker shadow. The facts of William’s early life are obscure, but he probably attended Charterhouse School like his father, and given that his father had come home from India by this point to begin his long retirement and taken up residence at Hanover Square in London, his life was probably one of privilege—up to a point. John Chamier insisted that all his sons earn their living or, as it was then phrased, “choose a profession.”\textsuperscript{94} India and the mystique of the Orient would have been a frequent topic of conversation at home and William “chose” to follow in the wake of his father to India. William’s brother Frederick, who

describes just such a fateful “conversation” with their father (“Mr Ganjam”) in his novel \textit{The Unfortunate Man} (though he paints his father in darker hues than he might have):

I was grown to the goodly age of thirteen, when I was asked what profession I would choose; and this was the only opportunity I ever had of following the bent of my own inclination. I had a great hankering after India. My brothers had gone out in regular rotation to that country, in the civil service, and I confess I felt a great desire to walk in that beaten path. . . . I had often heard my father, who had resided some thirty years in that sweet climate, talk of the pomp and honours of past days. . . . [H]aving frequently heard my father affirm that any fool would do for India, I thought I might succeed quite as well as any of the numerous stupid fellows . . . who have gone out to

\textsuperscript{93} Deschamps, \textit{Life and “Mémoires Secrets”} 57.
\textsuperscript{94} Captain Frederick Chamier, R.N., \textit{The Unfortunate Man}, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1835) 7.
that land without a grain of gold or sense, and returned overburdened with both.  

Frederick ignored his father’s counsel; William turned out to be just such a fool—though he did not do well out of it, unlike Henry, the third of the longer-surviving sons. Of these three, Henry, the eldest, was conventional and personally the least like his adventurous father, but outwardly he was the most successful, perhaps because he was the most status-anxious about social hierarchies and accordingly worked best with the imperial apparatus. Frederick, the next eldest, was most like his father, an adventurer in all things. William started in Henry’s mould, but like his own father then rebelled and did the opposite to his father, throwing over the Company for the Church—though without much success in either. As a family historian, Anthony Chamier, describes them, allowing for stereotypes, there was “Henry the stuffed shirt, Frederick the bon vivant and William the sensitive soul.” And in keeping with their father’s demand that they “choose a profession,” as was the way of the new Victorian middle-class, Henry and William at least—very much unlike their unambiguously Augustan father—would conform both outwardly and probably inwardly to the new Victorian morality with its discourse of respectability.

According to his nomination to the East India Company, William “received the Rudiments of a commercial and classical education” at Hertford Castle and at seventeen was nominated—with the official recommendation of his father—to the East India Company’s Haileybury College at Hertford Heath to qualify to be a Writer in “the Bombay Establishment” of “the Civil Service of the Honourable Company in India.” He attended the College from 1819 to 1820 (his brothers George and Henry also went to the school), and was “highly distinguished” in his final exams, being awarded a medal in “Muhammedan [sic; Islamic] Law” in his fourth term (of four). Despite his apparent success, according to Warner the experience of boarding at public schools was a “torment” for William, not untypically, and determined him later in favour of liberal education—for his children and as a mission of the church.

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95 Frederick Chamier, Unfortunate Man 1 7-8.
96 Anthony Chamier, e-mail to the author, 4 Sep. 2006.
98 Danvers 543 (see also 480, 534, 576).
99 Frances Warner 3.
William applied for the East India Company’s Civil Service in 1820 and passed the compulsory local languages examination in October 1821.\textsuperscript{100} In May 1822, he began as Third Assistant Collector at Ahmednagar about three hundred kilometres inland from Bombay in the central or Deccan division of the Bombay Presidency (now Maharashtra).\textsuperscript{101}

Ahmednagar was a small but historic Muslim town that had only been absorbed into British India about three years before he arrived after the defeat of the Maratha Confederacy in the Third Anglo-Maratha War in 1818, when most of the Peshwa’s domains were annexed to British India. The town is dominated by the tomb of Sultan Khan II (a minister of Murtaza Nazam Shah I) known as Chandbibi Mahal and was administered from the old Fort built in 1490 by Ahmed Nizam Sahi. They were interesting times, but life in Ahmednagar would have soon settled into a routine as he accustomed himself to the bureaucratic and social round. Trips Home would have been a relief—but also a reminder of his lack of advancement. His brothers by this time were well advanced in their careers: Frederick had attained the rank of Captain in the Royal Navy and had published his first novel, \textit{The Life of a Sailor} (1832), which soon became a bestseller; his merchant brother Henry was rising up the ranks of the East India Company, achieving his father’s rank of Chief Secretary of Madras in 1831 and then going on to be a Member of the Government there.\textsuperscript{102}

One such return Home was to get married in 1834. How William Chamier and Emily Crookenden met is not certain—perhaps through some Caribbean connection between the Burnabys and the Crookendens, but they married on 11 October 1834 at St George’s in Hanover Square, where his father was Churchwarden.\textsuperscript{103} They were quite old to marry, or rather he was quite old to marry for the first time—he was thirty-three and she was twenty-one—and consequently had their children relatively late, though this was not uncommon, especially for colonials: Geory and his future wife would repeat the pattern.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[100] The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany 1822: 508.
\item[101] Asiatic Journal 1822: 614.
\end{footnotes}
Emily Crookenden was born in Norwich, the daughter of Thomas Crookenden (1793-1842) and Mary Ann née Fuller (1788-1858), both of Suffolk. Thomas Crookenden made his money from a plantation in the Caribbean, the River Estate in Barbados, but lived in England at his family’s one thousand acre estate at Rushford in Suffolk.  

After his death in September 1842, the proceeds of its sale and the rest of his substantial estate passed to his wife Mary Ann, who lived with and probably helped support William’s family on and off throughout the eighteen-forties, and their four children—two boys and two girls. William had made a very advantageous marriage: on Anthony Chamier’s estimate, Emily had “beauty, money, and intellectual interests, to judge from her sons”—she encouraged several of her sons to break the Chamier mold by getting a higher education. In an obituary of her son Edward, Emily is described as being “of an old aristocratic family . . . and . . . a woman of great culture and no small eminence”—“old aristocratic family” might be a stretch, given that their estate was not ancestral, but she was certainly wealthy by inheritance, well-educated and “of great culture,” and much loved by her children and a large circle of friends (she is given special mention in Edward’s obituary and exalted by Chamier in his novels).

Over the twenty years William was at Ahmednagar (1820 to 1840), he rose only gradually to the rank of Assistant Judge of Ahmednagar. William did not have as much of a head for social climbing or making money out of the civil service as his father or brother Henry had (neither would his son Georgy). The connections he fostered in India did strengthen the kinship networks of which his son Georgy later took advantage: Georgy’s cousins the Lances, who would employ him in Canterbury, as well as his future employer in Australia, W. T. Doyne, served or worked in India. But it would have been something of a relief for William to return to Europe, to follow his heart’s prompting to the spiritual life and put into practice his interest in liberal education—though in moving from the colonial merchant “bureaucracy” to the clergy, he was simply going from one of the traditional Chamier occupations to the

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105 Anthony Chamier, e-mail to the author, 4 Sep. 2006.
other; he was only modestly successful at either. He was to be the last of the Chamier clergymen.

It must be said that William’s branch of the family were always under-achievers, at least when measured against the members of the family who stayed in the traditional Chamier professions of the East India Company Civil Service or Army, which his children avoided, and whereas his brothers’ children gravitated to England, his either remained in France or headed out to the settler colonies to make their way. This is true of George Chamier. He was imbued by William with an antipathy to insular England, to the British Establishment, even to the idea of going Home for an education. England gave him a nationality and somewhere to write back to, though much less so than many other colonial writers, but not a Home. The Englishness by which he came to define himself, such as he did, was largely literary, imaginary even—like that of his grandfather or his uncle Frederick, not the staid churchy Englishness of the aunts he visited in England in his adolescence. Neither he nor his father would have thought England “the Kingdom of Liberty and Tranquility [where] everybody . . . is his own master and does whatever he thinks is right,” as their newly settled forbear Jean Deschamps put it on his arrival as an exile in London.108 Then again, Chamier would find a degree of “Liberty” and “Tranquillity” in the far reaches of the Empire at the Antipodes.

More importantly, the colonialism of Chamier’s parents—of William as Anglo-Indian and Emily as Anglo-Caribbean—gave him an inherited understanding of the workings, not to mention the breadth of the Empire, and of the “high capitalist” political economy of colonialism, driven by speculative settlement, slavery and trade. With his colonial experience, Chamier would come to understand the principle of the Imperial system: that power acts at a distance with the appearance of a mysterious force, but plays out locally in ways that are entirely unmysterious, if not always foreseeable.109 Pragmatically, he realised that the Empire offered someone like him a degree of mobility denied him at Home, if he could accommodate himself to the unsettling mix of the Old World and New the colony offered. Given his Indian experience, William would certainly not have romanticised colonial life, though the

young Georgy may have been taken by it nonetheless—or he may have decided to go to what he expected to be a more amenable colony. Chamier himself did not rely on imperial connections to get on in life, except early on when he used kinship connections to get a start in New Zealand, but he did choose to live in the British settler colonies rather than the New World (America was by now no longer a British settler colony), despite his half-hearted frontier mythologising of the Australasian colonies as the new New World.

It was the next Continental phase of Chamier’s life—his Continental upbringing and education and “Bohemian” experiences—that most influenced his mature outlook on things. Europe provided him with an intellectual home, by which he was able to disavow his English heritage (PD 96).

*Europe: An Intellectual Home*

1844-59

As we know, the family left England when Georgy was very young; like Raleigh, he was “brought up on the continent of Europe,” for the most part in France. In 1844, the family toured Europe, spending time in France, Switzerland and Saxony, as William looked for a clerical position on the Continent. William’s departure was something of a flight from Old England, the bad Old World for William (and for Georgy later), associated with “conventional life,” the Establishment, and the more English and, not coincidentally, more successful Chamiers (PD 48). It is hard to know what Emily thought about the move, but given that she stayed in Paris until she died, she must have settled in well; it seems that, like her husband and sons, she was more comfortable living as an expatriate than at Home. Georgy learnt the habit of mobility early, then, with all the moving around the family did, if “learnt” is the right word, given that they did most of their travelling before he was four, by which time the family settled for good in Paris.

*The Chamiers in Paris*

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110 Frances Warner 3.
111 “Crookenden v. Fuller” 71.
In the second phase of his career, William served as Minister of the English Episcopal Church—now St Michael’s—at 5 rue d’Aguesseau, Faubourg Saint Honoré near the Champs Elysées on the Rive Droite opposite the British Embassy (not the other English chapel in Paris, St George’s at 10 rue Marbœuf).  

Fig. 6. Église Anglaise Rue d’Aguesseau, [Paris: Hadingue,] n.d., author’s collection.

Jetta Wolff describes it in The Story of Paris Churches as a very plain “edifice . . . entirely without architectural interest,” but she is being uncharitable, as John Bill’s description suggests:

Its style is Gothic. The internal decorations are plain and neat. It consists of a nave 50 feet high, and is lighted by painted windows at each end, and by three skylights in the roof. The organ is placed behind the altar, which is spacious; the rails of which will accommodate fifty communicants and is ornamented with a fine painting by Annibal

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Caracci. All the furniture and fittings are of oak. The chapel . . . will seat 800 persons.\textsuperscript{113}

The so-called “English Chapel” was a substantial edifice then—and distinctive in its Victorian Gothic style amid the neoclassical façades of \textit{haut bourgeois} Paris.\textsuperscript{114}

The family must have lived in a residence attached to the church. The Chapel had previously been the British Embassy Church but was not in William’s time. The process by which this situation came about is elaborate and says a lot about William’s antiestablishmentarianism. The chapel was built in 1833 by the Bishop of Europe, Reverend Matthew Henry Thornhill Luscombe (1775-1846), and served as the British Embassy Chapel from 1833 to 1846.\textsuperscript{115} William bought the chapel in early 1846 “in consideration of [Luscombe] receiving a annuity of £1,000,” after the British Government declined the offer to purchase it outright. Given that Luscombe died six months later in August 1846, it cost William just five hundred pounds—a real bargain, since it had been built for £6,000.\textsuperscript{116} Powerful forces—the Bishop of London (Bishop Blomfeld), the Foreign Secretary (the Earl of Aberdeen) and the British Ambassador to France (Lord Cowley)—had backed the unsuccessful application for funds for the purchase; they can hardly have been happy that William snapped it up for nothing.\textsuperscript{117} He probably used his wife’s dowry, made up largely of her inheritance from her father’s estate, as he would not have made much money in India or inherited much from his father’s estate, not being the eldest son.\textsuperscript{118} It was quite unusual to buy a church, but not improbable outside the Empire where there was no readymade Anglican church organisation. It could be a tidy earner for an entrepreneurial clergyman—Luscombe himself had originally built it “as a speculation.”\textsuperscript{119} William


\textsuperscript{114} Bomberger and Herzog 635.

\textsuperscript{115} See Cynthia Gladwyn, \textit{The Paris Embassy} (London: Constable, 1986) 70-71 and Matthew Harrison, \textit{An Anglican Adventure: The History of Saint George’s Anglican Church, Paris} (Paris: St George’s Anglican Church, 2005) 22.

\textsuperscript{116} Hansard Debates 1066-1918 (Third Series), Parliamentary Debates 1832-1891 147 (20 July-28 Aug. 1857); 1341-54 (10 Aug. 1857).

\textsuperscript{117} Hansard Debates 1341.


\textsuperscript{119} Hansard Debates 1347.
would struggle to make ends meet in the decade or so that he owned the chapel, but the purchase would pay off when he sold it.

Why William decided to take his family to Paris is uncertain, though several reasons suggest themselves. He had been looking for a clerical position on the Continent for a while. While in Leamington for the birth of his son William, he may well have heard about goings-on in the Anglican Church in Paris from the Reverend Lewis Way, who retired in 1830 from the Marbœuf Chapel in Paris to Leamington (he died nearby in 1840). But as Anthony Chamier puts it, “the British had been flocking there since the end of the Napoleonic wars and there was a resident and visitor ‘market’ for Anglican services.” The Embassy and the English Churches were the focus of what was by the eighteen-fifties a large colony of English expatriates, the largest expatriate community in Paris, most of whom were Anglicans. It was cheaper to live there than in London, and language was not an issue for the Chamiers; as Anthony Chamier puts it, “William and his siblings would have been brought up speaking French as their second tongue.”120 But family links were probably decisive. Bishop Luscombe would have known the Chamiers: he had gotten married at St George’s, with which they had a long association—it was where William was baptised in 1801 and married in 1834, and where his father had been Churchwarden. William’s brother Frederick was also living in Paris at the time and knew it very well, writing a social history of the revolutionary period in France, A Review of the French Revolution (1849), republished as France and the French (1852).121

William and the family’s position became problematic when he failed to successfully negotiate the significant and influential position of the Chaplaincy to the British Ambassador: “Chamier . . . for some reason, did not become the Embassy Chaplain,” as Cynthia Gladwyn puts it elliptically in The Paris Embassy.122 The reasons were manifold, the main one being that the “sensitive soul” William was also stubborn when his convictions were outraged.123 The Bishop of London—at that time

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120 Anthony Chamier, e-mail to Amy Chamier and the author, 8 Dec. 2005.
121 Frederick Chamier, A Review of the French Revolution of 1848 from the 24th of February to the Election of the First President (London: Reeve, Benham, and Reeve, 1849), republished as France and the French: From the Outbreak of the Revolution in 1848, to the Election of Napoleon the Little as First President (London: H. G. Bohn, 1852). Voort records that Frederick Chamier lived in Paris from about 1843 until after 1850 (61); according to Daniel Chamier, he lived there until at least 1866, though he retained a residence at Waltham Hall, Waltham Abbey, Essex (Daniel’s letter, Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey & Sussex, 3rd ed. [London: Kelly, 1855] 178).
122 Gladwyn 92.
123 Anthony Chamier, e-mail to the author, 4 Sep. 2006.
Bishop Charles James Blomfield (1786-1857)—had authority over all Anglican churches in Europe, but he had no money for stipends for foreign churches and British Ambassadors’ chaplains were appointed by the Foreign Secretary, then Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865). A five-year correspondence (1846-51) exists between William and Blomfield in the Foreign Office archives that details his travails.\footnote{Letters Bishop Blomfield to Reverend William Chamier, Foreign Office and Predecessors: Political and Other Departments: Supplements to General Correspondence before 1906: France: British Chapel at Paris, 1824-1849 and 1850-1854, The National Archives [of Great Britain], Kew, Richmond, Surrey, FO 97/199-200 (see Index to the Letters and Papers of Charles James Blomfield, Bishop of London, 1828-1856, in Lambeth Palace Library, ms. [1986] 60). The dispute is outlined in James E. Pinnington, “Anglican Chaplaincies in Post-Napoleonic Europe: A Strange Variation on the Pax Britannica,” Church History 39 (1970): 336-37, 343-44.}

William had apparently begun services as soon as he bought the chapel and wanted to secure the clientele of the Embassy chapel to shore up his poor financial position. He thought he had the backing of Blomfield—he believed he had been promised the position verbally—but the Ambassador Lord Normanby objected to his practice of collecting money at the church door or “paying for pews” and refused to allow it at his chapel (William charged one franc per person).\footnote{Francis Coghlan, The Miniature Guide to Paris and its Environs Arranged to Enable the Stranger to Visit Every Object of Interest in Ten Days (London: J. Onwhyn, 1853) 140.} It seems it was a little Low Church for Normanby, though the payment issue hints at more fundamental doctrinal or personal differences because Luscombe had also charged at the door. William also refused to have services in French at the Chapel or to share services with another minister. Blomfield tried to smooth things down for fear of a scandal, though he declined to petition Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, on William’s behalf; it seems he was most concerned to save face and avoid the gloating that would follow from the Catholics. William held on stubbornly and fell out decisively with Normanby, who was pretty stubborn himself. It was a lesson in the intransigence of the Establishment, as John Pinnington suggests:

To such legalistic lengths could the official mind go that in the course of the dispute . . . over the possession of the Rue d’Aguessseau chapel, the ambassador seemed prepared to borrow the Lutheran Church . . . as a mere tactic even though Charnier [sic] had a congregation and Normanby did not have a congregation at all apart from his secretaries and menials.\footnote{Pinnington, “Anglican Chaplaincies” 343, citing William Chamier to Normanby (17 July 1851), in Blomfield letters.}
The Ambassador converted a room in the Embassy to a chapel and appointed his own chaplain.127 This was a pattern Georgy would repeat; he too would get into battles with those to whom he would be expected to kowtow because of their social or institutional status.

But there is a more sinister backstory: the Ambassador who preceded Normanby and was there when William arrived, Lord Wellesley (later Earl Cowley), was the brother of Marquess Wellesley, Governor-General of India, who had much resented the appointment of William’s father at Madras.128 He presumably vetoed the appointment outright with the Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen, though William would still try again when Normanby arrived in mid-1846 (only to be followed in 1852 by another Wellesley, son of the last).129 No doubt this would have reinforced William’s enmity to the machinations of Imperial power—and been a reminder of the influence of his father in life and after his death. Family connections could work for both good and ill in the networks of Empire.

Nonetheless, according to Wolff, the Chapel was always “a centre of earnest work among the British colony and of active ‘parochial’ [parish] organisations.”130 That did not change during William’s tenure, despite the ructions with the Ambassador. By the eighteen-fifties, he had managed to build up a very good congregation and broaden it to include many expatriate American Episcopalians.131 In The English Party’s Excursion to Paris (1850), “J. B. Esq.” (John Bill) records a visit to the chapel in 1849, when he “paid 2 francs for two seats in a side gallery, which was about half filled, the body below about three fourths.”132 Still, the pew money coming in was not enough that funds did not have to be advanced by the House of Commons for the upkeep of the church or to keep it going.133 William always had to have his eye on the main chance. His other interest was in “experimental” education and he had become involved in the National School Society, in full, the National

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127 Gladwyn 92.
129 Gladwyn 92-93.
130 Jetta Wolff 196.
132 Bill 35.
Society for the Education of the Poor—and British expatriates, it seems—in the Principles of the Established Church. He set up a school attached to his church in accordance with the Society’s “sectarian monitorial” principles of “mutual tuition,” which had been devised by his father’s friend Dr Andrew Bell (1753-1832) and were advocated by the Southeys, Wordsworth and Coleridge. In addition, the chapel may have been affiliated with the Colonial Church and School Society, as it was under William’s successor, Reverend Edward Forbes; this may have been why the chapel was supported by the British Parliament.

As for Georgy’s education, as Warner puts it: “It is said of William Chamier that having himself been educated at an English public school,” probably Charterhouse, “he determined that his sons should not suffer the same torments but would be taught privately abroad by tutors.” Given his father’s antipathy to a traditional education, Georgy was spared going to public school in England, being educated at his father’s school and/or privately by tutors, probably having a private tutor in his teens. One tutor, “Fritz,” would later be doctor to the Rothschilds, and his daughter Daisy would board with him and his wife when she was studying music in Frankfurt. It was he who opened to Georgy the world of philosophy, in particular, introducing him to “Kant and the modern metaphysicians” and the “modern German school,” Schopenhauer above all, but possibly also the Neo-Hegelians like Feuerbach and Marx (PD 231; WP 25). This “godless” education seems to have been a cause of concern for Georgy’s English relatives, though Raleigh overstates it:

my godless bringing up was bemoaned in tears. My good aunt put it all down to the evils of a foreign education; to the want of the Bible and of wholesome discipline. What could be expected from outlandish schools, where infidel teaching prevailed, cricket was unknown, and flogging was not allowed? (PD 212)

Nonetheless, living in Paris, Georgy would learn to speak French fluently and get to know French literature: Voltaire, Molière, de Musset and Flaubert all crop up in his novels. He would continue to speak French—and German, which he would learn later—and enjoy reading in both languages all his life.\footnote{Frances Warner 3 (see \textit{PD} 46).}

The facts of the family’s time in Paris are sketchy. The one recorded event is the birth in May 1849 west of Paris at Saint-Germain-en-Laye of Charles (Charley), William and Emily’s seventh and last child. He was christened at William’s church. He seems to have been Georgy’s favourite: in \textit{Philosopher Dick}, Raleigh describes himself as having “one enduring affection—a dearly loved younger brother,” also called “Charley,” “for whose education and advancement he had cheerfully relinquished his share in their slender patrimony” (101; see 432-33). As for everyday life, it is hard to judge how widely and freely English expatriates circulated in French society. Many may only have communicated through their staff, but the Chamiers immersed themselves in Parisian life. Raleigh reminisces about getting caught up in “\textit{Le Dimanche} in Paris” on the Champs Elysées near where they lived, Sunday, according to Christopher Wordsworth’s \textit{Notes on Paris} (1854), being “the day specially chosen for excursion-trains (‘trains de plaisir’) and for fêtes in the environs of Paris,” when the bourgeoisie shut their shops and socialised in the streets:\footnote{Wordsworth 48.}

\begin{quote}
The Sunday of the gay French capital I remember well, although I was but a little boy then. How bracing and invigorating was the very atmosphere of that charming abode. The dazzling light, the bustling and laughing throng, the lively rattle of Les Champs Elysées; who could forget it?

\textit{Le Dimanche} in Paris was a pretty sight—it was more than that—a joyous spectacle. The gaiety of individuals would inspire the many, and the gaiety of the many would react on individuals, until all was gay. There was a simmering of merriment that was constantly boiling over in boisterous exhilaration. (\textit{PD} 216)
\end{quote}

The family would certainly have sensed the whirl of events and felt prey to the larger forces that were abroad in the eighteen-forties and -fifties in France, and Europe more generally. Life in the “New Babylon” in those days would never have been dull, whether or not the Chamiers moved in revolutionary or avant-garde artistic
France, especially Paris, was in a constant political whirl and William and family were living at the heart of it in the centre of Paris. Anglophobia ebbed and flowed, mimicking the state of relations at the diplomatic level: Victoria’s visit in 1842 had smoothed the lengthy dispute over the Abolition of the Slave Trade; Normanby’s “conceited manner” and poor French, and his antagonism to the French Foreign Minister Guizot and allegiance to the ex-Prime Minister Thiers, exacerbated the rift between England and France, and so on. But the Chamiers would just have gotten on, not being in a position to influence the course of events much either way and pretty much used to upheaval. William’s chapel would have provided a social hub and a haven during the Revolution for “les Anglais” of Paris.

Georgy himself is unlikely to have been aware of the events leading up to the “Revolution of ’48,” the downfall of the July Monarchy (the Bourbon-Orléans) and the ill-fated Second Republic (1848-52), except perhaps to sense the apprehension of his parents about the way things were heading—in France and elsewhere. In January 1848 in the French Chamber of Deputies, Alexis de Tocqueville summed up the common feeling at that point in time: “We are sleeping together on a volcano. . . A wind of revolution blows, the storm is on the horizon.”141 Georgy’s uncle Frederick writes in his Review of the French Revolution of 1848 of his despair at the “madness” of the Revolution: “We look with fear to the future. Until the parties can amalgamate, we can see no prospect of a firm, steady, well-supported government in France.”142 He shows himself to be politically and socially a Tory, as his friend Thomas Campbell described him.143 But he was not a defender of aristocracy per se, though royalist as regards England and France—as perhaps befits a Navy captain (though he was not uncritical of the Navy, especially its attitude to corporal punishment).144 He was nostalgic for the era of the Bourbons in France when it seemed to him that there was an “extended sociability” with “no foolish distinction” between classes which presumably favoured social mobility for people like him.145 Like the other Chamiers, as next-to-noble, he had always found his advancement limited; Frederick himself had

142 Frederick Chamier, Review of the French Revolution vi, v, vi.
144 Voort 20-21, quoting Frederick Chamier, Life of a Sailor I 52-64.
145 Frederick Chamier, Unfortunate Man II 154.
felt forced to elope with his aristocratic wife, Elizabeth Soane (c.1811-79),
granddaughter of Sir John Soane, a well-known architect, because he was considered
“not sufficiently genteel.”146 He was dismissive of contemporary French politics and
mores, which he thought proletarian and self-defeating. What William might have
thought is unrecorded; Georgy as he grew up is likely to have been better disposed, if
not to the political changes in French society—the Second Empire of Louis Napoleon
Bonaparte (1852-70) that soon succeeded the Second Republic—at least to the related
new social and artistic movements. The Chamiers also witnessed the modernisation of
Paris under Napoleon’s rule, as the city took its now familiar form. Beginning in
1853, Baron Haussmann demolished much of the old city and replaced it with a
network of wide, straight boulevards and radiating circuses, interspersed with large
public parks, ushering in the age of Paris as bourgeois metropolis par excellence.

Chamier’s final letter suggests that he preferred the French way of life to the
English or British: “I get on fairly well even with a British Company! With the French
I am much more sympathetic (Letter to Grainger 3). Chamier/Raleigh somewhat
jealously writes: “I was always partial to the mercurial Frenchman, and a disciple of
his gay philosophy of life, which consists in making it enjoyable both to ourselves and
to others” (PD 216). He identifies the French way of life with the idea of “Bohemia,”
calling himself “an aimless Bohemian” little concerned with “how he might get on
and make his way in the world” (PD 78). Raleigh reminisces about Bohemian student
life in Paris—he was “one who had moved gaily in the fashionable world, and . . . had
. . . caroused among rollicking Bohemians” (PD 96). For Chamier then, Bohemianism
meant scrambling through (rather than making money or a career), la mode (fashion)
and hedonism, but also a conscious self-fashioning—in Siren, Raleigh’s foil Alice
Seymour mocks and his “Continental manners” and “foreign notions on matters of
sentiment” (147, 148).

Part of this aestheticism, which would be key to his positionality, was a
 burgeoning artistic awareness. In Paris, it was the era of the Realists, of Honoré
Daumier, Gustave Courbet, and Rosa Bonheur, the animal painter, who is the only
visual artist mentioned in his novels (PD 79). Like Raleigh, Georgy began early, but
“unfortunately he . . . studied painting, like everything else, in a desultory and
perfunctory manner, without much method or regular tuition [so that] the necessary

146 Frederick Chamier to Sir John Soane (9 May 1832); see Sir John Soane, Memoirs of Mr. and Mrs.
John Soane, Miss Soane, and Captain Chamier (n.p., 1835) 6.
technique was greatly wanting.” Nonetheless, “his rough sketches possessed a rough charm of their own—un certain chic, as his fellow-students in Paris used to say” (PD 90). His visual art was always documentary, more often than not unpretentiously recording the landscapes in which he lived and worked. If Realism was an influence on him, it would have been via the grotesquerie of Daumier, in the pointed attention to detail that informs his “black-biting” descriptions of station and small town life. Georgy apparently decided against a career in art because he “always had a dislike to making money out of [his] daubs” (PD 77). Throughout his life, he would give away most of his paintings and sketches, aside from the few that passed down to the family.

Georgy would first become aware of international affairs through his typical interest as a young boy in the romance of war. In “The Moral Aspect of War” in War and Pessimism, Chamier looks back in his fifties on the “general congratulation” in Europe in 1851 “that the age of war was over” (WP 1) and the subsequent experience of war:

The first conflict I can remember was the Crimean War. As children we had brightly-coloured plans of the site, with tiny flags attached to pins to mark the positions of the allies and the battle-fields. To the spectators at a distance it was interesting, and even lively; to those engaged in that stupid and useless war it was deadly. (WP 9)

The Crimean War (1853-56) was significant because after much to-ing and fro-ing Britain allied with France (and Turkey) against Russia, bringing together the two traditional enemies in a fragile détente which was sealed by a Royal Visit in 1855 and which anticipated the Entente Cordiale of 1904. It temporarily eased the Anglophobia of the Parisians—only for accusations against perfide Albion to arise again with the 1858 assassination attempt against the Emperor and Empress planned by Italians harboured (like Mazzini and Hugo) in England. Along with the so-called “Indian Mutiny,” the War in Crimea would become for the English a marker of allegiance to the Empire, but in hindsight, Chamier characteristically pointed out the difference between the appearance and reality of war. As he suggests in “The Moral Aspect of War,” whatever the apparent justification for war, whether for “disinterested” ends or self-defence, there is always “another more practical purpose” (14, 16). Despite the “flimsy and transparent excuses” of warmongers, it usually “implies dominion”; “John Bull” makes war to expand his Empire (16, 17, 10).
Though Georgy spent most of his childhood in France, he did go to England occasionally to visit relatives, usually, as Raleigh puts it, “staying with prim old relations . . . of the old English pattern,” whom he considered prejudiced and intolerant—especially the women. The most likely is his aunt Georgiana Sophia Broughton née Chamier (b.1786), who may be the “rich old aunt” described in *Philosopher Dick* as Aunt “Sophia” (34, see 211-12). His experience of Home was soured by their dour religiosity—for them “life was ‘a vale of tears,’ and the seventh day set apart for a special downpour”—and he never really grew to like London (*PD* 211). When he returned to Europe in 1863 after three years away in New Zealand he would go to France—staying in Nice—rather than spending any length of time in England. Despite his father’s “conversion” and what is described in *Philosopher Dick* as an offer of financial assistance from his aunt “Sophia,” should he enter the priesthood, Georgy rejected going into the clergy (*PD* 35). His aunt disowned him. He became an agnostic of sorts, though like Raleigh he was “not irreligious”—and being agnostic did not stop him being a moralist, albeit one of a strange ilk (*PD* 214).

Warner sees this decision as “a response at an impressionable age to his father’s ill health and troubled spirit”—or perhaps to his “born again” or evangelical religiosity, though Paris would hardly seem to be the place for William to exercise his sense of mission and he seems to have been more a genteel Low Church reformer than a zealot. It is more likely that as Georgy grew up religion came to represent for him the hypocrisies of English conventionality: he would probably have had a grudging respect for his father’s belief, if it remained not too dogmatic or yoked to imperial prerogatives (which it seems to have been). And without doubt would have grown up immersed in the everyday business of the chapel—though he may have distanced himself from it in his “Bohemian” teens—and aware of the family’s religious heritage: his father inherited the family copy of their forebear Daniel Chamier’s masterwork of dissent, the *Panstratiae Catholicae* in four massive volumes, which would have had pride of place in the family library, and an aura of mystery and defiance about it. 147 In later life, he seems to have remained officially an Anglican but

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147 John Chamier passed the heirloom to his son William, who passed it to his son Daniel (VIII); he donated it to the Hove Public Library (Anthony Chamier, e-mail to the author, 25 July 2004). Daniel Chamier I’s most well-known works were the *Corpus Theologicum* and the *Panstratiae Catholicae*, a theology and a response to his critics, the former completed by his son Adrien and published posthumously (*Corpus Theologicum seu Loci Communes Theologici*, 3 vols [Geneva: Samuel Chouët, 1653]; *Panstratiae Catholicae, sive Controversiarum de Religione Adversus Pontificios Corpus* [*“Body
not a practising one, though he was married in an Anglican Church. On the birth of his youngest son George, at the behest of his wife all his children were baptised; he is said to have said, "'Very well my dear[,] Take the lot my dear. Take the lot!'"

Though Chamier took an intellectual or "philosophical" interest in religion, as his grandfather John had done, his religious intuitions were sentimental. He has Raleigh describe his religious experience in almost fideist terms, echoing Pascal: "My 'religious sense' has ever been a yearning after the spiritual—a cry of the heart! I cannot formulate it; I cannot express it, for it is beyond the range of words. Faith I could possess; a stereotyped belief never!" That is to say, the practice of religion must be wordless and personal, and by implication anti-ecclesiastical. Accordingly, he regarded all outward displays of faith as mere performance or "make-believe" and as done "out of public spirit"—for the sake of keeping up appearances, as Raleigh suggests (PD 215; SSS 101). And like Raleigh, he would have considered himself "under a vow never to attend a christening, a wedding, or a funeral," a phrase repeated verbatim in Philosopher Dick and Siren (PD 63; SSS 20).

Religion becomes less a matter of right belief than of getting the right perspective on things, a matter of positionality. In the fourth palaver of Siren (SSS XX), Raleigh defends at length the moot that "Religion . . . is sentiment," ending with a plea: "I plead for a heart-church instead of an official one" (SSS 217, 228). Chamier could well have had in mind Schopenhauer’s syncretistic glosses in the fourth part of The World as Will and Representation on the common metaphysical ground of Christianity and the “Eastern” religions, which he finds in Mitlied (G. sympathy, or literally “suffering-with”), as formulated in the “Tat tvam asi (‘This art thou!’)” of the Vedas. Because, for Schopenhauer, at bottom we are all what we call “will,” which makes us one in the same, and suffering our common lot, sympathy is a transcendental affect, that is to say, it enables us to transcend worldly suffering: “either in imagination we put ourselves vividly in the sufferer’s place, or we see in his fate the lot of the whole of humanity, and consequently above all our own fate. Thus, in a roundabout way, we always weep about ourselves; we feel sympathy with

148 Statton 256.
149 Frances Warner 5.
150 “Obituary.—John Chamier, Esq.” 182.
151 Schopenhauer, World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 374 (sec. 66).
ourselves.”152 This intuition reads like a metaphysical version of Adam Smith’s idea of “fellow-feeling.” The idea that sympathy (and a religion of sentiment) is an exercise in positionality, in which we put ourselves in another’s place, an act of imaginary “changing places,” underlies Chamier’s laissez-faire attitude to other individuals, if not their social institutions like institutional religion.153 It is a more worked-out version of what Hume had earlier called “social sympathy,” which for Chamier is the sine qua non of a liberal society.154 In later life, Chamier talked about religion in these terms. His granddaughter Warner recounts a talk he and his daughter Daisy had about heaven: “‘Father, where is heaven?’ she asked him. My grandfather was pulled up abruptly. ‘Heaven, my child,’ he replied, frowning, gazing out over her head and waving his pipe. ‘Heaven is not a place, it is a state of being.’”155 For him, religion was all about getting the right perspective on things, a matter of positionality or the “state of [one’s] being.”

If indeed, as Kirstine Moffat puts it, “Chamier jettisoned the religious elements of his family past, he continued the tradition of philosophical and literary endeavour” of what Stevens calls “his family of talented ancestry, bound by a network of connections with philosophy, literature, music, and art.” And, as Stevens puts it, “[t]hese interests are reflected in his own literary efforts.”156 How close Georgy’s father William was to his brothers is unclear, but in Paris Georgy would have had a glimpse of high literary culture through his uncle Frederick, who published novels (maritime, historical and romantic), travelogues, histories fictional and factional, and translations.157 He must have read his books and later talked literature and the writer’s

152 Schopenhauer, _World as Will and Representation_, vol. 1, 377 (sec. 67)
155 Frances Warner 5.
157 I have already mentioned _Life of a Sailor, The Unfortunate Man and France and the French_. Frederick Chamier was best known for his many novels, the best of which are the first two, _Life of a Sailor and The Unfortunate Man_, but he wrote more broadly; representative texts include M. N. Zagoskin, _The Young Muscovite; or the Poles in Russia_, trans. and adapt. Frederick Chamier, 3 vols (London: Cochrane and McCrone, 1834), William James, _The Naval History of Great Britain: From the Declaration of War by France in 1793 to the Accession of George IV_, ed. Captain Chamier, 2nd ed., 6 vols (London: R. Bentley, 1837), and Frederick Chamier, _My Travels, or, an Unsentimental Journey through France, Switzerland, and Italy_ (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1855). A relatively complete bibliography appears in Voort.
life with him (though Frederick was as much an autodidact as Georgy would be).\textsuperscript{158} “Captain Chamier,” as he was known as an author, had gone to sea at thirteen, inspired in part by his father’s collection of journals of voyages; his writing began with the story of this rite of passage in \textit{Life of a Sailor} and would draw always on his own life for material.\textsuperscript{159} He met Byron and Cam Hobhouse soon after, being present at Byron’s famous swimming of the Hellespont in 1810. Frederick would quote Byron frequently in his novels, and pass on this influence to his nephew. He knew many other well-known authors, Dickens among them.\textsuperscript{160} During his lifetime, he was published by several well-known publishers and publications on both sides of the Atlantic, a number still trading (Bentleys, Harper, Routledge, \textit{Blackwood’s Magazine}, and so on), and he was involved in various publishing ventures, like \textit{The Metropolitan Magazine} of which he was the principal proprietor for a short while.\textsuperscript{161} Frederick was dead before Chamier began looking for publishers in the eighteen-eighties, but his name would certainly have still been known in publishing circles.

In life, Frederick was a magnetic character: as his friend the poet Thomas Campbell describes him, he was both a bon vivant, “the merriest joker in the world,” and “a shrewd, active, and business-like man”—unlike Georgy’s father William, who was a contradictory man: outwardly religiose and impressive as a sermoniser, but inwardly troubled and ailing, but with what his friend, the apostate Catholic priest and Italian Republican Luigi Bianchi, calls “a natural warmth of heart.”\textsuperscript{162} It would not have been until later in life that Georgy would have begun to see his father as a sensitive man—and father—and see beyond his apparent lack of material success. Frederick would certainly have provided a persuasive example of the writer’s life for Georgy as a boy and of the idea that a writer’s own life could be the stuff of art (as Byron had done for Frederick). But there is a hint that William too circulated in literary circles in Paris—and was something of a dark horse: the Huguenot antiquary, poet and translator Robert Hovenden’s “Letters from Paris, in 1848” records a dinner

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{159} Voort 16; see \textit{Catalogue of the Valuable Library of John Chamier}.
  \item \textsuperscript{161} Beattie 259; Voort 55.
  \item \textsuperscript{162} Beattie 260; Luigi Bianchi, \textit{Incidents in the Life of an Italian: Priest, Soldier, Refugee} (London: J. Nisbet, 1859) 301.
\end{itemize}
with an oddly mixed company including William, Captain Devereux, Viscount d’Arlincourt and a Clive, probably the Reverend Archer Clive. Devereux would later be a successful pornographer; d’Arlincourt was a French dandy, known as “le prince des romantiqques,” and the once celebrated author of Solitaire (1821); Chamier and Clive were Low Church ministers keeping interesting company. Given that this was his milieu, William too may have encouraged Georgy in his reading (and writing) as a young boy.

Georgy’s uncle Henry, an amateur historian and genealogist, would have been in the wings too, as he settled in Paris after retiring from the East India Company in 1848, though he and William were probably not simpatico, Henry being more career-minded and conventional. He would have been able to teach Georgy more about the history, in particular, the Huguenot heritage of the family than his father knew. He was a member of the Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français, the French equivalent of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain, and commissioned a biography of Daniel Chamier I from his friend William Courthope that is a de facto history of the Chamiers, complete with a genealogy of the family down to Georgy’s generation. The Memoir of Daniel Chamier (1852) begins with the declaration, “This family is descended from one of those indomitable opponents of the Church of Rome, whose deep learning and fiery zeal kept alive in the South of France the spirit of the reformed Church.” For Henry, this inheritance would have implied Protestant faith and tenacity, and the weight of the Chamier tradition, neither positives for Georgy; for him, the iconoclasm and persecution of his ancestors, and more importantly, the themes of exile and international mobility would have been more resonant.

The two main branches of the family stemming from Henry and William would soon diverge, Henry’s sons sticking with the traditional Chamier occupations in England and India (the army and John Company) and William’s “being more adventurous and varied in terms of what they did and where they went,” or rather, “more entrepreneurial, adventurous and Continental than the other Chamiers,” as Anthony Chamier puts it. Some of this “entrepreneurial [and] adventurous” spirit

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164 Courthope, Memoir 1; see Joan Stevens, Introduction ix-x.
165 Anthony Chamier, e-mail to the author, 27 July 2005.
may have come from Emily Crookenden’s family, who were traders in the Caribbean colonies, though William’s sons were entrepreneurial only in a loose sense—none of the brothers were financially successful. If the Chamier tradition centred on England, India and the East India Company, all were more or less “ex-centric.”166 All the brothers bar one travelled broadly—all studied in Germany and four of the six tried New Zealand—and they ended up in pursuits, whether professional or amateur, that were outside the Chamier tradition: there was a musician (William), an essayist—and semi-professional chess-player (Edward), a novelist (George), a songwriter (Daniel), a newspaperman (Anthony). William and Emily must have encouraged their children to be expansive and passionate in their interests, given that the majority turned out to be artists of some ilk, though all the brothers must have been encouraged to get a grounding in some profession.

Georgy’s elder brothers would both end up living in France—as would his youngest and favourite brother Charles Chamier V (1849-1929), about whom very little is known. The eldest was William Brook Chamier (1839-85), called “Willy.” He tried New Zealand and then agricultural school at Jena in the eighteen-sixties, but apparently “having little aptitude for any serious occupation,” as his brother Daniel harshly put it, he settled down in the south of France and became a professional flutist—as Georgy’s alter-ego Raleigh says he contemplated doing (PD 91).167 The next eldest brother was Edward Chamier III (1840-92). He was educated in Germany in Vermont from 1862 to 1864, teaching European languages and technical drawing, and then as an actuary for the New York Life Assurance Company.168 In 1881, he married and moved back in France, becoming a semi-professional chess player with

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166 Voort 16.
167 Daniel’s letter. This short note, in full “Account of My Brother William’s Children from His Son Daniel Chamier Dated 8 April 1866,” was apparently written by Daniel Chamier VIII (Chamier’s brother) and deposited by Henry Chamier (his uncle) with the Chamier collection at Nottingham University Library (personal letter, “Papers of the Families of Chamier and Deschamps, 1623-1862,” University of Nottingham Library Ca 23, 156-67).
the Paris Club and winning the French Championship in 1883.\textsuperscript{169}Apparently he also worked in some capacity for the \textit{Westminster Review}, which was edited from Paris by Dr John Chapman (1821-94) and for which Edward wrote a couple of philosophical essays.\textsuperscript{170} Edward and Georgy must have shared an interest in philosophy and literature as they grew up: Edward’s essays for the \textit{Review} focus on the relation between philosophy and science, and reveal a fairly systematic working knowledge of modern philosophy from Descartes to Berkeley and Kant and of Continental writers from Goethe to Metternich. Both turned out to be pragmatic empiricists, appealing to what Edward calls “the facts of consciousness,” “subjective” and “relative,” but whereas Edward grounds his empiricism in the conditioned positivism of G. H. Lewes and “Common Sense,” Chamier prefers a Schopenhauerian pessimism—altogether more uncommon.\textsuperscript{171}

As for Georgy’s younger brothers, two of them, Daniel and Anthony, would both spend substantial periods living in the Australasian colonies. Daniel Chamier VIII (1843-1936) was also educated in Germany but would never really be able to settle on a vocation.\textsuperscript{172} Aside from a brief period spent living in New Zealand, he lived most of his life in England in clerical jobs—in Middlesex, Kent and Surrey.\textsuperscript{173} About 1880 he fetched up at Wainui in the Poverty Bay as a “cadet,” then from 1882 to 1883 as an insurance, land and stock agent at Woodville in the Wairarapa, then by 1885 as a journalist at Waipawa, a little further north.\textsuperscript{174} But by late 1885 he was back

in London, whether because he had made his fortune in New Zealand (or the opposite) and sold up, or because his wife, who had come out in August 1884, did not like it here.\textsuperscript{175} He flirted in the nineties with popular music, writing and publishing several songs.\textsuperscript{176} In later years, Daniel earned the epithet “wicked Uncle Daniel” in the family, probably because he contested the will of his mother against other family members, including Chamier’s daughter Daisy.\textsuperscript{177}

Anthony was the brother to whom Georgy was the closest in later life and with whom he most often crossed paths. Anthony Frederick Chamier (1846-1938) trained as an engineer at Darmstadt in the mid-sixties and then went out to New Zealand, arriving on the \textit{Kaikoura} (the first steamer to use the Panama route to New Zealand) in late December 1867, probably to visit Georgy in Canterbury.\textsuperscript{178} In the eighteen-seventies, he went to Australia, going first to Victoria, where Georgy was working, then to New South Wales. There he worked as a surveyor, mainly in Sydney and to the west in the pastoral districts of the Riverina, but he also helped establish the Sydney \textit{Daily Telegraph} as one of its first directors from July 1879.\textsuperscript{179} Until the late eighteen-nineties when his first wife died, he and his family lived in the inner-western suburbs of Sydney—where the Chamiers also lived after arriving in Sydney in 1890.\textsuperscript{180} All of Anthony’s children by both his marriages would end up living back in


\textsuperscript{177} Frances Warner 13; Jenny Chamier-Grove, e-mail to the author, 26 Feb. 2005.


\textsuperscript{180} \textit{The New South Wales Post Office Directory} (Sydney: Wise’s Directories, 1880-1900).
Europe (like Anthony himself from 1922)—as would Chamier’s, but the families would have been quite close as they grew up in Sydney.

What can be said, then, of the significance of Georgy growing up in France? He would have experienced a sense of exile—or at least of geographical and social distance—from what his fellow expatriates in the English colony in Paris called Home, though he had lived in England only briefly and had mixed feelings towards it as he grew up, and also a feeling of being an outsider, both in England when he spent time there and in France among the French natives, though he and his family seemed comfortable there. The irony of growing up a Huguenot, exiled from France to England, who had returned to France to live among English expatriates cannot have been lost on Georgy as he grew up either. Then there were the more immediate crises of identity. He would have experienced the stigma of the colonial origins of his parents, especially of his father, when he mixed among the higher-ups in the English colony. And William, and his family by extension, felt close-at-hand the force of the Imperial powers-that-be when he disagreed with Normanby and was put beyond the pale of the Embassy. That feud meant that the family struggled to make ends meet after William’s career change and would have felt the more or less subtle condescension of the wealthier expatriates and the other Chamiers, especially William’s more successful brothers, not to mention those in the Ambassador’s circle. Most significantly, as a member of the relatively small and rather closed English colony in Paris, Georgy experienced being part of a minority, with the sense of closeness—or claustrophobia even—and alienation from others around that this implied. When he later went out to the settler colonies, he would preserve this sense of what it was to be a member of an alienated minority as an unsettled settler within that majority of British settlers who came to be numerically and politically dominant there and who defined themselves as distinct from both the local “native” peoples and, over time, from their source metropolitan peoples. His sense of the problematic nature of ethnic affiliation never allowed him to settle comfortably into such a majority position.

That said, Georgy would have borne his deracination easily as a child and as he grew up would have been grateful for the paradoxical familiarity with and distance on the machinations of the Empire that it allowed him. Growing up in France offered other consolations: immersion in French language and social and intellectual culture, a sense of (France) being at the heart of national and cultural affairs on the Continent.
at an eventful and significant time, and the chance to experience the Bohemia in which he circulated as an adolescent. At heart, Chamier felt more Continental than English and at home in Paris. In the next phase of his life, Georgy would be thrust out of his Parisian idyll by the need to equip himself for life, to be practical (in Germany, not inappropriately), and then inadvertently find himself propelled out into the far reaches of the Empire where, by the strange inverse law of the colony, the pull of Home—or the push, in Georgy’s case—was strongest.

*Georgy in Dresden*

Fig. 7. George Chamier at about sixteen, [c.1858], Anthony Chamier Collection, Ross and Cromarty. (Reproduced by permission of Anthony Chamier.)

By early 1857, William was in London, staying at the English house of his mother-in-law, Mary Ann Crookenden, at Bryanston Square in Camden Town. The rest of the family apparently stayed on in Paris: Emily would remain there until her death in 1889; Georgy may or may not have gone with his father to experience London. William had been in ill health for a while and must have gone there seeking treatment. He had decided to leave active ministry and had apparently been trying to find someone to buy his chapel for a while to pay off his mortgages, which had reached
about 75,000 francs (£3,000) by this time. William had held out against successive embassies over ten years by asking what they saw as an exorbitant price for the chapel: £10,000 in 1849, £9,000 in 1856. A wealthy American dentist known as “le bel Evans” (Dr Thomas W. Evans) had taken an option on it on behalf of the “American Protestants in Paris” as early as 1856, offering $45,000 (more than £8,000—upwards of £800,000 in today’s money); the Wesleyans had also made an offer. Early in 1857, under pressure from the British residents of Paris, Ambassador Cowley took up the case again and by March had been able to persuade the Treasury to fund the purchase at William’s asking price. But Chamier’s agent in Paris, a “Mr Beaven,” had already sold it to Evans—at about a sixteenfold profit, if the sale was on his original terms. Evans ended up handing the church over to the Ambassador amenably (with a touch of legal duress) and the chapel reopened as a Foreign Office chapel under the direction of a Reverend Swale of the Colonial Society in May 1857. This was premature, as it turns out, because the Treasurer’s application for a £10,500 grant to the House of Commons in August to discharge the Government’s liability for monies advanced to William was unsuccessful and Cowley was requested to close the chapel and dispose of it. Offers to purchase the chapel were forthcoming and various suggestions made by Cowley to dispose of the chapel; none came off. The Government must have written off the expense: in 1865, Swale is recorded as officiating as “Chaplain to the [British] Embassy.” Whatever the case, William came out of the business financially unscathed—it was one up for him against the Ambassador. Nonetheless, he would once again have been confirmed in his suspicion of the tortuous machinations of imperial power.

187 Hansard Debates 1354; the debate over the application is recorded in the Hansard Debates 1341-1354 (see also the Protestant Episcopal Quarterly Review 630).
In January 1858, Mary Ann Crookenden died at Montfleury, Cannes, leaving a fairly substantial estate of just under £3,000. She had lived with the Chamiers for a period in Yorkshire before they moved to Europe (from about September 1842 to the spring of 1844). There must have been some warning that she was declining, because William was apparently at her estate in Cannes when she died and stayed on to tidy up her affairs and dispose of her goods; then he went back to her London house in Bryanston Square to do likewise. Georgy may have tagged along again. He had decided with the prompting of his father and his German tutor Fritz to study engineering at the Royal Polytech of Dresden (the Königlich Polytechnische Schule Dresden, now the Technische Universität Dresden) in Anton Square in the heart of Dresden in Saxony. William went with him to help him get settled in. Georgy enrolled for a two-year course from 1858-60, probably starting at the beginning of the academic year in about August 1858.

It is not surprising that Georgy went there, once it was decided he should study engineering: at least three of his brothers would study in Germany, his elder brother William preceding him at agricultural school at Jena. At the time there were close connections—not just at the level of the Royal Family—between England and the German principalities and a German technical education was highly esteemed. Saxony was at the forefront of the industrialisation of Germany, driven by growth in the textile and chemical industries, and the Dresden Polytech was its foremost school of engineering and highly regarded in Europe and beyond. The leading light of the school was Johann Andreas Schubert (1808-70), a visionary mechanical engineer and designer of the first German steam locomotive, the “Saxonia,” the first paddle steamer


192 Frances Warner 2.

193 Mike Huebner, “TUD—UA—Liste Studierender von Technischer Bildungsanstalt (TBA) / Polytechnischer Schule (PS)/ Polytechnikum Dresden (PT) für den Zeitraum (1828-) 1836-1887 -C-,” 9 June 2005, Technische Universität Dresden, 9 Feb. 2005 <http://tu-dresden.de/die_tu_dresden/zentrale_einrichtungen/ua/navpoints/archiv/alumni/alumni_az/C>. Chamier’s “candidate’s circular” (or application form) submitted prior to his election as an Associate Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers gives the dates as “1858-60” (Candidates’ Circulars 1879: 4); the circular prior to his transfer to full Membership gives the dates as “1859-60” (Candidates’ Circulars 1884: 6).
on the river Elbe called the “Königin Maria,” and the biggest brick stone bridge in the world at that time, the “Göltzschtalbrücke.” Schubert’s example would have guided Chamier in his own visionary engineering projects in Adelaide.

Fig. 8. Building of the Technische Bildungsanstalt at Antonsplatz, 1847, lithograph, Collection 27, University Archives of the Technical University of Dresden, Dresden, Programm der Technischen Bildungsanstalt 1847 (Dresden: U Dresden, 1847) 79. (Reproduced by permission of the Technical University of Dresden.)

The school specialised in mathematics, mechanics, and mechanical and structural engineering, but as was common then, military training was compulsory, as Raleigh remembers in Philosopher Dick: “Raleigh in his boyhood had been to a Continental School, where to his many mental exercises had been added some bodily ones” (174). He probably means military drill; it was an early experience of what Chamier would later call “that infernal German militarism that has been the curse of the world” (Letter to Grainger 4). Georgy always remained ambivalent towards nationalism, especially the militant species, but he liked the songs—as does Raleigh, when he describes a German settler at Horsley Down singing a “national air of the Vaterland [that] carried him back to his student days” (PD 161). He missed the “joyous spectacle” of Parisian life (PD 216). Compared with “Le Dimanche in Paris,” “the German Sonntag” was lumpen:

Then there was the German Sonntag, its listless mornings, devoted to a monotonous divine service. . . . As some compensation for the dull
mornings, the afternoons were given up to dancing and beer drinking—amusements that were not to my taste. So I never liked the German Sunday; it was neither one thing nor the other. (PD 216-17)

Georgy may well have escaped Saxony to spend his holidays in Switzerland—if he had not when he was younger. In Successful Man, Tim describes a visit in his retirement to Lake Geneva (Lake Léman), “a spot hallowed to me by the happiest associations of my youth, and where I had often wandered during my student vacations, and lingered with delight over its fascinating beauties.” Tim would “ever cherish those lovely scenes” (XXX); for Georgy, the lake and Mont Blanc above would have brought to mind Byron and the Shelleys—but especially Byron’s Manfred (1817), written at Villa Diodati on the lake and set in the Bernese Alps to the east. Manfred’s encounter with the sublime Alpine landscape informs the “back back country” episodes of Philosopher Dick, in particular the passage when Manfred, “alone upon the Cliffs” of the Jungfrau, is tempted to suicide in the abyss.

On 25 February 1859 William died. He was only 58; Chamier was not yet 17. There was a very brief obituary in the Gentleman’s Magazine, “Feb. 25. At Dresden, aged 59, the Rev. William Chamier, late Minister of the Episcopal Church, Rue d’Aguesseau, Paris.” It threw Georgy into crisis. He did not sit or flunked his exams and left the Polytech without finishing his “degree,” as Chamier has Raleigh do (PD 402). In the end, Georgy spent only one semester at Dresden, the autumn term which finished at the end of January. Most of his engineering studies would be done on the job, and what he did not know he could sham his way through. He decided—if the decision was not made for him—that he would go out to the colonies. According to Warner, he was “shipped off to the colonies” like a kind of cut-rate remittance man—“sent off with £100 in his pocket to find a life for himself in the colonies, since he showed no inclination to join the army or the church at home” (the £100 was probably actually his inheritance from his father). In Philosopher Dick, Raleigh describes such “broken-down swells” sent out by “conscientious, but stupid and ill-

195 William Chamier’s death was registered at Dresden (GRO Consular Death Indices [1855-59] 9 [3: 1081]); his will was proved in March 1859 (“Wills 1859: Chamier, William, Rev.,” National Probate Calendars [1859] 73).
197 Frances Warner 2.
advised parents . . . in England” (48). For the parents, “New Zealand . . . has the advantage of being a long way off”; for the sons, the experience is ambiguous: “The young man is started on his life-journey rejoicing. What is to become of him is another matter. But as this occurs sixteen thousand miles from home it is of no great consequence. ‘Out of sight, out of mind;’ he can sink or swim, or he may drift down the stream” (PD 51-52). Chamier went with the flow and kept drifting.

The traditional Chamier occupations—and the Chamier tradition of going out to India—had never been to Georgy’s taste. The example of his father’s vexed life with John Company was before him and he would have known of the limitations for someone like him of bettering himself in the Company without land or a title; moreover, the idea of going into the clergy or army was at odds with his confessed agnosticism and pacifism. He was going to have to make his own way in the world, whatever he did. In the novels, Chamier reworks his father as traditional and representative of the tradition. He makes Raleigh’s father a somewhat distant and authoritarian army major, effacing his father’s tolerance and making him more of a Chamier, as it were, just as his uncle Frederick had done with his own father in Unfortunate Man (PD 334, 377, 393). He has Raleigh exalt his mother as an almost angelic figure, who appears in visions to comfort him in his isolation:

One beloved shade would . . . bring a gleam of comfort to his sorrowing heart. He believed it to be his mother. He had lost her in early childhood, and could only remember her in the dim past as a benign embodiment of tenderness and departed joy. He would welcome the fond apparition with ecstasy. . . . (PD 108; see 190, 203-04)

Amid the ironic bathos—and Chamier’s mourning for his mother’s death as the novel was being written—is the topos of the settler as motherless child, in which the mother represents the good motherland to the father’s evil empire. Chamier plays up Raleigh’s estrangement from his father and the absence of his mother to emphasise his deracination, the sense that he stands alone and must fashion a self to accommodate himself to the new place.

When Georgy’s father died, he took his chance to give up his engineering studies: he had probably only gone into engineering because his father had suggested

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198 Voort 16.
it as a practical choice; now he hoped an “adventure” in the colonies might get his mind off his father’s death and give him something to write about. Nonetheless, his training in engineering would come in useful when he needed a job in the Australasian colonies. Nelson Wattie is right to say that “traces of this German [scientific] background and an interest in the philosophy of science are found in his novels,” but more significant perhaps is the “informed interest in music and literature” they display. In Germany, he continued his study, whether formally or informally, into the world of German philosophy Fritz had opened to him. It was Schopenhauer’s philosophy, peculiarly comprising a pessimistic view of the world, an aesthetic way of life and an ethic based on sympathy, that had the greatest impact on him. Though his high cultural credentials—his family inheritance, scientific training and reading of philosophy and literature—would hardly have made him a “better” settler, the philosophy in particular would enable him to understand what he was undergoing and to theorise his own settlement and sentimental reading of settler society in hindsight.

Why try New Zealand? First of all, it was by dint of what David Pearson has called the “kin-migrant linkage” vital to the “imperial diaspora.” Georgy ended up at Heathstock and its partner station Horsley Down in North Canterbury due to a (Huguenot) family connexion: his paternal aunt and godmother, Frances Amelia Chamier (1791-1870), married the Reverend George Porcher (1791-1861), whose sister Madelina Louisa Lance (1804-39) had married the Reverend John Edwin Lance (1794-1885); their sons James and Henry Lance were out in New Zealand living and working with a cadre of their John Company associates, including the Mallock and Walker brothers. The Lances were soon-to-be owners of Four Peaks near Geraldine and, not long after, of Heathstock/Horsley Down, where Georgy was to work as a “cadet,” an apprentice sheep-farmer. After her husband’s death, Emily Chamier probably asked her sister-in-law Frances Amelia (Porcher née Chamier) to ask her sister-in-law Madelina Louisa (Lance née Porcher) to ask her sons to see their cousin Georgy right in New Zealand. The Du Prés and Porchers, both also Huguenots, had known the Chamiers in Madras—hence the marriage. There was another family connection: two of Chamier’s cousins (sons of his uncle Henry), Francis Edward

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199 Wattie, “Chamier, George.”
Archibald Chamier of the India Staff Corps (1833-1923) and Stephen Henry Edward Chamier of the Madras Infantry (1834-1910), were with James Lance at Addiscombe Military Seminary and at the “ Siege of Lucknow” during the Sepoy Uprising (the “Indian Mutiny”). 201 In *Philosopher Dick*, Chamier will suggest that James Lance (“Dale” in the novel) only took him (or Raleigh) on as a gesture, as Dale puts it, of “the high regard I always bore your gallant father”—remembering that Raleigh’s father is an army officer in the novels (*PD* 393).

Secondly, Georgy certainly fits with what Betty Gilderdale in *The Seven Lives of Lady Barker* calls the model of the “clergy son.” The vision of Bishop Godley, that “the provision of church and schools . . . was essential to the formation of a civilized community,” which supplemented Wakefield’s pseudo-aristocratic vision for Canterbury, would have resonated with William, as with the impecunious clergyman fathers of other “young clergy sons of the Canterbury settlement” like Frederick Broome (the future husband of Lady Barker). As Gilderdale puts it, “These Utopian ideas attracted many of the English clergy, who felt comfortable for their sons to go to a colony which has vision and ideals, thus neatly solving their financial difficulties without compromising their consciences.” 202 Before William died, he may have proposed that Georgy join in this utopian venture.

But, as the choice was probably Georgy’s, we can assume adventure would have been a more powerful motive, as it was for most young colonial men. Georgy’s uncle Frederick would have told him what he knew of New Zealand from his time at sea and his researches into the Bounty Mutiny for his novel *Jack Adams: The Mutineer* (1835), though as recorded in the novels his knowledge seems limited to the commonplace exoticism of ritual cannibalism and “the New Zealand law of retribution.” 203 For most young colonial men, an “ardent longing for freedom, novelty, and adventure was tempered with an earnest desire to carve out for themselves a useful and interesting career,” as Chamier put it in 1895:

> Between thirty and forty years ago New Zealand offered a favourite field for emigration to many of those enterprising spirits, whose ardent longing for freedom, novelty, and adventure was tempered with an earnest desire to carve out for themselves a useful and interesting

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career; those young bloods who, while giving way to a passionate
impulse to kick over the traces of conventionality, to plunge from off
the beaten track, and escape from the restraints and restrictions of a
plodding existence, yet, in all their vagaries, kept a keen eye on “the
main chance.” (SSS GR 105)

He continues, “I saw a good deal of this enterprising movement, indeed, I participated
in it,” though it was unlikely to have been wholeheartedly, and, as it would turn out,
“without any perceptible accession of personal dignity, that I am aware of, or of any
tangible profits either” (SSS GR 106-07). Similarly, Raleigh and Tim, Chamier’s
stand-ins in the novels, prefer to justify their departure as not so much driven by what
Raleigh describes the “mad hallucination for ‘freedom and the bush’” or because they
have “imbibed . . . great notions concerning the ‘dignity of labour,’” but as a flight
from a degenerate and hierarchical Old World (PD 47, 48). As Raleigh puts it, “‘with
me no [such] silly expectations prevailed. It was not with a view to getting on in the
world, but to get away from the world—a craving for change—a morbid disgust for
conventional life—that brought me out’” (PD 48). Ultimately, it seems to have been
Chamier’s eccentricity (that is, ex-centricity)—the necessity of “follow[ing] the bent
of [his] own restless, wayward, and morbid temperament”—that drove him (PD 32).
Whatever the case, Georgy had had to grow up fast, first when he went away to school at 16, and then when he set out for New Zealand a year later upon the death of his father. He must have made his way to England, whether en route or for longer, in the four months between his father’s death in February 1859 and his departure from Gravesend on 16 June 1859 on the Cashmere, perhaps for his father’s funeral or to visit or stay with relatives. He would have filled in time reading up on New Zealand—or rather, Zeal andia, the Britain of the South, as it was famously branded by Hursthouse—in the promotional and travel literature, and getting together the necessaries for the trip: clothes, bedding and linen, toiletries, tobacco, not to mention the essentials for his new life: his painting supplies, flute and favourite books. When he left for New Zealand, he would set himself for good on what would be his wry path through life (and the colonies). The ten years he spent in Canterbury, from age seventeen to twenty-seven, would be the making of Georgy. If Europe provided him with an intellectual home—or rather, a point of departure, Canterbury provided him, oddly enough, with something of a literary home.

204 Charles [Flinders] Hursthouse, New Zealand, or Zealandia, the Britain of the South, 2 vols (London: Stanford, 1852).
II

New Zealand
1859-69
For this the daring youth
Breaks from his mother’s weeping arms,
In foreign climes to roam.


Chamier represents Georgy’s time in New Zealand in the eighteen-sixties—spent for the most part in the north of the Canterbury settlement between the Ashley (Rakahuri) and Hurunui rivers—as light-heartedly purgatorial, though here, as usual, he is mocking his self-pitying younger self and his tendency to “lay . . . on the colours pretty thick at times” (*PD* 345):206

Did I [Raleigh] not abandon a happy land of civilisation and refinement; did I not leave congenial pursuits, the companionship of friends, the attractions of society and art, and all for what? To make a fool of myself; to bury myself in a wilderness; to seek for privation and misery at the farthest end of the world. (*PD* 112-13)

It was in his nature to “accommodate [himself] to circumstances,” to “do without,” but he never missed a chance to paint his youth as a fateful struggle for existence (*PD* 58). Here I am mainly concerned with how Chamier “accommodated” or adapted himself to the “dismal comedy” of life in Canterbury, with the what, where and why of that process, for which his Canterbury novels provide evidence that for the most part squares with the historical record; I will speak to the finer points of Chamier’s close reading of his younger self as Richard Raleigh or “Philosopher Dick” when I look at the novels more closely (*PD* 63).

In *Philosopher Dick* and *A South-Sea Siren*, Chamier describes this process of adapting himself to circumstances as an apparently rapid, but in reality ongoing

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206 Joan Stevens, Introduction xii.
process of disillusionment. Chamier was finding himself a literary home: in New Zealand (and then Australia) he would find something—or rather, settle on a place—to write about, but he also found and settled himself here through literature. That is to say, he adapted himself to the place and its peoples through literary means (forms, genres and tropes), as would other settlers as they wrote the place into being, whether through the language of the survey, of ethnography, of history (in which languages Chamier was fluent), of biology and geology, or of philology even.

Nonetheless, it would have been a rather starry-eyed Georgy that boarded the Cashmere at Gravesend with the other passengers in the chief cabin in mid-June 1859; the “cheaper” passengers in steerage would have boarded earlier at London, where the voyage commenced on 16 June 1859, after which the vessel would have been towed to Gravesend.207 He would have brought on board his own bedding and other necessaries, though, because he would have known he was to dine at the captain’s table with full service, he did not need to bring his own provisions or alcoholic beverages. A berth in the chief cabin would have cost about £50, a considerable sum and about three times the cost of one in steerage. Once at sea, life “above decks” would have been a round of sight-seeing, “amusements,” study—and meal after meal (routinely at nine, twelve, four, seven and ten o’clock). The route went southwest down the North Atlantic, southeast to Cape Town, and then “easted” roughly along the thirty-ninth parallel (though vessels went as far south as the captains dared to take advantage of stronger winds). According to the Lyttelton Times, “On the [Cashmere’s] passage nothing of import from a nauticle [sic] point of view occurred; no vessels were spoken and moderate weather, with a short supply of fair winds, was encountered.”208

207 “Shipping News: Arrival,” Lyttelton Times (12 Oct. 1859), quoted at “ArrivalCashmere 1859,” Rootsweb, 27 Feb. 2004 <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~oursuff/ArrivalCashmere1859.htm>. In her introduction to Siren, Joan Stevens has it that Chamier came out on the Chapman, arriving on 10 September 1860 (actually, it arrived on 12 September), strange considering that the AUP Correspondence records that she had earlier thought him to have come on the Cashmere (Joan Stevens, Introduction x; letter to R. D. McEldowney, 30 Apr. 1969, AUP Correspondence). According to the Lyttelton Times of 19 September 1860, another Chamier did arrive on the Chapman on 12 Sep. 1860, travelling in the saloon (“Shipping News: Arrival,” Lyttelton Times 19 Sep. 1860: 4, recorded in W. H. R. Dale, W. H. R. Dale Album of Lyttelton Times Passenger Lists 1830-1888, ms. [1925] 55, Canterbury Museum Library, Christchurch). If this was George Chamier, he may have gone to Australia and come back, or the earlier Chamier who arrived on the Cashmere the previous year was a relative.

Fig. 10. *The Cashmere*, personal photograph by Dr Peter Rhines, Dr Peter Rhines Collection, Seattle, “Air: the Great, the Large, and the Small,” by P. B. Rhines, 15 Feb. 2003, 6 Aug. 2005 <www.ocean.washington.edu/courses/envir202/air-lec2-03.pdf>. (Reproduced by permission of Peter Rhines.)

The vessel was said to have “had more comfortable accommodation for passengers than many other vessels coming out in the ’fifties,” especially for those travelling in the cabin, but Georgy would have been shocked by what the *Times* describes as an unusual number of deaths on board—sixteen, though apparently none were due to contagious disease—and by “the death under peculiar circumstances of seaman Belaminar, a native of Austria,” about which nothing further was said, and “the case of the boy George Davidson, whose death seem[ed] to be connected with severe castigation received at the hands of his father [Andrew],” a labourer. 209 The boy was only four years old. Georgy would have heard something less secondhand about New Zealand than the promotional literature offered from the returning settlers “Mr C W Fooks,” probably C E Fooks, a Canterbury Provincial Council engineer, “Captain Fuller . . . of Canterbury province, and Mr W G Fuller of . . . Otago.” On 4 October, they reached the Snares; on 7 October they finally sighted Banks Peninsula, “the long time on the coast being consumed with baffling winds.” They arrived at Lyttelton on Tuesday 11 October after 121 days at sea (120 days was the norm). Apparently, “[b]efore leaving the ship,” probably out of sheer relief at not dying

209 Brett 343; “Shipping News: Arrived.”
aboard the death-ship, “the passengers presented captain John Byron with an address to which he replied in grateful terms.”

Georgy arrived just before the Provincial Council’s monumental building and engineering projects got underway. Work on the Lyttelton tunnel had not yet started—Lyttelton was a tiny cluster of buildings, though Christchurch would not have looked much bigger when Chamier first looked down on it from the Port Hills. Christchurch was at this time less the model of mock English domesticity it would become and more a parody of what William Pember Reeves grandiloquently called “the City of Magnificent Distances,” as Dr Barker’s photograph looking south over the sparse settlement from the partially constructed Provincial Council Building shows.

Fig. 11. (Dr) Alfred Charles Barker, *Central Christchurch*, [c.1859], *Timeframes*, 1/2-034638-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. (Reproduced by permission of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.)

At this point, the town looks less like the spacious embodiment of “liberal values” or “democratic sentiment” Giselle Byrnes sees in Wakefield’s plan for the settlement than a frontier town from the American West with a smattering of mock English


public buildings. But between 1860 and Georgy’s next recorded visit in 1862 the town would rapidly take something like its settled form, growing out of the pattern of original allotments.

Likewise Canterbury per se: Pakeha New Zealand was at this time still very much “a coastal phenomenon” and in the uncomfortable frontier (or invasive) phase of settlement, at once rapacious and “civilising,” as Alan Grey puts it in Aotearoa & New Zealand. In numerical terms, the Maori and Pakeha national populations were apparently roughly equivalent (though it was always difficult to measure Maori populations accurately at that time). Because of an apparent absence of Maori in the South Island (Te Wai Pounamu), then known as the “Middle Island,” and so what Reeves would call “the absence of Maori troubles,” the place was well “suited . . . for the first stages of settlement” and the work of settlement proceeded relatively easily, despite the uneasy mix of first-come-first-served and Wakefield rules at work—of speculative versus “ideal settlement.” Nonetheless, the Pakeha population of the South Island at the time of the 1858 census was only about 25,000 (about forty-two percent of the total New Zealand Pakeha population); Maori numbered only about 3,000 in the whole island. According to the census, 8,967 Pakeha were resident in Canterbury, about 7,000 of whom lived in Christchurch and its environs, and 755 who were “on the land.”

From 1858 on, the back country would became rapidly claimed and settled—though it should be remembered that the deed of settlement or “Hamilton’s Purchase” that assured Pakeha ownership of the lands of the North Canterbury settlement had been signed with the chiefs of Kāi Tuahuriri of Kaiapoi (a Kāi Tahu hapu) only as recently as February 1857. Of course, this deed only served to “constitutionally” formalise the de facto Pakeka ownership of the lands granted by the Canterbury Land Office in the eighteen-fifties to the owners of the four big stations between the Ashley (Rakahuri) and the Hurunui: Heathstock/Horsley Down (owned by the Lances), Glenmark, Stonyhurst and Motunau. This deed and the other earlier ones—Kemp’s Purchase south of Christchurch (1848), the Banks Peninsula Purchases (1849) and the

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214 Reeves, Long White Cloud 245; Grey 164.
215 Grey 164.
216 Grey 186, 214.
effective confiscation of the lands of the Waimakariri Block immediately north of Christchurch—removed the remaining Maori seasonally resident in the Canterbury Plains (Waitaha) to reservations at Kaiapoi and Akaroa. There were no reservations granted in North Canterbury—for fear of “disturb[ing]” the “squires” of the big four, as Harry Evison puts it.217 From 1858, the Pakeha population of Canterbury would double every three years to 1867.218 The period from 1857 to 1868 under William Sefton Moorhouse and Samuel Bealey would come to be known as “the great age of Canterbury pastoralism,” with fencing, stocking, housing construction and tree-planting proceeding apace, though after 1864 things slowed, because of scab, snowstorms, full stocking and falling prices.219 The province came to be dominated by the “mutton lords,” the squattocracy or quasi-gentry of North Canterbury like the Lances, who were favoured by the land laws—peppercorn leases and a system of preemptive rights to purchase—that they themselves enacted (PD 42).220

These were the mythical “‘early days,’” as described in the narrator’s ironic summary in *Philosopher Dick*:

> This was many years ago, before the progress of settlement and cultivation had spread far inland; in the “early days,” when cattle-tracks were the only roads, and bullock-drays the principal means of conveyance; in the “good old times,” when the arrival of a sailing-ship was quite an event; when the Maories were still on the war-path . . . ; when shepherd-kings ruled the country; when land was cheap, and plenty of it; when ladies rode twenty miles to pay an afternoon call, and were welcomed like fairy beings from another world; when everybody else, and a warm hospitality was extended to all new-comers; when all was young and fresh and promising, and “roughing it” was the order of the day. (PD 4-5)

Behind this narrative of half-truths was the hard fact of dispossession, rewritten as what settlers called the “law of the bush” and a sublime encounter with the “uncanny country” of the South Island, to borrow the phrase Blanche Baughan uses to describe the volcanic country in the North, and in a roundabout way with its former owners

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218 Grey 238, 196.
220 Grey 198; see 179 and 184.
who are occluded by this narrative. Going on at the same time was the growth of a transplanted English parochial society (often with Anglo-Indian pretensions), not so young or fresh or promising to Chamier’s sceptical eye.

All this is a little at odds with what has become the official Whiggish narrative, first thematised by William Pember Reeves in *The Long White Cloud: Ao Tea Roa* (1898). Chamier might have agreed broadly with some of Reeves’s remarks about the southern settlements, that “[t]he endowed churches, the great pastoral leases, high-priced land (in Canterbury), and the absence of Maori troubles, were the peculiar features of the southern settlements of New Zealand.” Though in the Canterbury novels he will spin more negatively what Reeves calls “the Canterbury dream” or “the Wakefield system,” that is, “to transport to the Antipodes a complete section of English society, or, more exactly, of the English Church,” he will ironically appropriate this narrative to puff *Philosopher Dick* as a novel documenting “the settlement of the Southern Island [as] a model establishment . . . for respectable labour”:

The settlement of the Southern Island had only just been formed, and some, at least, of the young communities had been founded on highly approved and benevolent principles, and designed on quite aristocratic lines. They were represented as affording a glorious opening for honest work, where energy was bound to succeed and thrift to be properly rewarded—quite a model establishment, in fact, for respectable labour. Many people of the well-educated class flocked there. Retired army and navy officers came in shoals, the Universities were well represented; there was a goodly sprinkling of lawyers’ clerks, without law; medical students, without practice; and gentlemen farmers, without agricultural experience; there was also a noticeable proportion of very highly-connected “ne’er-do-wells.” (SSS GR 106-07)

But the novel, like the place, would turn out differently: it would “depict the sort of roving life we led in those days; the ‘roughing it’ we endured in the noble attempt to

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223 Reeves, *Long White Cloud* 245.
224 Reeves, *Long White Cloud* 234, 247, 234.
live ‘according to nature,’ the glowing aspirations we indulged in so heartily, and some of the miserable disenchantments we suffered in consequence” (SSS GR 107).

Likewise, Chamier is more interested in Reeves’s qualifications, which would be elided in the official narrative, in particular the fact that the life of the noble settlers of Canterbury was indeed “a spectacle fine in the general, but often ludicrous or piteous in the particular,” as Reeves puts it.225 For example, Chamier will more or less agree that due to their “fund of cheery adaptiveness,” “the Canterbury folk did not, on the whole, take themselves quite so seriously as some of their neighbours” (the Otagonians and Nelsonites), but he will focus on the facts that the settlers were not overly “cultivated,” despite all the rhetoric about noble settlers, and that “work” was their main adaptive mechanism. And he will very much agree that Canterbury was “no Dresden-china Arcadia,” whatever the proselytising literature claimed: that the life of the settler was often hard and lonely and that Nature (and the first settlers or so-called natives whose place it was) was “stubborn.”226 He will argue that the province was hard to settle not only in a practical sense, but also ideologically—the effort of sublimation required to put paid to the native place and its peoples brought uncanny returns and was bought at a high psychological cost to the settlers themselves. Chamier will talk in terms of the void without, within and between settlers that nostalgia for Home, the transplantation of Home to here, or the hypermaterialism and disciplinary morality of settler society can only partially assuage.

As befits his autoethnographic focus, then, Chamier will concern himself almost entirely with settlers. In fact, he seems like a typical “Middle Islander” in his attitude to native matters in the novels, with his occasional references to Maori or “native” stuff happening someplace else—off on the frontier in the North Island (Te Ika a Maui) or in the assemblies of the Provincial Governments—and to signs of a mediated native presence in the local landscape. He never once acknowledges the local Maori peoples, though there would have been clear evidence for the curious ethnographer in the rock drawings at Weka Pass en route to Heathstock/Horsley Down, not to mention the local guides, the nearby reserve at Kaiapoi and the evidence of seasonal food grounds (mahinga kai) and collecting practice throughout the Canterbury Plains.

225 Reeves, Long White Cloud 235.
226 Reeves, Long White Cloud 237, 239, 238, 237.
Thus, though “a comprehensive, comic and critical picture of Canterbury in the 1860s” has often been seen as the business of Chamier’s diptych of Canterbury novels, that picture will be limited to settlers—and it is rather dark, as Lawrence Jones’s outline suggests:

[The Canterbury settlement] is seen as “absolutely wanting in all the attractions of a refined civilisation, the beauties of art, or the charms of old associations”; its people, “without interest in everything except their progress,” animated by “a humdrum, bustling, and practical spirit . . . servilely devoted to progress and utility.” Narrow materialism is complemented by a doubtful business morality devoted to land speculation and the fleecing of new chums, while colonial politics is not a noble experiment but a “pitiable exhibition” evoking disgust. Social life is marked by hard drinking—“the besetting curse of the whole community”—and petty, malicious gossip.227

In other words, he will be most interested in describing how the settlement went awry, how “they [the “noble settlers”] laid the foundation stones of a fine settlement, though not precisely of the kind they contemplated,” as Reeves puts it. But this description will really just serve as a background to his own story—or at least, that of the sentimental education of his stand-in Raleigh, a story at once as “ludicrous [and] piteous” as the one Reeves tells of the settlement of Canterbury.228

New Zealand 2: The Cadet
1860-64

Georgy was to end up as a cadet at Heathstock/Horsley Down, co-owned by his cousins James Dupré Lance (1829-97) and his brother and silent partner Henry Porcher Lance (1833-86). But though they may have taken charge of the station as early as 1860, they did not take formal ownership of the station until late 1861.229 What Georgy did between his arrival in October 1859 and that date is unrecorded: he may have worked on Heathstock/Horsley Down for the earlier owners, the Mallock

228 Reeves, Long White Cloud 235.
and Walker brothers (the Lances, or at least J. D. Lance, had worked there in some capacity from 1856 until they were recalled to India to fight the “Mutiny”), or for the Lances on Four Peaks station near Geraldine, which they bought in 1860 and traded for Heathstock/Horsley Down the following year. Alternatively, he worked on another station or hung about in Christchurch. Whatever the case, it is the time he spent at Heathstock/Horsley Down station that is recorded in Chamier’s first novel, *Philosopher Dick*.

The close geographical, occupational and familial kinship of the Lances, Mallocks and Walkers, all upper middle-class sons of the clergy or mid-level John Company men who came to Canterbury in the mid-1850s to speculate, marked the squattocracy of the Canterbury province. As Cresswell puts it in *Squatter and Settler*, the Mallocks and Lances “shared the same clubs, supported the Tory party, and followed hounds together. When therefore, the . . . Mallock brothers . . . decided to come to this country, we can be sure their vis-à-vis in the Lance ménage knew about it.” Their alliance was cemented when J. D. Lance married Mary Ann Eliza Mallock in early 1862 in Devon and brought her back to Heathstock/Horsley Down. And for Lance, finding the Walkers here, as Cresswell puts it, “was almost too good to be true; and . . . opened great vistas of a happy life. . . . No doubt he rode the province with Walker, while [John] Mallock and McDonald [their manager] minded the flock.” These men and men like them (with their wives) set out to lord it over the province—whatever the de jure plans of Wakefield, Godley and the other “pursuers of the ideal,” as Thomas Arnold calls them in his *Passages of a Wandering Life* (1900)—and put into place their de facto vision of a hybrid society equal parts Anglo-Indian country estate and English parish.

Heathstock and its partner station Horsley Down are sixty-five miles (two full days journey by coach) almost due north of Christchurch in the Hurunui and Waitohi ridings of Waipara County (now usually known as North Canterbury), bounded on the south by the Waipara River and on the north by the Hurunui.

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231 Cresswell 66-67.
233 Thomas Arnold, *Passages in a Wandering Life* (London: Edward Arnold, 1900) 120.
At its largest, the double station encompassed about 120,000 acres (48,560 hectares), 100,000 acres of which were eventually freeholded, and carried 75,000 sheep; in the eighteen-sixties, it carried about 60,000.\textsuperscript{234} There were about one hundred men on the station in 1860; the manager was a Scot, Thomas McDonald—he appears as Stead, the too-canny Scotsman in \textit{Philosopher Dick}, who is all about progress or “bettering [one’s] condition” (\textit{PD} 17).\textsuperscript{235} In the novels, it becomes “Marino station,” “an ‘up-country’ station, in a mountainous and remote region of the Middle Island of New Zealand.” It certainly was remote in “in the ‘early days,’” as the narrator describes it, “many years ago, before the progress of settlement and cultivation had spread far inland” (\textit{PD} 4). As Cresswell describes it in \textit{Squatter and Settler in the Waipara County}, the station was rudimentary to begin with: “Originally the estate had been open tussock country with occasional swamps. Fences were unknown, the boundaries were rivers. . . . As far as the eye could see he country was bare, except for clumps of matagouri (“Wild Irishman”).”\textsuperscript{236} Parts of the station retained this character, as Henry Lance’s 1870 watercolour of the station shows:

\textsuperscript{234} Grey 196, Acland 280.
\textsuperscript{235} See McDonald’s Heathstock-Horsley Down diary for January to April 1861 in Cresswell (68-71).
\textsuperscript{236} Cresswell 79-80.
This fits with Chamier’s description of the station: “Marino station was situated on high ground, surrounded by bleak and arid hills. The homestead comprised a number of huts and houses, of which the largest was the men’s kitchen” (PD 5).

Life on the station when it was first settled in the eighteen-fifties was hard and simple, but by the eighteen-sixties, it had become industrialised. It was transformed by new technologies like sheep-dipping and by new markets. Upon the discovery of gold on the West Coast in 1864, miners began to move through the property on their way to Lake Sumner and the Hurunui Saddle, so a slaughter house was erected to slaughter mutton for the travellers. Chamier represents the works of the station as Dickensian, infernal even: “At the back [of the homestead], all was dirt, disorder, and muddle; stables, stock-yards, and sheep-pens being spotted about. The post and rail fences were hung with reeking sheepskins, and the slaughter-yard, with its blood-stained scaffold, stood close by” (PD 6). In contrast, life for “management” had become relatively pleasant. Heathstock had become famous for “a degree of civilisation,” though Chamier always talks it down (PD 6): James Lance had set about beautifying the station, having a house built in brick to his own design—“a very large, handsome, brick house, with projecting gables and a verandah,” according to Lady
Barker in *Station Life* (1870)—and sculpting the grounds. He lived extravagantly: he was generous in his hospitality and he loved good food, being himself an accomplished cook. As Acland puts it, the estate was “run like an English country house.” By the time the Broomes (“Lady Barker” and her second husband, Frederick Broome) visited Heathstock for six weeks in 1865, it was well established: “F— says that this beautiful place will give me a very erroneous impression of station life, and that I shall probably expect to find its comforts and luxuries the rule, whereas they are the exception; in the meantime I am enjoying them thoroughly.”

William Pember Reeves’s poem “The Burnt Homestead (Heathstock Loquitur)” describes the house at Heathstock before it burnt down in 1889 and the goings-on there: the tales and common experience of India, the exchange of an odd mélange of views practical and philosophical, of “[r]eflections on Marino ewes . . . blent with philosophic views,” and the hospitality.

Ah! jolly days and nights have been,
And pleasant faces I have seen
Around such fires.
Here half the night old friends have sat,
And heard that flow of cheery chat
A pipe inspires.

How good it was! An equal dower
Of freshness and of staying power
Those yarns revealed.
What tales of tigers, Sepoys, Sikhs
What memories of narrow squeaks
By flood and field!

A settler’s talk of early days,
A traveller’s of Eastern ways
Or Breton habits;
Here tales of Himalayan stags,

238 Acland 282, 283.
239 Lady Barker 23; see letters IV and V of *Station Life*, dated 13 November and 1 December 1865 (23-35); Gilderdale 97.
There scattered hints on driving drags,
And quelling rabbits.

Reflections on Marino ewes
Were blent with philosophic views
Of wealth and worry,
The farmers’ very latest pest
A cunning recipé, the best
By far for curry.

So while two storeys were the most
Of stature I could ever boast,
I stood this proof,
No friend e’er sought in vain a place,
No guest turned back for lack of space
Under my roof.240

Georgy was there as a cadet, “learning the trade as a gentleman farmer,” according to Stevens.241 The duty of the cadet was to learn how to run a station but also how things were to be done in the new settler colony—the aim was to turn the “new chum” into an “old hand.” As Reeves puts it, “[t]o cure an un-fit new-comer, dangerously enamoured of the romance of colonization, few experiences could surpass a week of sheep-driving.”242 Nonetheless, though Chamier suggests that “‘roughing it’ was the order of the day,” how rough life was there is relative (PD 5): Stevens suggests that Georgy apparently continued “taking his ‘tea’ in the ‘parlour’ with the master and mistress” when at Heathstock.243 But he chose to spend much of his three years on the station as a “boundary-walker,” living “Robinson-Crusoe like” in his “hermitage” in the hills—past “Mt Vulcan” over the “Stony River” (PD 90, 89, 58). He “had undertaken to keep the outermost boundary of the run in preference to living near the homestead” (PD 89).

240 W. P. Reeves, “The Burnt Homestead (Heathstock Loquitur [L “it is called”]),” in In Double Harness: Poems in Partnership, by George Phipps Williams and W. P. Reeves (Christchurch: Lyttelton Times, 1891) 6-7 (stanzas 8-11).
241 Joan Stevens, Introduction x.
242 Reeves, Long White Cloud 239.
243 Joan Stevens, Introduction x.
Chamier gives us a detailed picture of the time he spent at Heathstock/Horsley Down in the first half of *Philosopher Dick*. Going by the novel, for the first year he had shared his hut with a Scotsman, but after that he lived alone—with his working dogs and a cat to keep the rats out of his provisions. His duties involved making sure the sheep did not stray, helping those that got into trouble, and working on the muster, which happened twice a year and was “the great event of the year on the station” (*PD* 94). The muster would terminate at the “Home Station,” as Heathstock twelve miles over the downs from Horsley Down was often called. At Heathstock, there was a manager’s house, wool-shed, men’s huts (for the 25 shearers), and a dip; as Barker describes, it was where “[a]ll the work connected with the sheep [was] carried on”: shearing, sorting, packing and labelling of the bales, and branding, recording and dipping (for scab) of the shorn sheep.\(^\text{244}\) For recreation (and as often as possible), Georgy read, painted, played music and smoked his pipe, affecting the bucolic style. He had to be dragged into pig-hunting and the more “savage” hobbies of the other men (see *PD* VII [166ff.]). As he would later describe his hero, the “‘philosopher’” Raleigh, he was

[a] kindly, well-intentioned young fellow, intelligent, accomplished, but unpractical; a man with poetical ideas, all sorts of logical theories, and artistic tastes, who loved to moralise about things in general as he went his solitary way, who tried hard to peer into his own heart and into the hidden secrets of nature, but without ever getting to be any the wiser, who talked too much and did too little. (SSS GR 108)

“Philosophically,” *Philosopher Dick* is a study in the isolated sensibility and sympathetic communion with Nature as a response to isolation. Raleigh likes to describe himself as alienated from settler society—from the other settlers on the station in *Philosopher Dick* and in the small town in *Siren*, seeing himself as a kind of philosophical lone wolf. Chamier presents him as wilfully eccentric: “Raleigh was somewhat different from the everyday run of men, and he affected a still greater divergence” (SSS 116). At the start of *Philosopher Dick*, he thinks he can manage his alienation by self-fashioning the illusion of “originality,” claiming that, if nothing else, “at least we may regulate our conduct somewhat according to our tastes, and live up to our own idea of happiness. I came out all this way to be free, and I find there is

\(^{244}\) Lady Barker 32-35.
no such thing. Still, since absolute independence is not to be had, I must keep up the
illusion of it; so people call me ‘an original’” (PD 65). He advocates a kind of relative
freedom—but tries to keep up the illusion of absolute freedom by adopting the pose
of the pastoral philosopher commenting on station life. But that gets tired fast:
Raleigh is simply perceived as cynical or misanthropical, a “Timon,” as his friend Val
calls him (PD 181). He takes refuge from other settlers in the back country, but
becomes alienated both from himself and from the nature in which he initially takes
solace.

Chamier implies that Raleigh’s problem (and his own when young) was a
divorce between sentiment and philosophy: sentimentally, he wants to “commune
with nature,” to sympathise with it; philosophically, he sees nature through a
Schopenhauerian lens as a cruel “wilful” struggle for survival with which he cannot
sympathise. His refuge from the conflict between these two motives is a kind of
aesthetic distance equal parts Schopenhauer and John Ruskin. For Schopenhauer, the
disinterested aesthetic perspective gives you distance on the cruel world of nature; for
Ruskin, art looks upon nature in its positive aspect—in the “secluded and serious
beauty” of the Swiss Alps, for example—as a painterly idyll; in its negative aspect—
in “the New Continent”—as “oppressively desolate,” abyssal even.245 But Raleigh
becomes increasingly morbid as he tries to reconcile these contradictory demands; the
“wilderness” begins to “exercise a weird fascination over [him]” (PD 186) and he
eventually all but succumbs to a death-wish to throw himself after his sheep into an
abyss, as he will again in Siren at his nadir (PD 238-43; SSS 285). For Chamier, this
death-wish signals the failure or “impossibility of enlightenment,” but is also the first
step in Raleigh’s sentimental education, his lesson being that that the self cannot
simply be remade from nothing (as a tabula rasa), nor society in turn (as a terra
nullius)—it must be patched together or refashioned, and relies on the sympathy of
others and the history of the place (PD 103).

In Philosopher Dick, Chamier describes his process of adaptation to the new
place as an apparently rapid (but in reality ongoing) process of disillusionment. He
had thought himself “thoroughly disillusioned” by his Bohemian experience and
philosophical reading (PD 76). Having “moved . . . in the fashionable world, and . . .

245 Schopenhauer, World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 196 (sec. 38); John Ruskin, The Seven
Lamps of Architecture (1849; London: George Allen, 1899) 322-23, quoted in John Newton,
“Colonialism above the Snowline: Baughan, Ruskin and the South Island Myth,” Journal of
caroused among rollicking Bohemians,” he perhaps felt he had seen everything (PD 96). And his reading of Schopenhauer had taught him a valuable lesson for a new chum, especially one Continental by inclination and habit, faced by the puffed-up, apparently new settlement of Canterbury, a lesson by which he would justify his critique of settler society: that “Society is one vast make-believe—a sham. . . .
Deception is essential to our common existence”; or, as he puts it elsewhere, “nature’s
garb is universal illusion” (SSS 45, 52). This is the substance of the first palaver in
Siren (SSS I): all truths are relative and all truths are illusions, that is to say,
“according to the prevailing rules of society, truth makes but a sorry show” (SSS 6).
And he had come out “to get away from the world”: the Old World (PD 48). That is not new—and neither is his reaction; as Stevens puts it, echoing the Horatian
aphorism “caelum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currant” (“They change their
skies but not their souls who run across the seas”), 246

Rejecting the Old World, as did so many young emigrants of similar
temperament and education (such as Thomas Arnold, ten years before),
he has come hopefully to this New one, only to be disillusioned. “I
came out all this way to be free; and I find that there is no such thing.”
Human nature, he discovers, does not change merely with the
hemisphere, and is indeed more searchingly revealed under the
uncompromising colonial light. 247

Chamier barely entertains the idea (or illusion) that Canterbury or New Zealand could
be a New World, an authentic frontier, not just because there is no war to satisfy
settlers’ “young hearts [that] panted for freedom, the rifle, and the bowie knife,” but
because the Cantabrians seemed both more English than the English—radically

When we first meet Raleigh in Philosopher Dick, he is in his third year at the
station and well and truly “colonised”; we never see him as new chum—he is always
already an old hand (PD 149). The same will be true of Tim’s progress in Successful
Man. It takes him just two chapters to lose his illusions about the settlement as New
World. It is implied that he would never see himself a member of what the “Siren,”

246 Horace, Epistle 1.11.27 (Horace [Quintus Horatius Flaccus], Epistles, ed. Roland Mayer
[Cambridge: CUP, 1994] 71). The continuation of Horace’s phrase serves as the epigraph of chapter
XXV of Successful Man: “Navibus atque / Quadrigis petimus bene vivere” (we seek a happy life by
ships and carriages).
247 Joan Stevens, Introduction xii, quoting PD 65.
Celia Wylde, calls “a corps d’élite—men of birth and education who have broken away from the restraints and restrictions of Old World society for Nature and freedom,” made up of natural aristocrats “[r]oughing it,” “bucolic swell[s]” and “gentlemen pioneers” of “haut ton” (PD 43-45). He is too sceptical and too eccentric for that. But neither does he class himself as an ill-fated outcast among the “roving population of tramps, topers, and outcasts” up-country, one of what he calls “the . . . ragged regiment of poor devils, who wander about the country, homeless, aimless, hopeless—often deserving of a better fate” (PD 43).

Besides, it is questionable whether Chamier’s passage through this phase in the life of the settler was as traumatic as it is stereotypically presented, say by “Hopeful,” the anonymous female author of “Taken In” (1887): “I . . . firmly believed in “the sunny south as the land of promise, the land of plenty, and the land of hope”; but how different were the real facts!” Chamier was never one to “paint all ‘couleur de rose,’” except perhaps where his adolescent bohemian life in France was concerned or in picturesque Ruskinian “moments” in the landscape of the high country—and this was to ironic effect. For the most part, he would agree with the way “Hopeful” represents “the dark side of things in the country, fairly set forth,” in particular, with her observations that “the tendency of the Colonies is certainly not to elevate, but, more or less, to demoralize”—and that “the one thought and aim is to make money” (PD 183, 167). He is as determined as she says she is to represent “the facts” of settler life, “gloomy” as they might be, though, as I have suggested, consciously or unconsciously he also represents the way settlers deal with the more fundamental hard facts of settlement (PD 184). With him, the settler experience was always coloured shades of grey with a kind of gleeful schadenfreude, increasingly at his own expense, which sums up the peculiarly Schopenhauerian mood of much of his critique of settler society.

From the start of Philosopher Dick, Raleigh well knows what he calls the “rule of the bush”: “to help yourself to whatever you can get wherever you go. You make no enquiries and you leave no record,” though he does the opposite in hindsight: he is both inquisitive and records his time in New Zealand at length in the novels (PD 59). He would agree that the settler makes do with what they have, or rather, does without: “we accommodate ourselves to circumstances, that’s all. How do we do? Why, we do

without” (PD 58); the pig is his exemplar of the “successful colonist,” who “possesses to an eminent degree the thoroughly human attribute of adapting himself to circumstances” (PD 163). So there is a sense in which Chamier carries forward the spirit of what David Hall calls “the early settlers” who “accepted the fact of their transplantation more wholeheartedly than did their children, who, conspicuously less well educated than their parents, tended to focus their unappeasable yearnings on the country their parents had left” (this is true of Chamier’s own children who survived into adulthood; they will both be drawn back to Europe to pursue their artistic interests). Arnold calls these early settlers, especially those affiliated with the New Zealand Company, “pursuers of the ideal.” Chamier would not call them that or describe himself that way, but neither would he categorise himself as Arnold’s alternative: the “practical” settler who capitalised on their work. He does not fit either description—but he does fit in somehow; perhaps it is simply as “[a] man concerning whom the greatest wonder was how the devil he got there”—as that rara avis, the “unrepresentative” unsettled settler, as Peter Alcock describes him (PD 46).

It is implied in the Canterbury novels that the young Georgy’s illusions were different from those of the hopeful settler taken in by the idea of “the sunny south as the land of promise, the land of plenty, and the land of hope” (“Hopeful”) or the New Zealand Company “pursuers of the ideal” (Arnold). They are not so much concerned with “the modifications in belief an idealist must make if he is to come to terms with life,” as Stevens would have it, but with the process of Georgy/Raleigh learning to see through his illusion that he is thoroughly disillusioned and to see that he is not so different from the other “unconscious blind” (SSS 80). He must learn his own lesson: that a laissez-faire sense of sympathetic community is both the most fitting response to his own alienation from settler society and the best recipe for a “fitter” settler society, inasmuch as that was possible—Chamier was not one to wholeheartedly prophesy what Arnold calls “the rise of a regenerated society.”

This is an entirely Schopenhauerian move: from an elevated anti-humanist perspective on human illusions to an acceptance of a more radical illusion, that is to say, a belief

250 Arnold 120-21.
251 Alcock, “Informing the Void” 91.
252 Joan Stevens, Introduction xii.
253 Arnold 120.
in human sympathy. Schopenhauer makes this move himself in *World as Will and Representation*, going from a radical critique from a god’s-eye—or properly “aesthetic”—perspective of the world of “appearances” as really “willed” and therefore entailing suffering in volume II of that work to a recipe for self-overcoming based on recognising the fellow suffering of others, in fact of all things, in volume IV. Chamier’s version of that move characteristically un-metaphysicalises or psychologises it. As he has Raleigh say in a conversation with Alice, his mentor: “‘The bane of my life had been *disenchantment*. I thought then I had been thoroughly disillusioned, but I find—even now—’ / ‘That you are human, after all.’ / ‘Too much so, perhaps’” (*SSS* 243).
Philosopher Dick (1890; 1891): Raleigh, Unsettler and Unsettled Settler

If from great nature’s or our own abyss
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss—
But then’t would spoil much good philosophy.

—Byron, George Gordon, Don Juan (stanza 14)²⁵⁴

1 The text
   Publication history
   Reception
2 Philosopher Dick as “rolling stone” novel: the geography of the narrative
   2.1 Philosopher Dick as “rolling stone” novel
   2.2 The geography of the narrative
3 A pair of unhappy Jacks: the unsettled settler in Philosopher Dick
   Raleigh as Shakespeare’s “melancholy Jaques”: the unsettler
   Raleigh as “melancholy Jacques” Rousseau: the unsettled settler

During 1890, Chamier moved from Adelaide to Sydney with his family, perhaps to be where the literary action seemed to be (though, as in Melbourne and Adelaide, he would move only peripherally in literary circles), more likely for family reasons. The era of the Bulletin, “the bushman’s Bible,” was well under way. Various authors in its circle and the larger ambit of bush or up-country writers had begun to publish voluminously, locally and abroad: in particular, Rolf Boldrewood, with his Robbery Under Arms (1888), The Miner’s Right: A Tale of the Australian Goldfields (1890), and A Sydney-Side Saxon (1891), and William Lane, with his The Workingman’s Paradise (1892), which brought the bushman to the city.²⁵⁵ The Bulletin had begun to

publish collections in its own right locally, the first being *A Golden Shanty: Australian Stories and Sketches in Prose and Verse* (1890). 256 The best known of the *Bulletin* writers, Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson, had begun publishing in the magazine, but their collections would not be published for a few years; Joseph Furphy, often thought the best of the *Bulletin* writers, and perhaps the most comparable to Chamier, stylistically in any case, was several years off publishing his *Such is Life* (1903). 257 *Philosopher Dick* created nothing like the stir of any of those works. But Chamier’s literary life had begun, and over the next five years, he would publish all three of his novels. The first two, *Philosopher Dick* and its sequel *A South-Sea Siren*, which together form his Canterbury diptych, are concerned with what he calls the “dismal comedy” of station and small-town life in the north of the Canterbury settlement in the eighteen-sixties (63). 258 Together with his third novel, *Story of a Successful Man*, set in Marvellous Melbourne during the land boom of the eighteen-seventies, the novels constitute a trilogy of autoethnographical novels of sentimental education, by which Chamier aims to make sense of the first two decades of his life in the Australasian colonies—to work out his life and make of it a work of art.

*Philosopher Dick* tells the story of Chamier’s stand-in Richard Raleigh, alias “Philosopher Dick,” who serves as a cadet on a back country station in North Canterbury called “Marino station.” As the subtitle *Adventures and Contemplations of a New Zealand Shepherd* suggests, the novel follows Raleigh through a series of picaresque adventures on the station and in the back country, which are interwoven with his “philosophical” contemplations of life there and of his place in the scheme of things. But Chamier did not begin with Raleigh, or so he suggests in his 1895 manifesto, “A South-Sea Siren,” published in Fisher Unwin’s *Good Reading about Many Books* to puff that novel for the British market. Apparently, his original subject was the “enterprising movement” of the “settlement of the Southern Island” as “a

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258 Unless otherwise specified, all in-text citations in this section, whether page or chapter numbers (in roman numerals), refer to *Philosopher Dick*.
model establishment . . . for respectable labour” (SSS GR 106, 105, 106). The beginnings of the novel—like those of the settlement—were rough and ready: it struck me, in after years, that this phase of existence might be interesting, and even amusing, to describe, in the shape of a novel, and so I set about patching together a few stray notes, and working in some old sketches, to depict the sort of roving life we led in those days; the “roughing it” we endured in the noble attempt to live “according to nature,” the glowing aspirations we indulged in so heartily, and some of the miserable disenchantments we suffered in consequence. ’Tis but a page of life, and life of no very exciting or attractive kind either, but it is somewhat off the beaten track; it is heartfelt and it is true.

He was aiming at a straightforward description of settlers “‘roughing it . . . in the noble attempt to live ‘according to nature’ . . . somewhat off the beaten track” (SSS GR 107).

But the “Philosopher” Richard Raleigh quickly became the focus of the novel. He is an unlikely hero—but not unlike the Georgy who fetched up on his cousins’ station Heathstock/Horsley Down about 1860:

A kindly, well-intentioned young fellow, intelligent, accomplished, but unpractical; a man with poetical ideas, all sorts of logical theories, and artistic tastes, who loved to moralise about things in general as he went his solitary way, who tried hard to peer into his own heart and into the hidden secrets of nature, but without ever getting to be any the wiser, who talked too much and did too little.

The “philosopher” cannot by any stretch of imagination be elevated into a hero of romance. . . . A popular hero, in the ordinary sense, he can never be—he hasn’t even got the biceps to act the part properly. Nor can his adventures by the utmost elasticity of language be termed “sensational.” (SSS GR 107-08)

Raleigh’s—read: young Georgy’s—philosophical struggles with himself and the place and its peoples, rather than his romantic, heroic or “sensational” adventures, became the lens through which Chamier’s description of the “settlement of the Southern Island” was refracted. If, as he suggests, “‘roughing it’ . . . in the noble attempt to live ‘according to nature’” was the common lot of back country settlers, what was uncommon was Raleigh’s “moralis[ing] about things in general” and his attempt “to
peer into his own heart and into the hidden secrets of nature” that only served to unsettle other settlers and himself (SSS GR 107, 108). It is his “philosophical” contemplations of back country life and his place in the scheme of things that mark out Philosopher Dick as the first phase in Chamier’s systematic thematisation of the position of the unsettled settler.

In this chapter, I will focus on the “Philosopher’s Progress” of Raleigh and what it says about the position of the unsettled settler. Raleigh sees himself as the resident philosopher of the station, a pastoral philosopher in the mold of “melancholy Jaques” from Shakespeare’s As You Like It, who can see through the “dismal comedy” of station life (63). He enjoys slumming it with the other station hands and casting his sceptical eye over goings-on on the station, but the violence of the industrial agriculture practised on the station—and the antipathy of other settlers to his philosophising—start to test his philosophy. His philosophising is perceived as unsettling by the other settlers on account of his cynicism about colonial ideas and ideals and his lack of “energy”: they think he has “no idea of bettering [his] condition,” of progressing himself and the colony (30, 32). In a move akin to the return to nature of that other “Melancholy Jacques,” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Raleigh chooses to go it alone as a “boundary-walker,” living at his hermitage in the hills (90). But he struggles with the isolation and tries to overcome it by communing with nature through a Byronic, or rather, Manfredian unbounded sensibility. The resulting experience of nature (or Nature: big “n”) as sublime and other uncanny experiences in the back back country profoundly bring home to him his own unsettlement and lead him to contemplate suicide. With the help of his mentor Dr Valentine and confidante Alice Seymour, he comes to realise that living as a hermit is not the answer and decides to move down to town to put his philosophy to the test in society.

1 The text

1.1 Publication history

Philosopher Dick, in full Philosopher Dick: Adventures and Contemplations of a New Zealand Shepherd, was published for the Christmas market in October 1890 by T. Fisher Unwin of London. This publication late in the year is why its date of publication is often given as 1891. The advertisement in The Athenaeum read: “New two-volume novel, just ready. Philosopher Dick . . . . Crown 8vo. cloth, 21s. ‘A well-written and vivid picture of life in the New Zealand bush.’—Scottish Leader.”261 It was probably published on commission, if Chamier’s later novel A South-Sea Siren is anything to go by, with Chamier paying the cost of its production and promotion. If so, it was a not inconsiderable investment on his part, as well as—at twenty-one shillings a copy—for his readers.

The novel was originally published anonymously, probably according to the conventional contemporary practice that it was proper to avoid offending the living, given that many of the characters are clearly modelled on North Canterbury settlers of the eighteen-sixties, many relatives and acquaintances of Chamier, others local and colonial public figures. Chamier more often than not altered their names and “‘scrambled’ the characters,” as Henry Douglas suggests; more importantly, he presents them as types in accordance with the practice of the eighteenth-century novel to give characters cratylic names: Dale the sheep station owner, Valentine the philanderer, Markham the surveyor, and so on.262 Chamier himself becomes “Richard Raleigh,” an alliterative nod to Tobias Smollett’s picaresque Roderick Random (1748), but more so to his namesake, the poet adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh, Huguenot sympathiser and founder of the ill-starred “Lost Colony” on Roanoke Island in the old New World. His epithet “Philosopher Dick” echoes and deflates Marcus Clarke’s pseudonym in the Australasian: “The Peripatetic Philosopher,” but no doubt also nods to the popular expression “clever Dick” (know-all) and various double-entendres on “dick.”263 In any case, Chamier’s anonymity was short-lived: “By Chamier” was apparently written on the back of the cover of review copies; the one-volume edition, published early the following year (1891), has “Chamier” in gold

261 Athenaeum 15 Nov. 1890: 651; see also Athenaeum 29 Nov. 1890: 749, and “Our Library Table: List of New Books,” Athenaeum 1 Nov. 1890: 585.
262 Douglas 119.
263 Marcus Clarke, The Peripatetic Philosopher (Melbourne: Robertson, 1869).
on the spine. It was now thought appropriate to reveal the author’s name, perhaps because the fact that the name had some cachet by association with Chamier’s uncle Frederick had overridden considerations of propriety.

The novel was never reprinted—or issued in a second edition, despite the efforts of Eric McCormick, whose examination of *Philosopher Dick* in his *Letters and Art in New Zealand* (1940) was the first local reading of Chamier.²⁶⁵ It was McCormick who renewed interest in the novel—and perhaps in Chamier’s life and works altogether, despite considering it “a baffling novel” and Chamier no better than “a third-rate writer.”²⁶⁶ Whatever its deficiencies, he saw it as “a pioneer work,” groundbreaking in a literary-historical sense, but also in terms of the cultural or “pioneer work” that it was doing. With his rather backhanded final comment, he established Chamier’s oft-stated but seldom argued status in local literary history: “with little competition Chamier takes his place in the New Zealand literary hierarchy as the most distinguished male novelist of its pastoral epoch.”²⁶⁷ McCormick was a prime mover in Chamier being included in the New Zealand Fiction series published jointly by Auckland and Oxford University Press from the nineteen-seventies. He had included *Philosopher Dick* in his original five-year programme for what was then called the “New Zealand Series” and pushed for it to open the series. In the end, that honour would go to *A South-Sea Siren*, which was considered more suitable because it was “shorter, better organized, more even—and possibly duller.” Or as Joan Stevens put it, “*A South-Sea Siren* it will have to be: *Philosopher Dick* is altogether too rambling & monstrous.”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ McCormick, *Letters and Art* 72-75 (see also 84 and 112), republished as *New Zealand Literature: A Survey* (London; Auckland: Oxford UP, 1959) 48-52 (and see also 59, 75 and 130).
²⁶⁶ McCormick, *Letters and Art* 74, 75.
1.2 Reception

*Philosopher Dick* deals with two distinct subjects. It presents a most vivid and life-like picture of some of the phases of New Zealand life, as it was some thirty years ago, and gives a detailed analysis of the evil effects of prolonged solitude on a mind which, though of more than average ability, is well stored with acquired knowledge, and never, at the worst of times, deprived of the companionship of books, yet had an innate tendency to dreaminess and melancholy. Both subjects are treated in a masterly way.

—*Westminster Review* (1891)

In his manifesto from *Good Reading*, Chamier suggests that *Philosopher Dick* was well received by “discriminating” readers: “The ‘philosopher’ . . . seems with his *bonhomie* to have made a good few friends among a discriminating public” (108). But he has to admit that the reviews were decidedly mixed—though he refuses to take issue with his critics: “My first literary effort was highly appreciated in some quarters and grossly depreciated in others. I am not going to fight it out with my hostile critics,” even those who show no evidence of having “read it through” and the “Mrs. Grund[ies],” the moral pedants (*SSS GR* 110, 109). The publishers, and probably Chamier himself, given that it was published on commission, sent out numerous review copies to the literary pages and, soon after, to lending libraries. It was reviewed only about ten times in all, though several times it was by leading English periodicals of the day like the *Academy, Athenaeum, Spectator* and *Westminster Review*. The novel attracted enough interest for Fisher Unwin to cite it in advertisements for *Siren* five years later.

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270 A copy was received and date-stamped at the Auckland Public Library on 13 July 1891, surprisingly soon after its publication (Auckland Public Libraries Special Collections [Auckland]: SP Coll NZSP 823.99 Cha).
271 For a list of the contemporary reviews, see the Bibliography. Many of these reviews are excerpted and reproduced in the endmatter of Chamier’s non-fiction collection, *War and Pessimism*.
The reviewers found the novel hard to place, as the *Scotsman* suggests: “It is not a novel, in the ordinary sense of the word, and can hardly be said to contain a story. . . . This book is one altogether by itself.”

It was thought overly ambitious, overlong and up-and-down.

As to the subject matter of the novel, aside from noting that much of it would be new to British readers, given that the story is set “in a country and among a people not often put under contribution hitherto for literary purposes,” as the *Northern Whig* has it, the reviews highlight two key aspects of the novel:

a. its critical descriptions of “up-country life in New Zealand”—what William Sharp of the *Academy* calls its “verisimilitude,” and

b. its value as a record of the isolated metropolitan sensibility, of what the *Westminster Review* describes as “the evil effects of prolonged solitude on a mind well stored with acquired knowledge,” namely Raleigh’s.

With regard to Chamier’s “verisimilar” descriptions of back country life, the *Home News* notes that he invariably sticks to “Nature in her severer aspects” and is “truthful [and] graphic . . . to an unusual degree.” Likewise, the *Athenaeum* suggests that he presents station life “strip[ped] of the romance with which it [was] clothed by most authors”—in short, that Chamier “differs from most other writers on New Zealand; he has . . . picked out the seamy side of . . . bush life.” As we know, this was intentional: Chamier had set out to present “a page of life, and life of no very exciting or attractive kind either” (SSS GR 107). But reviewers found it difficult to sympathise with the apparently ineffectual and self-centred hero Raleigh and his philosophical contemplations. Like Sharp, they miss the self-mocking bathos in his “flights of rhetoric and speculation” and can only read his black humour as being in “bad taste.”

For this reason, several reviewers prefer Raleigh’s adventuring to his philosophising; the *Spectator* is typical: “The ‘contemplations’ of the philosopher are decidedly unequal in value, but his ‘adventures’ are always entertaining.”

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273 “Literary Notes” 3.
274 William Sharp 610.
275 Rev. of *PD, Northern Whig* [Belfast], quoted in *WP* endmatter; William Sharp 610; “Contemporary Literature: Belles Lettres” 94.
276 “Literature” 25.
277 “Our Library Table” 184.
278 William Sharp 610.
Nonetheless, the reviews suggest that Chamier captures the experience of a certain species of settler, as the Spectator argues: “there is an air of . . . verisimilitude about the whole story which stamps it as being a faithful record, from one point of view, of the more prominent features of a settler’s life in New Zealand.”

That “one point of view,” that of the unsettled settler, is Chamier’s untimely version of what will become a dominant topos of New Zealand literature: the Man Alone. When not singling out Philosopher Dick as pioneering the species of “critical realism” that has often been taken to define the canon of New Zealand literature, most modern criticism of Philosopher Dick from McCormick to Stevens to Lawrence Jones and beyond has dwelt on the fact that we get in Raleigh what Dale Benson calls “an early Man Alone”: the use of “the device of the misunderstood outsider, the Man Alone, to explicitly or implicitly focus attention on social conditions.”

Peter Alcock goes as far as to say that “Raleigh [is] the first of New Zealand’s locally notable literary succession of ‘men alone.’” Benson thinks this topos is “existentialist”—or “more accurately, ‘pre-existentialist’ because it was not at all self-conscious.” Her description of the “deracinated, isolated and alienated” Man Alone as existentialist certainly fits Raleigh. But Raleigh, like Chamier, is self-conscious, that is, conscious of his own position and of the “absurd” or unfounded nature of the life-choices that go to make it up—though he always relates his position to being a settler and is nowhere near as po-faced as later existentialist Men Alone would be. As Chamier mocks his own choices in the person of Raleigh, we are constantly reminded that he is something of a philosophs gloriouisus, a philosopher-fool.

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280 “Current Literature” 250-51.
The *Home News* review best captures Raleigh’s position in suggesting that Philosopher Dick—or Chamier in the guise of Philosopher Dick—“present[s] himself to us in the guise of a modern ‘Melancholy Jaques.’” I would argue that the Philosopher Richard Raleigh is equal parts “melancholy Jaques,” the pessimistic pastoral philosopher of “All the world’s a stage” fame from *As You Like It*, and the other “Melancholy Jacques,” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, so called for his morbid sensibility and ill-fated return to Nature. Or rather, Byron as Manfred, because we are never allowed to forget that Raleigh’s position is a position, a pose: it is both not autobiographical or confessional per se and somewhat mockable, whatever its critical purchase on settler society. Raleigh is not Chamier and not sincere in the same way as Rousseau is, say, in the *Confessions* (1782). While Raleigh is literally a “man alone,” the way Chamier presents his narrative of education sidesteps Kendrick Smithyman’s valid argument that the topos of the Man Alone can be read as a manifestation of a pervasive local “myth of the primitive” that marks “a romantic strain in New Zealand writing.” Raleigh cannot really be described as “a romantic hero” in these terms, a kind of romantic outsider or Mother Nature’s son, because, never mind that he is no primitivist, his attempt to return to Nature and get by outside settler society is presented ironically by Chamier—and fated to fail in the context of the novel and his trilogy. But neither does Chamier fit with the opposite strain, what Smithyman calls “anti-romantic writing, an inverse romanticism which does not break away from romantic principles”: he is not merely a straightforward critic of settler society. Not only is Chamier’s version of Man Alone untimely in the history of “New Zealand literature” and more nuanced than Smithyman’s simple dichotomy suggests, but it is unusual in its focus on the man alone as settler and on the new settlement in which he finds himself as a testing-ground of sentiment. For that reason, in what follows I will read the novel through the sentimental personas of the two unhappy Jacks: Shakespeare’s Jaques for Chamier’s critical or unsettling description of settler society, Jean-Jacques Rousseau for his record of the isolated or unsettled sensibility in Nature.

It was Eric McCormick who first suggested that Chamier’s untimely interest in the Man Alone and his “critical realism” marked *Philosopher Dick* as a “pioneer

284 “Literature” 25.
work” in New Zealand literary history and the “only . . . imaginative work [that] handles the rural life of this [pioneering] period with any approach to insight.” But, for him, it was “undoubtedly too ambitious [and] almost certainly premature,” that is to say, without the accumulation of a local literary history it was too shallowly rooted. He speaks for most of the critics who follow him when he suggests that *Philosopher Dick* was really just an exemplary pioneer novel that “sums up the whole class of pioneer fiction and memoirs” with its émigré central character, focus on “rough experience” and “assortment of stock characters,” its “amateurishly contrived” construction and “loose and formless” prose, and its “baffling” mixed tone, register and affect. Wattie’s suggestive reading of Chamier’s novels as “technically skilful” in their “unusual narrative structure” and “multi-perspectivism” is the sole exception to this rule. But most critics tend to overlook Chamier’s stylistic mobility: his unwillingness—or inability—to fit with what Jones calls “conventional fictional modes” and his penchant for improvisation, for makeshift formal constructs and adapting metropolitan models and genres for use in the New World.

Nonetheless, I read McCormick’s suggestion that *Philosopher Dick* was “a pioneer work, an attempt to impose some coherence and form upon a formless mass of experience” as gesturing at a more charitable and foundational reading. He is drawing attention to the novel’s literary-historical novelty and historicity, and hinting at the cultural work or “pioneer work” it was doing: that the novel was pioneering or settling—or rather, as I would have it, unsettling in its concern with the process of settlement, but a settler novel nonetheless. He also hints that the form of the novel might have been doing some of that work: that Raleigh’s close description is unsettling—evidence that “the déraciné has begun to send down roots”—and that the novel’s eccentricity might be in some way adequate to its work: “[it] is a baffling novel, as difficult to characterize and assess as the society it describes.” Perhaps, in its apparent “formless[ness],” the novel simply mirrors the as-yet-“unformed” place it represents; its formlessness would fit with its position as the first and, as it were, “least formed” or “least settled” novel of Chamier’s trilogy, embodying the first back

290 Wattie, “Chamier, George.”
291 Lawrence Jones, “New Zealand Novel” 933.
293 McCormick, *Letters and Art* 75.
country phase in his appropriation of what has become a grand narrative of settlement as a centripetal movement toward the city, that is to say, toward social cohesion—and in his trilogy, toward formal cohesion or closure. Or perhaps, as I will suggest, its formlessness is only apparent and its fit of narrative and place more sophisticated than it seems.

2  Philosopher Dick as “rolling stone” novel: the geography of the narrative

2.1  Philosopher Dick as “rolling stone” novel

At first glance, Philosopher Dick is the most loosely structured or open novel of Chamier’s trilogy. The novel does not fit with the formal conventions of the realist novel, even if in its “verisimilitude” it obeys its representational conventions. I read it as what Stevens calls a “‘rolling stone’ novel,” a local adaptation of the picaresque that records “the travels of a footloose, casual adventurer” through the colony.²⁹⁴ Philosopher Dick follows Stevens’s description of the genre: it is “essentially a man’s book”—the world of the novel is certainly predominantly male—and “pioneer memoir thinly disguised,” typically in the service of the topos of “The New Chum Makes Good.”²⁹⁵ Perhaps the best known of the South Island rolling stone novels is Dugald Ferguson’s Vicissitudes of Bush Life in Australia and New Zealand (1893), but unlike Ferguson, Chamier does not rest content with simple “memorialising” or revisiting the topos of “New Chum Makes Good.” He goes back to the picaresque as it was reworked in sentimental discourse from Henry Fielding’s Joseph Andrews (1742) to Henry Mackenzie’s The Man of Feeling (1771), which culminated in the novel of sensibility, with its characteristic episodic, or as Janet Todd puts it, “necessarily fragmented” narrative that aims at the generation of a series of discrete affective moments of “heightened consciousness.”²⁹⁶ Many of the key episodes in Philosopher Dick mimic this strategy to the point of parody. Once we subtract what plot there is from the narrative, which is basically a series of “adventures” or stock episodes of back country life, we are left with a discontinuous series of tests of

²⁹⁴ Stevens, “Literature: Fiction” 329
Raleigh’s “philosophy,” a series of failed solutions to the problem of his unsettlement that end in unresolved or bathetic anticlimaxes.

Chamier also takes the looseness of the picaresque as a licence to cram all manner of heterogeneous material into the novel. We end up with the most open expression of what Lawrence Jones has called Chamier’s “gladstone bag” style, capacious and genre-busting.\(^{297}\) In its heterogeneity, it does resemble other Australian fictional improvisations—or what seem in hindsight to be experiments in the anti-novel—like Patrick Eiffe’s *The Three L’s, or, Lawyers, Land-Jobbers, and Lovers* (1882) or Joseph Furphy’s *Such is Life* (1903), though Chamier probably had in mind metropolitan models like Laurence Sterne’s sentimental anti-novel *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) or its early Victorian descendant, Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34). This heterogeneity is most obvious in the texture of the narrative, which consists of a series of episodes split between the “adventures and contemplations” of the subtitle, but is frequently interrupted by material apparently supplementary to the main narrative: a mixed bag of “philosophical discussions, detachable episodes and pictures of New Zealand life and society, and inset stories,” as Jones puts it.\(^{298}\) The narrative is woven from an array of narrative and non-narrative elements:

a. direct, free indirect and indirect discourse in the narrative past (or “past-present”) tense with retrospective narratives, description and dialogue, which makes up most of the narrative,
b. diaries—Raleigh’s (VIII, XIII),
c. letters—between Raleigh and Valentine (VII, XI, XIV, XVI),
d. doggerel (VII),
e. songs (IX), and
f. quotations, usually one or two lines, but sometimes whole stanzas of poetry or popular folk songs.

This broad range of narrative elements is reflected in the novel’s breadth of register, which moves from representations of the vernacular, as in the reported conversations of the station hands, often in broken or dialectical English rendered phonetically, and of the personal, as in the various diaries and letters, to often bathetic


“philosophical” “contemplations”—on sheep (V), local vermin (VI, VIII), “native” pigs (VII), wild dogs (IX), and “Darwinian principles,” but most often on Raleigh’s unsettling experience of being a settler (206). The range of quotations is just as broad, though they are for the most part from eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English and French literature, with a smattering of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature and the classics: from frequent quotes from popular songs, to Burns—as befits the “highland” location (61, 83, 297, 310, 316, 510), to Chamier’s Romantic of preference, Byron (29, 41, 488), to Goethe’s *Faust* (421). All this heterogeneous material reinforces our sense that the narrative is fragmented or decentered. Likewise the narration: though for the most part the narrative voice is heterodiegetic, in that the novel is narrated by a covert external narrator who tells both Raleigh’s story and that of the settlement, it is variably focalised. The narration focusses out and in, as it were, as life in the settlement and the actions of Raleigh and others are described or “contemplated” philosophically, sometimes through Raleigh’s eyes or in his words (in his diaries and letters, for example), sometimes from outside. This variable focalisation, along with Raleigh’s sceptical “philosophising,” generate what Wattie describes as the “complexities of . . . multi-perspectivism” of the novel.299 All these structural factors account for the apparent formlessness—I would say openness—of the narrative. But despite its picaresquerie, the narrative is bound by the “unities” of place and time, and, to some degree, of action.

2.2  *The geography of the narrative*

The action of *Philosopher Dick* takes place in the back country in and around Marino station over about three years in the early eighteen-sixties, though most of the “real time” action is confined to the last few months of Raleigh’s final year at the station leading up to Christmas 1863. Chapters I to VI are chronologically unmarked, except for chapter IV, which summarises Raleigh’s previous three years at the station; chapters VII to XX take place from September to December of that final year. The narrative is driven by Valentine’s proposal in the opening chapter that Raleigh quit Marino station and come to live with him in the small town of Sunnydowns (33-34). Raleigh vacillates for most of the novel over whether to accept his proposal: in

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299 Wattie, “Chamier, George.”
chapter III, he tells Val that he had promised Dale he would stay until shearing-time in October (62); in chapter V, he decides to leave out of frustration with life as a boundary-walker (114-17); in chapter VII (1 Sep.), Val asks him again by letter but Raleigh delays, and so forth (181-82). It is not until chapter XIV (26 Oct.), when Val asks him yet again by letter, that Raleigh at last makes a move (389). After a final interview with Dale that ends in stalemate, he quits the station (390-404, 407). The rest of the novel, after a detour to Christchurch (XVI), he spends settling in with Val in Sunnydowns and finding a job. The novel ends with the pair deciding to spend Christmas at Glenmoor, a low country station owned by Seymour, whose daughter Alice will play the role of confidante to Raleigh in *Siren* (XX).

Raleigh’s vacillation over Val’s proposal gives the narrative a fatalistic quality, as we wait for him to decide to quit the station. But it is not Chamier’s main focus, nor the thread of the narrative I will follow here. The greater part of the narrative consists of a series of stock episodes of back country life, both agricultural and social, which constitute Raleigh’s “adventures”: going for assistance for an injured stationhand (I-II); taking supper and breakfast at the station and making damper (I, II, VIII); taking part in the biannual muster, a pighunt and shearing at the station (V, VII, XII); chancing upon a splitters’ camp, a tournament of rams and a massacre of sheep by a rogue dog (VI, VIII, IX); and, once Raleigh moves down to Sunnydowns, awaiting the arrival of the mail and partaking in a colonial Christmas (XIX, XX). In the course of these adventures, Raleigh offers his unsettling “contemplations” of back country life and of his own place in the scheme of things—what Chamier describes in his manifesto as Raleigh’s “moralis[ing] about things in general” and his attempt “to peer into his own heart and into the hidden secrets of nature” (*SSS GR* 107, 108).

It is the story of Raleigh’s unsettlement that represents the main thread of the narrative. Out on the boundary by himself, Raleigh becomes increasingly unsettled as his sense of self begins to disintegrate and he struggles to know what to do with himself. In a version in miniature of his “Philosopher’s Progress” through the novels, he tries a series of solutions to the problem of his unsettlement: in chapter IV, he thinks communion with Nature is going to get him settled—this turns out to be a false *anagnorisis* (moment of recognition); at his nadir in chapter IX, when he contemplates suicide, he thinks work might save him—this turns out to be false again; in chapter XII, he starts to think love is the answer—this turns out to be a *peripeteia*
(turning-point) for him, as the trilogy plays out, though it is hardly a true *anagnorisis*, given that he spends the rest of *Philosopher Dick* avoiding this realisation. Raleigh does end up moving down to Sunnydowns and putting his philosophy to the test in a series of sentimental romances in *Siren*, the next novel of the trilogy.

The geographical movement of the narrative reproduces this “Philosopher’s Progress” in broad strokes. The four main geographical locations can be plotted as follows.

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**Fig. 14. Locations in *Philosopher Dick*, based on “Map of the Province of Canterbury New Zealand” (detail), John Marshman [and Henry Selfe Selfe], *Canterbury, New Zealand, in 1862* (London: G. Street, 1862) frontispiece. (Horsley Down [3] is in the high country northwest of Mt Grey; Leithfield/Kowai [2] is about two kilometres inland on the south bank of the Kowai.)

Moving citywards, we have Raleigh’s hut in the back back country past “Mt Vulcan” over the “Stony River” (location 4), “Marino station” or Horsley Down/Heathstock, the back country station (location 3), “Sunnydowns” or Leithfield, the small town (location 2), and Christchurch, the city (location 1). Location “0” represents the
colonial metropolis or alternative metropolitan centre—Melbourne—where the third novel of the trilogy heads. The geography of *Philosopher Dick* maps straightforwardly onto the geography of Canterbury, though Chamier has changed the names of the station and the small town. But he divides the back country, where most of the narrative takes place, into two symbolic sublocations:

a. the *back back country* where Raleigh’s hut is situated, in the main unpeopled and regulated by the “rule of the bush”—of appropriation and adaptation to circumstances—and characterised by sublime experiences of Nature and other uncanny phenomena, and

b. the *back country* of the station, peopled by a cosmopolitan and almost entirely male crowd, regulated by discipline and the laws of settler economics and characterised by violence and storytelling (58-59).

In contrast, he represents the provincial town in the front country as a stereotypically female space, regulated by a discourse of respectability and bureaucracy, and characterised by romance and gossip.

In the course of the novel, Raleigh moves from “Marino station” in the back country (location 3) to his mountain hut in the back back country (location 4), as he goes “back to Nature”; then he returns to the station in the back country, to get back to work; then, having made his decision to quit the station, he moves to the provincial city of Christchurch (location 1) and back to the provincial town of Sunnydowns (location 2)—in search of love, as it turns out. Beginning at the station and taking movement toward the city as inward, the narrative moves out to the back back country from the station, back in to the station, right in to the city, bypassing the town, and finally, back out again to the town. The zigzag geographical movement of the narrative represented in figure 15 typifies Raleigh’s push-pull relation with settler society, as he is excluded and then drawn in by other settlers, only to end up in the middle ground. Moreover, in keeping with the grand narrative of settlement as a centripetal movement toward the city that Chamier uses to structure his trilogy, the novel moves his narrative of sentimental education one step inward: from the station, where three quarters of the novel takes place, to the town, where the next novel of the trilogy, *A South-Sea Siren*, will be set.
3 A pair of unhappy Jacks: the unsettled settler in *Philosopher Dick*

*Philosopher Dick* begins with Raleigh in his third year at the station and already well and truly “colonised” (149). The opening scene takes place in the oddly cosmopolitan milieu of the “men’s kitchen at the Marino station” amid “a motley group” of immigrant workers (1, 5). Raleigh is out of place there. He is introduced in his absence by the station manager Stead:

Raleigh is a right good fellow . . . but he is too cynical, and he is quite lost here. Absurd! a man of his parts and accomplishments fooling away his life tailing sheep. He gets into a morbid state, too, and becomes very unsociable. I have no patience with such foolishness. I don’t believe he has one idea about bettering his condition. (17)

Cynicism, folly, morbid unsociability, a lack of material ambition: the rest of the novel explores these traits that mark him out from other settlers, in short, his alienation from other settlers and settler society.
After this opening, the action tracks back to the real beginning of Raleigh’s story, to suggest that this alienation—and the alienation from himself that underlies it—began with his alienation from his former life in the Old World and all that it represents. He felt that alienation as a kind of freedom: not as the “freedom and the bush” after which many young colonial men emigrated—remembering that he says he emigrated “not with a view to getting on in the world, but to get away from the world”—but as a moment of negative freedom, an “ever wakeful consciousness of an overpowering Present” that is like “a living death” (47, 48, 100). In this moment, “his former life became almost as a blank to him,” it “faded away into the dim and receding past” (100). Art, nature, books, “philosophical friends” and “sentimental correspondents” all fell away until he fancied that “an impassable barrier divided him from all he cared for on earth” (101-02). He became aware of “the utter loneliness of his position,” which he personifies as “[t]he gloomy spectre Reality [that], having once revealed itself, would never leave him” (98, 99). In Samuel Butler’s Erewhon, a similar moment leads Higgs to what he describes as “[that] dreadful doubt as to my own identity—as to the continuity of my past and present existence—which is the first sign of that distraction which comes on those who have lost themselves in the bush.”

Where Higgs sees this problem of identity as a kind of historical break, by which Butler is presumably preparing him to ascend to his utopia in the back country, Raleigh characteristically “philosophises” it—he sees the moment as a negative moment of “dissolution” in the Hegelian sense, revealing his self as object: “In the intensity of his powers of abstraction, he . . . bring[s] himself to realise his own personality as if it were a thing apart, an object in view” (99). From this moment, he is literally de-centered: he is alienated from himself, struggling to see himself as whole and reduced to patching together a make-do self—or what turns out to be a series of selves—to fill an imaginary void within. And unlike Higgs’s, Raleigh’s experience of the back country will be anything but utopian; it is, in the phrase from Byron, a descent into “great nature’s [and his] own abyss.”

This is Raleigh’s—and the trilogy’s—zero point and the point of departure for Chamier’s story. In a sense, this moment skews the originary moment of freedom that

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301 Hegel, Phenomenology 19.
302 Byron 471.
for Hardy marks the settler fantasy of natural settlement, a moment of “voluntary cultural [self-]dispossession” whereby

the politics of racial and cultural domination and resistance are displaced and refigured in terms of an erotic and aesthetic deficiency in European culture. Their theme is therefore not possession but dispossession. To surrender the furnishings of a culture both European and bourgeois is to come into the sensuality of a “natural occupancy” of the new land.  

For Chamier, it is not that simple. Putting aside the fact that he saw the majority of settlers as resisting this indigenising or “nativising” moment through nostalgia for the Old World and the attempt to transplant the Old into the New, viz. colonialism, he presents Raleigh’s “surrender” as involuntary: it does not feel good (it is not “sensual”) and it does not do him any immediate good—it only “frees” him to try out a series of personas or positions (it is thoroughly un-“natural”). Given that he sees no escape from the forces of colonialism at work on the ground in the Antipodes, his solution to the problem of settling the self will turn out to be an aesthetic (but not aestheticising) one—and one that takes shape over time. Chamier sees his life in hindsight as an aesthetic whole: a narrative of sentimental education in which his autoethnographical protagonists work through a series of sentimental personas or positions as they try to get settled, or rather, try to come to terms with their unsettlement.

In the course of the Canterbury novels, Chamier has Raleigh learn that the self cannot simply be remade in the act of settlement (it is not a tabula rasa), nor can society (it is not founded on a terra nullius); the self and society must be patched together or refashioned, and rely on the sympathy of others and on the history of the place, if only by negation. To this end, he has Raleigh work through two sentimental positions or personas in Philosopher Dick: one akin to Shakespeare’s melancholy Jaques for his critical or unsettling description of settler society, another akin to the melancholy Jean-Jacques Rousseau for his record of the isolated sensibility unsettled in the face of the abyss of Nature.

3.1 Raleigh as Shakespeare’s “melancholy Jaques”: the unsettler

303 Hardy 215, 214 (emphasis given).
The wise man’s folly is anatomized
Even by the squandering glances of the fool.
Invest me in my motley. Give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of th’infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

—Jaques, in William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*[^304]

In chapter VI, we hear the new chum’s “rambling and doleful account of his emigration and colonial experience,” by which he has been “brought low” in the new country (154, 155). Just like Raleigh, the new chum is the son of a military man (a general to Raleigh’s Major) who has “imbibed democratic notions about liberty and equality, and a supreme contempt for the artificial restrictions and stupid prejudices of a bloated society” and is “an amateur Bohemian, of irregular proclivities” (154-55). Unlike Raleigh, he came out because he fell out with his father. Raleigh sympathises with him but hints that his own case is somewhat different because he *chose* to come out: “‘It’s a bad case . . . [but] you have thoroughly deserved your fate’” (156). The new chum admits that he was a fool, to which Raleigh says: “If you have seriously arrived at that conclusion, your colonial experience may not have been entirely thrown away” (157). Raleigh is suggesting that becoming “colonised” requires that the new chum admit that he is something of a fool—that he was a fool to think he might find “freedom and the bush” here in the first place (149). Or more radically, that becoming colonised requires that you learn to play the fool. This Raleigh does. It is the only way he can deal with the disillusionment he felt once “the novel aspect of the new settlement” had worn off and the thoroughgoing economism of settler society in the back country became apparent, the feeling that he is “entirely out of harmony with his surroundings, where a humdrum, bustling, and practical spirit prevail[s], servilely devoted to PROGRESS and UTILITY” (95).

In the spirit of Jaques in *As You Like It*, who, as Alan Brissenden puts it, “comments satirically under the cloak . . . of . . . the melancholy philosopher,” Raleigh thinks of himself as a pastoral philosopher who can see through the “dismal

[^304]: Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 146 (II.vii.56-61). Here “anatomized” means satirised, “squandering” means straying or erratic (*ibid*).
comedy” of station life (63). We often find Raleigh striking a pastoral pose in his “philosophical” moments. Chapter V sees Raleigh at work as a “sheepwalker” and cursing his wayward sheep:

the best thing under such trying circumstances would be to set himself down and light his pipe, in order to grasp the situation in all its aspects. So he found shelter under the lea of a large outspreading flax bush, and, having wriggled himself into the most comfortable position that the stony nature of the ground admitted of, he “lit up,” and indulged in a quiet smoke and a “big think.” He first relieved himself with a good all-round curse. . . . That business over, he felt better, and was able to take a calmer view of the situation. . . . (111)

It is this local version of the pastoral ideal—reclining smoking under the flax bush and having “a ‘big think’” about “the situation in all its aspects,” including his own—that enables Raleigh to overcome the discomfort of his “trying circumstances” in Philosopher Dick. In this spirit, Chamier often has Raleigh play the fool and mock the ironies of back country life. Characteristically, the mockery is often at his own expense. An episode relating his first attempts at the back country settler’s rite of passage of baking a “damper” (unleavened bread) is typical. His second attempt produces a rather intractable specimen:

I tried in vain to cut a slice; the knife would not scratch it. I tried the tomahawk, but that was too light to make an impression. Determined not to be beat, I took it outside, placed it carefully on the chopping block, then swung high in air [sic] the American axe, and delivered a terrific cut which nearly cut my leg off, for the blade glanced off the loaf and came back upon me. As for the damper, it shot down the gully, madly pursued by Mop, and was afterwards picked up near the creek. I found that the stroke of the axe had made an indentation, which enabled me by means of the maul and wedges to effect an opening. (225)

Though there is much in this vein of comic “sketches of shepherd-life,” as The Academy describes them, or, more broadly, of “verisimilar” descriptive work or recording of agricultural and social life in the back country in Philosopher Dick, there

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is also at work a deeper Schopenhauerian critical impulse to dig beneath appearances. To use Stevens’s terms, Chamier’s descriptive work is more than just “recording,” it is critical or “interpreting.” The persona of the pastoral philosopher “[g]ive[s] [Raleigh] leave,” in the spirit of Jaques, “[t]o speak [his] mind, and . . . through and through / Cleanse the foul body of th’infected world”—not that the other settlers “patiently receive [his] medicine,” as he might like. It gives him critical distance on settler society in the back country, in particular on the barely repressed violence central to the economy of settler agriculture, be it that of the musters (I, V, IX), the pig-hunt (VII), shearing (XII), or more generally on what Evans in “Paradise or Slaughterhouse” calls “[t]he violence of frontier life, and the existence of a class of people created by and attuned to that violence.” From the first few pages of the novel, Raleigh is alert to the contrast between the appearance of a “degree of civilisation” of the Dale’s “residence” at Heathstock and the real situation “[a]t the back” of the homestead: there “all was dirt, disorder, and muddle; stables, stock-yards, and sheep-pens being spotted about. The post and rail fences were hung with reeking sheepskins, and the slaughter-yard, with its blood-stained scaffold, stood close by” (6). Similarly, he implies that the “rough” code of sociability—the “kindly sentiment,” music and conversation—of the stationhands belies the violence of their life, not to mention their willingness to turn on those who defy the code or set themselves apart, as he does (40).

This kind of critical puncturing of the hypocrisies of the regime of “keeping up appearances” in settler society continues throughout the trilogy (SSS 105). But Chamier never allows Raleigh to settle for mere diagnosis of the “infection” or problem that confronts him; he always tempts him to philosophise about the aetiology or conditions of possibility of the problem. In the case of settler agriculture, he has Raleigh speculate that, despite its economically productive appearance, it enacts a fundamental violence or “universal warfare” (207). At one point, Raleigh is watching “a grand tournament” for supremacy amongst a mob of rams (205); his ironic reflection echoes Schopenhauer—and Hobbes (205):

306 William Sharp 610.
308 Shakespeare, As You Like It 146 (II.vii.58-60).
To fight is one of the first laws of nature. All animated existence is a conflict. War and bloodshed are “necessary evils.” . . . They belong . . . to the very essence of the “eternal fitness of things.” The most useful and beneficial institution in the glorious constitution of our universe. All animals (excepting man) are armed for the good fight; either to prey on the brotherhood, or for defence against insidious attacks, or for mastery in their own family relations. Creation is an armed camp, and the work of slaughtering its principal occupation. (206)

Chamier will contrast this fundamental violence—this idea of natural life as a cruel struggle for survival, in which back country settlers participate with their violent agriculture—with an alternative impulse to sympathetic identification (as does Schopenhauer), be it through communion with Nature, or sentimental romance or domesticity. But it is the violence that strikes Chamier as fundamental in Philosopher Dick, whether it is the violence of “open conflict” or “guile and stratagem,” as Raleigh puts it (207). Chamier suggests that the keeping up of appearances in back country settler society is an evasion of the violence inherent in settler agriculture—not to mention the harder fact of invasion, by which settlers like the “Dales” (the Lances) laid claim to, enclosed and exploited the land: the fact that settlers had to displace the indigenous peoples of the place, for the most part by “guile and stratagem” rather than “open conflict,” as a condition of settler agriculture.

The position of the pastoral philosopher does not just enable Raleigh to get critical distance on settler society, it enables him to sublimate its violence and settle himself—after a fashion—by making himself “fe[el] better” (111). It helps him to achieve a temporary “equanimity” or distance on his experience—and on the enterprise of settlement (113). According to Brissenden, the same process of sublimation happened over time with the trope of Jaques as melancholy philosopher: in As You Like It, Jaques weeps in empathy with the stag as it weeps in extremis; by the time William Hodges (the very same who accompanied James Cook on his second voyage to the Antipodes) paints the scene, Jaques reclines and contemplates the stag in pastoral fashion—as Raleigh contemplates settler agriculture. Jaques becomes, in

311 Brissenden, Introduction, As You Like It, by William Shakespeare 31; see John Boydell, Gallery of Illustrations for Shakespeare’s Dramatic Works (Philadelphia: George Barrie, 1874), online at “The Arts Collection: The gallery of illustrations for Shakespeare’s dramatic works: Contents,” University of
William Hazlitt’s phrase, “the only purely contemplative character in Shakespeare. He thinks and does nothing”—not unlike Raleigh. 312

Fig. 16. William Hodges and George Romney, *Jaques and the Wounded Stag*, 1790, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund, New Haven. (Reproduced by permission of the Bridgeman Art Library.)

The position allows Raleigh to manage his alienation from settler society by enabling him to self-fashion an illusion of “originality,” to keep up the appearance of being a kind of philosophical outsider in settler society, “think[ing] and do[ing] nothing.” He rationalises his “originality” as an Epicurean relative freedom that nonetheless keeps up “the illusion” of absolute freedom or “independence”: “[A]t least we may regulate our conduct somewhat according to our tastes, and live up to our own idea of happiness. I came out all this way to be free, and I find there is no such thing. Still, since absolute independence is not to be had, I must keep up the illusion of it; so people call me ‘an original!’” (65). Nonetheless, the position of the pastoral philosopher will prove problematic for Chamier—not to mention the other settlers. In hindsight, it can be read in at least two ways: as transplanting the British topos of the colony as pastoral idyll, “a rural arcady,” “an arcadian near-paradise for sturdy emigrant yeomen and small farmers,” as Russel Ward has described it, but

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emphasising non-productive philosophising rather than more “reproductive works” (440); or as offering Chamier’s eccentric reading of the so-called “Australian Legend,” the Bush ideal that emphasises the frontier values of independence, egalitarianism and mateship as characteristic of “Australianness,” rather than transplanted urban or provincial values, whereby he makes independence the supreme value, as if to make a virtue of the atomised social relations of the frontier. 313 As regards the first reading, Chamier will suggest that Raleigh’s position is not half as settled as he thinks and that his education will require that he engage with settler society. As regards the second, he will imply that independence is a dubious value—certainly for Raleigh, for whom it will become an unsettling isolation.

Raleigh himself sees the persona of the pastoral philosopher as simply the “most comfortable position” that the nature of the settlement—namely “the stony [read: unsettleable] nature of the ground”—permits him (111). It seems like a pretty settled position, hence the characteristic pose: reclining on his arm, smoking and thinking, in other words, passive, relaxed rather than hard at work, and close to the ground. It shows him to be at ease with the place and distances him from the actual work of settling. But the other settlers perceive Raleigh as both complacent—all-too-settled—and unsettling, not to mention a bit of a fool. Though he is seen as “a right good fellow,” they think it absurd that “a man of his parts and accomplishments [should] fool . . . away his life tailing sheep” and find his unsociability “foolish” (17). They see him as a “corrupting influence,” on account of his lack of that settler sine qua non: “energy”—because he has “no idea of bettering [his] condition,” of progressing himself and the colony, and because he is altogether “too cynical” about colonial ideas and ideals (30, 32, 17). Just like Jaques in *As You Like It*, Raleigh fails to persuade anybody to his point of view. When his neighbour “Sailor Jack” and his “henchman Jim Pipe” come upon Raleigh reclining as they muster Raleigh’s wayward sheep back across the boundary, Jack threatens to do him violence if he does not muck in (113):

> “Thanks, old man,” [Raleigh] said; “you have saved me a lot of trouble. I was just wondering where the darned critters had got to. . . .”

Jack looked savage. . . . “You go the right way to find hout,” he growled, “squatting under a flax bush and smoking a pipe. That may be a philosopher’s way of keeping his boundary—’tain’tourn.”

“D—— the boundary; I’m sick of it,” replied the other coolly.

“Then why don’t ye clear hout,” replied Jack surlily, “and give it up to some cove as’ll mind it? Here’s Jim, what ’ud be glad of the place.

He’s looking for a crib to settle down. . . .” (114)

And if it is not other settlers rounding on him for being a good-for-nothing “scholard,” it is the place itself—or rather, the pigs who are its natural settlers—who do him violence for thinking too much (117). When Raleigh is roped in to going pig-hunting in chapter VII, he romanticises his encounter with a “grand old boar” as a “conflict with the brute creation,” with Nature per se (168, 167). But his half-hearted attempt at this settler rite of passage—or act of settlement—is a sublime failure. He and the hunting party have come upon the boar in “the peaceful enjoyment of his breakfast” (168). Like a true settler, “his boarship did [not] exhibit the slightest intention of seeking for safety in flight, but squatted down on his hams and contemplated the intruders with a vicious twinkle in his little cold grey eyes” (168). Raleigh brings to bear his “stupendous mind” and decides—“for strategic purposes”—to “develop a retrograde motion”:

It was humiliating, no doubt, for an intellectual being to have to retire before such a degraded emblem of brute force. That man, whose stupendous mind can encompass the globe, reach to the stars, and unmask the awful secrets of the creation, should collapse before a pig!

[. . .] But in dealing with wild boars, neither sentiment nor the pride of intellect availeth much. In a close contest of tusks versus poetry, the latter might be expected to come off second best.

Raleigh comes off second best in the settler stakes, but the status quo seems to be maintained: he is “permitted by the eternal fitness of things to return to his meditations on the infinite,” on the sublime, “and the pig to go on rooting up the grass”—like the “successful colonist” he is (172, 162). Raleigh preserves his philosophical distance—and remains unsettled, though comfortably so. But in a nasty twist, a sow charges him from nowhere and knocks him senseless. Picked up by the other hunters, he reiterates his unsettlement, asking, “Where am I?” (174). His much-vaunted philosophy counts for nothing; he is literally unsettled.
With this bathetic collapse, Chamier suggests that, in terms of his narrative of sentimental education, the position of the pastoral philosopher is an inadequate solution to the problem of Raleigh’s unsettlement: the distanciation it allows him vis-à-vis settler society is problematic—as what Alice Seymour calls Raleigh’s “pos[ing] as a Stoic” and “cultivat[ing] SUBLIME INDIFFERENCE towards the world” will be in *Siren* (SSS 242). Not for nothing is he knocked to the ground: Chamier implies that to get settled he is going to have to come to terms with the place, to return to Nature. Psychologically, Raleigh’s philosophy is inadequate too: he continues to suffer from melancholy or “hypochondria” (32). He decides he has to leave the home station and go it alone as a “boundary-walker,” living “Robinson-Crusoe like” in his hermitage on “the outermost boundary of the run,” setting the scene for the encounter with Nature that will represent the next phase in his education (90, 89).

3.2 Raleigh as “melancholy Jacques” Rousseau (or Manfred): the unsettled settler

Here he could commune with nature, untrammelled and undisturbed. He could bask in her sunshine, study her secrets, and relish all her beauties. Here he could indulge in his cherished day-dreams, fancy free, revel unrestrained in a little world of his own, peopled with creations of his sportive imagination; or yield to pensive reveries and more serious contemplation.

—George Chamier, *Philosopher Dick* 88-89

If Raleigh’s main role as pastoral philosopher in *Philosopher Dick* is to criticise or unsettle settler society in the back country (though he makes himself comfortable while doing it), when he heads off into the back back country he changes course. Raleigh’s answer to his alienation from settler society is to flee to Nature to try to settle himself. As his friend Valentine rather melodramatically puts it, he leaves “to seek refuge with the wood-hen and the paradise duck in the close places of nature; associating against [his] will, but compelled by the irresponsible unrest within thee to hold communion with disconsolate sheep-walkers like thyself, the loafing tramp, or the jabbering savage and his womanny!” (180). The hyperbole of Valentine’s
injunction sums up the disproportionate nature of Raleigh’s response: “[A]bandon hope in man! Cleave thou to the savagery of Nature” (181). What we get in this back country phase of Raleigh’s sentimental education is “an analytical study of solitude and its effect on a thoughtful mind,” as Nathan Haskell Dole suggests.\textsuperscript{314} Chamier presents Raleigh’s move as a Rousseauian attempt to counter the thoroughgoing economism and hypocrisies of back country settler society by communing with Nature one on one, by making a virtue of his solitude. At this point in his story, Raleigh’s state of mind and position on the nexus of nature and society mirror Rousseau’s. According to Timothy O’Hagan, Rousseau—like Raleigh—“is torn between a deep pessimism, as he regards the world as it is, and a degree of optimism, as he develops his own counter-theory”; in “the world as it is” nature and society are fundamentally opposed and “impose conflicting demands on the individual.”\textsuperscript{315} To put into practice his “counter-theory” requires that Rousseau reject society for nature. Raleigh does likewise—with unsettling effects.

From the beginning, Valentine warns Raleigh against the melancholy inherent in his preference for solitude. In trying to persuade him to come live with him at Sunnydowns, he says, “You say you love solitude; believe me, my child, it doesn’t love you; it is bad for you” (33). His guidance will prove prophetic. Raleigh begins by insisting he is “not naturally unsociable,” that he “fled from the resorts of men not from a dislike of his fellows, but from a yearning to be alone,” out of a desire to find himself in solitude (88). On first heading out back, he feels “a delightful sensation of relief” (87). And things go smoothly to begin with: “The first twelve months of this new existence passed away uneventfully, and without much effect on his state of mind” (90). After his initial companion, an old Scotsman called Donald Macmee, leaves, he comes to exult in the solitude, in his “Robinson-Crusoe like” existence at his hermitage in the hills. He restores his “hovel,” builds himself some furniture, gardens, cooks, keeps house, and cobbles (89). The life of solitude is his siren: “Solitude had won his heart, and as the years rolled on he became the more attached to this isolation, more fascinated by the powerful spell” (92).

Most of all, Raleigh delights in “self-communing and . . . solitary rambles” (88). His “self-communing” consists in sympathetic “commun[i]on with nature,” or rather Nature, whether through art or more directly through “day-dreams” or “pensive

\textsuperscript{314}Dole 2.

\textsuperscript{315}Timothy O’Hagan, \textit{Rousseau}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (1999; London: Routledge, 2003) 63, 64.
reveries” (87, 88, 89). In the face of Nature, he feels a sense of “a boundless sympathy”: “The deep solitudes attracted him. / A sense of indescribable freedom, a loosening of all artificial bonds, and a boundless sympathy with nature, thrilled his soul” (87). His feeling echoes Rousseau’s identification with the natural order in the seventh *Reverie of a Solitary Walker* (1782): “At such times his senses are possessed by a deep and delightful reverie, and in a state of blissful self-abandonment he loses himself in the immensity of this beautiful system, with which he feels himself identified.” But there is a foreboding, even masochistic undertone to his reveries: “He looked up to the lofty mountains, clad in sombre grandeur, with wondering admiration, and longed to explore their hidden passes, to scale their dizzy heights. The deep recesses of dark ravines had a fascination for him” (87). When these moments are “positive,” Raleigh will read them as painterly moments of Ruskinian transcendence through beautiful sublimity—through sublimity represented as beautiful—that make his Robinsonade feel right. But when they are “negative,” they intrude upon it in uncanny and unsettling ways, to which I will return.

The question is what these moments of sympathetic communion with Nature mean for Raleigh. As well as offering him an escape from the violence of back country settler society (or so he thinks), he feels that only sympathy—a feeling of connexion with someone or something outside himself, or as Adam Smith puts it, of “regard[ing] himself, not as something separated and detached, but as a citizen of the world [or] a member of the vast commonwealth of nature”—can cure him of his melancholy, since neither the “glaring newness” of the new country nor the “novelty of the situation” in which he now finds himself can do so: “mere diversity of scene cannot cure a morbid and melancholy temperament; the disease lies deeper, and relief can only spring from the heart, through the invigorating influence of appealing sympathy” (95, 87, 95). Given that at this point he is alienated from other settlers, he is fated to choose sympathy with Nature.

Leaving aside problems of settlement, Chamier also implies here that the problem Raleigh goes into the back back country to solve can be understood as a divorce between philosophy and sentiment—between “head” and “heart,” in the terms

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318 Adam Smith 162 (3.3).
of the conventional binary: sentimentally, Raleigh wants to commune with Nature, to “sympathise” with it; philosophically, he can only see it through a Schopenhauerian lens as a cruel struggle for survival with which he cannot sympathise. His refuge from the conflict between these two motives takes the form of a kind of aesthetic distance equal parts Schopenhauer and Ruskin. This position pushes further the distance that marked the position of the pastoral philosopher—though Raleigh thinks it is getting him closer to Nature through an aesthetic communion. For Schopenhauer, the “disinterested” aesthetic perspective gives you distance on a world of nature that is a cruel “will-ful” struggle for survival; Ruskin’s reading of such a position in “The Lamp of Memory” chapter of The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849) is more plainly aestheticising: it looks upon nature in its positive aspect—in the “secluded and serious beauty” of the Swiss Alps, for example—as a kind of painterly idyll.319 Raleigh’s moments of transcendence through beautiful sublimity are described in these terms, as in this depiction of a “beautiful vista” we see through his eyes as he returns to his hermitage via “Mount Vulcan” (66):

[When at last the solitary wayfarer reached the summit he paused . . . to take a look around. . . . Wide was the horizon, vast the imposing panorama which unfolded itself before him. Along the lofty ranges innumerable peaks stood up in naked grandeur, like the spires of some fantastic edifice, reaching to the clouds, and reflecting from their craggy sides the golden sunlight. . . . The evening shadows had crept over the scene, tinting with purple hues the mountain tops, and shrouding in misty gloom the far-stretching valleys, while from the deep recesses of black ravines rose a deep murmur of running waters. (65-66)

But Chamier implies that this picture strikes a false note and that the aesthetic communion with Nature it promises is illusory. It is a twist on Ruskin’s “Pathetic Fallacy,” less the “description of inanimate natural objects that ascribes to them human capabilities, sensations, and emotions,” as M. H. Abrams defines it, than the projection of a received and false idea of the self onto nature.320 In his essay “Ruskin’s


‘Frondes Agrestes’” (c.1875?), Chamier argues that Ruskin’s aesthetic is limited by his “ideal temperament” that gives him to view nature “poetical[ly]” and pantheistically (WP 73).\footnote{Frondes Agrestes, a selection from Ruskin’s magnum opus Modern Painters, also includes a discussion of pathos in art; see John Ruskin, Frondes Agrestes (London: George Allen, 1875) 22-24.} But here he suggests that simply to borrow and translate this received position, which is in any case an aestheticising or falsifying perspective on nature, is not going to help Raleigh get settled. This is why he has the moment of apparent transcendence first move Raleigh to tears with nostalgia for “those far distant shores which he had left, but where his heart still dwelt,” and then make him realise that “‘tis but an illusion!,” that in fact these “painted hills, clad in exquisite hues, and melting in the soft sunshine, are rugged and stony ranges . . . —deformed, gaunt, and of forbidding aspect. Inhospitable regions!” (67). Ruskin’s “Lamp of Memory” casts a false light on nature—and Raleigh’s attempt at sympathetic communion with Nature is a false anagnorisis.

Furthermore, Raleigh’s disillusioned realisation in the face of nature echoes Ruskin’s negative description, by way of contrast to his painterly idyll: nature in its negative aspect is “ oppressively desolate,” abyssal even, as exemplified for him by the “aboriginal” landscape of “the New Continent.”\footnote{Ruskin, Seven Lamps of Architecture 177.} But Chamier implies that Raleigh’s negative description of nature is not so straightforwardly “the reflection . . . of a colonizing eye,” as Newton suggests of Ruskin’s, or even the to-be-expected disillusionment of a metropolitan snob; it bodies forth the problem of settling the self in a new place.\footnote{Newton, “Colonialism above the Snowline” 86.} Chamier reads Raleigh’s unsettlement as exemplary, that is to say, as instructive about the fundamentally unsettled nature of settler society. And he will turn his disillusionment in the face of nature back on himself. The other note in Raleigh’s unsettling encounter with nature will be that of Byron’s Manfred, in particular the passage when Manfred, “alone upon the Cliffs” of the Jungfrau, is tempted to suicide in the abyss:

\begin{quote}
\textit{... ye Mountains,}
\textit{Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye. . . .}
\textit{And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge}
\textit{I stand, and on the torrent’s brink beneath}
\end{quote}

Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom’s bed
To rest forever—wherefore do I pause?324

This is where Chamier is leading Raleigh: to suicide, to an all-or-nothing self-effacing gesture of settlement, or rather, of unsettlement.

But first, a further question suggests itself: why does Raleigh’s attempt at sympathetic “commun[ion] with nature” take the form of such sublime moments (87)? Firstly, from the start of the novel Raleigh is already settled or rather has been settled or “colonised,” though for the most part this “colonisation” has been unchosen (149). He has felt invaded, even animalised by this process, hence his “unpleasant retrospection” that he is like his wayward sheep:

“[D]id I not leave a happy land of civilisation and refinement; did I not leave congenial pursuits, the companionship of friends, the attractions of society and art, and all for what? To make a fool of myself; to bury myself in a wilderness; to seek for solitude, misery, and privation at the farthest end of the world. Truly, I am that blessed sheep!” (112-13)

Such an animalisation is one of the uncanny effects of settlement, to which I will return, but to Raleigh, it is “utterly perverse”: he wants a settlement on his terms, in other words, one the nature of which he has chosen—and that centres on him—and a settlement on a grand scale, but one that nonetheless avoids the hard fact of invasion (112). The distanced and aestheticised relation with nature the Ruskinian viewpoint offers him seems to do just that.

Secondly, this type of sublime encounter with Nature exemplifies what Nigel Clark in “De-feral: Introduced Species and the Metaphysics of Conservation” takes to be a long-standing local metaphysics of presence. He sees the local landscape as haunted by a “persistent phantasm of a pure and unmediated experience of ‘nature.’” The “phantasm” is the fantasy that such an experience will enable settlers to overcome the “culture/nature dichotomy” (or the settler society/nature dichotomy on my reading) that marks their experience, in other words, that it will enable them to

settle themselves in the new place by indigenising themselves.\textsuperscript{325} I have mentioned two such “phantastic” positions: aesthetic communion with Nature and self-effacement. It is a truism that the topos of the sublime was, as Francis Pound puts it, “brought in the European’s cultural baggage to New Zealand,” that “however unfamiliar New Zealand’s natural objects might be to the European, invariably what they gave rise to was the familiar: to European-coded emotions.”\textsuperscript{326} That such indigenising moves displace the hard fact of invasion is clear in the case of the fantasy of an aesthetic communion with Nature, which aestheticises the local landscape by casting it in a metropolitan light. This echoes what Patrick Evans says about sublimation in “‘No earth tones,’” that it is “an imaginative dematerialisation by which the realities of colonisation, particularly its absences and its awkward violations, are transformed into apprehensions of what Burke defined as the terrible and the marvellous.”\textsuperscript{327} “Dematerialisation” perfectly describes Raleigh’s aestheticising move.

Nevertheless, Evans’s inference that the topos of the sublime is therefore “a crucial tool of colonisation, in New Zealand as anywhere else, a way of painting over an Other too terrible to contemplate unsublimated” might seem overstated in a South Island context.\textsuperscript{328} The displacement of the indigenous peoples of the place seems less apparent there, perhaps because there were not many Maori around at the time: there seems to have been between about two and three thousand Kai Tahu in the whole island in 1840.\textsuperscript{329} Though Maori in the south were indeed “paint[ed] over,” they were hardly “an Other too terrible to contemplate unsublimated.” Instead, they were seen as a more or less hypothetical presence, whether it be in discussions of the “Native Question” in the local parliament and press—the question as to what to do about “our” natives, the Native Minister Frederick Weld called it—or indeed in Chamier’s Canterbury novels (SSS 56).\textsuperscript{330}

\textsuperscript{326} Francis Pound, \emph{Frames on the Land: Early Landscape Painting in New Zealand} (Auckland: Collins, 1983) 20.
\textsuperscript{328} Patrick Evans, “‘No Earth Tones.’”
\textsuperscript{330} Fred. A. Weld, \emph{Notes on New Zealand Affairs: Comprising a Sketch of its Political History, in Reference Especially to the Native Question, its Present Position, the Policy for the Future, with a Few General Remarks upon the Relations of England to her Colonies} (London: Edward Stanford, 1869); see
This is not to say “the Native” per se was insignificant. Because settlements are nearly always founded on cleared ground, namely, in somebody else’s place, settlers need to legitimate their practices of settlement and they often do so by problematising “the Native.” In the North Island, this problematisation took the form of outright negation, that is, the alienation of Maori land by force and/or the force of law, which process then needed to be ideologically and psychologically sublimated; in the South, because the alienation was less barefaced or usually seen to be happening at a remove in the North, the problematisation was more imaginary. It was less an “othering” process than one of “saming” or adaptation—though naturally the process was not without geopolitical implications. In “Reading Culturally,” Alex Calder describes a thought-experiment whereby “something on the far side of a cultural border—a something [he]’d rather not put a name to,” might be called “a mysterious x.” The unsettling feeling of such a “mysterious x” “can be reduced by finding a more familiar name” for it like a stereotype or a taboo.331

Another version of this naturalising gesture of sublimation that became a stereotype of South Island literature was to equate “the Native” with Nature, not so much in the familiar colonising gesture of seeing “natives” as living in a state of nature and therefore noble or able to be displaced as in seeing communion with Nature as a way to get settled or “nativise” oneself, as Chamier had Raleigh do. It will crop up later in a positive form in the post-romantic pantheism of the cultural nationalists, in what Charles Brasch in “The Silent Land” (1939) describes as “the need for a man ‘to lie with the hills like a lover,’” which impulse returns full force in James K. Baxter’s nativism, in the worship of the native Earth as healing “mother,” a “greater I / Whose language is silence” in the “Pig [South] Island Letters.”332 In Tutira, Herbert Guthrie-Smith puts it more pragmatically: “A settler gives his best love not to his parents, not to his wife, not to his little ones, but to his land.”333 Such gestures naturalise the relation of settlers to the place; they take the mystery out of it.
as it were—and remove the Maori problem from the equation, as if to stay on the settlers’ side of the “cultural border.” All the talk of the “Native Question” in the South Island, which came down to helping or not helping to pay for the war of North Island settlers against Maori “fanatics,” did likewise: it made Maori a hypothetical problem for settlers to solve, not to mention displacing the problem to the North Island. As an autoethnographer, Chamier always focusses on the response of settlers to the unsettling negative phenomena—the “mysterious x’s”—of settlement, that is to say, on the place of sublimation in the settler imaginary.

The other sublime “phantasm of a pure and unmediated experience of ‘nature’” Chamier looks into, that of self-effacement, seems much less an act of cultural legitimation through sublimation than a gesture of debasement. He will read Raleigh’s death-wish as less an act of self-destruction as another test of sentiment, an attempt to plumb the depths of feeling in the self as a catharsis. To return by way of an explanation to Pound’s statement about the local encounter with nature giving rise to “European-coded emotions,” it fits with Chamier’s view of the “new” settlement as a test of sentiment that the topos of the sublime might become naturalised here as an affective experience, a sentimental response to nature.334 The local sublime typically attempts to translate what Burke called the “inferior” affective sublime, rather than Kant’s high, philosophical version, what Jean-François Lyotard describes as “the ‘transport’ of thought towards its limits”—though Chamier does parody the Kantian reading of the sublime in the episode of Raleigh’s bathetic encounter with Nature on the pig-hunt, in which his lofty “meditations on the infinite,” on the sublime, are upset by his being knocked senseless by a charging sow (172).335 Meaghan Morris calls this inferior local sublime a “popular or casual version of the sublime”; Wedde labels it “provincialis[ed]” by its distance from the centre.336 But it might better be described as a “debased” sublime in Bakhtin’s sense of debasement, because the topos has become “degraded” or physicalised in its translation to the new settlement.337 This fits with the way the new settlement is often conceived of in the colonial imaginary as

334 Pound 20.
“marked by a general downward thrust,” that is, as lower or inverted in relation to the metropolitan centre, as the antipode of the metropolis.\textsuperscript{338} Chamier came to see this relation as productive: the Antipodes might have been a purgatory, but it was one to which he not unhappily consigned himself. Not so Raleigh at this point in his story; in the next phase of his education, Chamier will force him to debase himself, to look within himself rather than to Nature and plumb the depths of his self.

To return to Raleigh’s story: out in the back back country, despite his occasional moments of aesthetic transcendence, Raleigh’s desire to be alone and commune with Nature becomes increasingly pathological as the “wilderness” begins to “exercise a weird fascination over [him]” (186). As the narrator puts it, the “baneful influence of this intense loneliness was not long in taking effect on such a sensitive temperament as Raleigh’s. It worked upon him with a slow but cankering growth” (92). His “morbid symptoms” alienate him further from other settlers (93): “The companionship of man had become distasteful to him, his sympathies were less effusive, his former complacency was ruffled, his gentle kindliness was soured. He was becoming cynical. His only delight was to be alone” (94). A severe winter sets in and brings home to Raleigh his real isolation: the “utter loneliness of his position” that gives rise to “a sensation of anxiety and dread—he felt that he was alone” (98). Not only does he feel alienated from his past, as we have seen, trapped in an “ever wakeful consciousness of an overpowering Present,” but also from the “outside world,” from the world of nature about him (100). He realises his aesthetic pastimes are mere consolations: “In vain would he strive to rouse himself from this miserable dejection; seek for relaxation in his books, call in aid all his philosophy, or fly to his beloved palette.” For him, this is “fancy”—the fancy that he might commune aesthetically with Nature—giving way to “reality,” reality with a capital “R”: the “gloomy spectre Reality,” as he puts it, that “having once revealed itself, would never leave him. It would dog his steps on his long rambles, and . . . haunt his visions” (99). This spectre represents a failure of imagination in the face of the reality of the new place, an inability to settle.

Likewise, Raleigh feels “out of sympathy with the world of letters”; his much-vaunted philosophy has served him as scant defence against “Reality.” He puts it prosaically at first: “It had not adapted him to his ‘environment’; it had not made him

\textsuperscript{338} Bakhtin, \textit{Rabelais} 435.
rich, or wise, or happy.” But he concludes that his failure of imagination exemplifies “the impossibility of enlightenment” in a place like this (103). Where once he “had set up an idol called TRUTH” and held it to be “the Universal Good—to bless, to beautify, and to enlighten the world,” “all that had been revealed to him was a hideous hypothesis of FORCE and MATTER—a soulless thing” (104). He has gone to Nature as a Schillerian truth-seeker and found it to be brutally material, as Büchner’s famous maxim describes it: “No force without matter—no matter without force!” He reads this disillusionment as a via negativa that has led him to a bedrock realisation: “We pry into the secrets of nature until we discover that there are none—the Unknown is not solved, it simply disappears. We are thoroughly disillusioned . . .” (76). But “Reality” is not done with him yet; the reality he has yet to confront “face-to-face” will strike at the root of his being. All the same, it is as though Raleigh’s desire to commune sympathetically with Nature is turning against him: he begins to project inward the imaginary void he senses in Nature; his self becomes ever more decentered, as he comes to realise that his conviction as to “the self-sufficiency of his own mind” is a “fatal delusion,” that he has become alienated not just from Home and other settlers, but from himself (93).

Raleigh’s final alienation manifests itself as an uncanny objectivity or depersonalisation: Raleigh “brings himself to realise his own personality as if it were a thing apart, an object in view.” He reads this depersonalisation as “reality” working on him: “[g]rim reality . . . roughly rend[ing] asunder the bright veil of his illusions,” enabling him to “view himself as he really [i]s” (107, 99). He sees himself for what he really is—an unsettled settler, whose unsettlement is marked by an extreme spatiotemporal distatination, by a sense of ahistoricality and displacement: he feels lifted out of history, his own and history per se; he feels captive “in [the] ever wakeful consciousness of an overpowering Present,” and disconnected from reality: “The outside world had lost all interest for him—it had almost ceased to exist to his distempered mind” (100). For Chamier, ahistoricality and dislocation represent the ground-note of settler experience that most settlers avoid facing at any cost. But whatever the “epistemological” payoff, Raleigh experiences his unsettlement as a “living death,” melancholic, animalising, carceral, ominous (100): “In his mind’s eye

he would see himself sitting dejected by the smouldering log-fire, or pacing like some
wild creature the narrow confines of his cell, with his wan features, dishevelled locks,
his melancholy eyes, that strained their aching vision into the clouded outlook of a
dark future” (99-100). He feels invaded by “doubts,” “scorn[ed] hopes” and
“unmask[ed] . . . ideals,” as might be expected.

But what unsettles Raleigh most are the “fits of hallucination,” the uncanny
phenomena that haunt him (107): “voices” and “emanations of the past” like the ghost
of his mother and the waking nightmare of his own “entombment”: “Nothing but
emptiness—the void of the dark enclosure . . . the stillness of the dead” (108). Worst
of all is “the Idea of Death,” “an undefined and awful PRESENCE” (109). For
Chamier, such negative phenomena are uncanny returns of the settler imaginary. All
along, Raleigh has been shadowed by such phenomena, like his frequent mock-Gothic
encounters with apparitions: the “ghost” hiding in his bed who turns out to be
McWhirter, the “apparition” “clothed in white” that is just a nightshirt hanging on a
peg, and the “dog fiend” that is revealed to be an “old black sheep,” to name just three
(72-74; 190-91; 250, 255-56). Not for nothing do these encounters turn out
bathetically: for example, the “dog fiend”—like the “spectre Reality [that] dog[ged]
his steps” and represented his alienation from his past and from nature—turns out to
be just an “old black sheep,” a more prosaic reality with which Raleigh must come to
terms. Chamier is bringing Raleigh down to earth: his problem will turn out to be less
the alienation that seems to dog him than how to get by as an unsettled settler in
settler society, as its “black sheep.”

Such uncanny returns are the way unsettlement makes itself felt imaginatively
for settlers in the back country. These imaginative returns cannot be identified with
Maori, the first settlers of the place, because the other world that reveals itself,
whether you call it “Nature” or “the Native,” is not te Ao Māori (the Maori world).
But they do not need to be; such phenomena shape the world of settlers negatively: as
“mysterious ‘x’s’” that do not fit settlers’ worldview, unsettling stuff that reminds
them—or at least what I have called the unsettled settlers among them—that their way
of seeing does not have unconditional purchase on the place and that the hard facts of
settlement are not as easily sublimated as it might seem. It is out here in what seems
to Raleigh to be a literal no man’s land, a terra nullius on the outskirts of the
settlement, isolated and uncannily empty, that the hard fact of his unsettlement—and
that of settler society per se—is brought home to him, whatever the fate of that
“hardest fact” of settlement: the fact of the displacement of the first peoples of the
place (Maori) by the second settlers (Pakeha) by invasion. For Chamier, however
bathetic the realisation, facing this unsettling reality—“tarrying with [this]
negative”—enables the settler to challenge their own certainties, to be unsettled and
unsettle themselves, and others in turn. He seems to have in mind the passage from
Hegel’s *Phenomenology* that describes this negative dialectic:

> the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself
untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and
maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter
dismemberment, it finds itself. . . . Spirit is this power only by looking
the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the
negative is the magical power that converts it into being.\(^{340}\)

It is this “devastation,” the fact of his unsettlement, that Chamier has Raleigh
face after the failure of his attempt at communing with Nature aesthetically. Raleigh
all but succumbs to the “*Idea of Death*” in the form of a death wish to throw himself
after his sheep into an abyss (238-43). This is his nadir: what he is really facing is
unsettlement as the ultimate threat to himself—or his self. He crawls on all fours like
his dogs to the edge of the void where his sheep have plunged to their death; then he
“threw himself down on the stony slope, within a few feet of the brink of the fatal
precipice, and relapsed into one of his fits of gloomy despondency.” In a parody of his
pastoral pose, he “lay on the bare ground, with his head reclining on his folded arms
and his eyes intent,” not on settler society as they were before, but “on vacancy.” He
feels like a scapegoat—for his family at Home, if not for all settlers: “He felt like one
that had been deserted in a wilderness, there to linger and to die.” The pressure of
alienation seems to be driving him to a final gesture of settlement, “seem[ing] to crush
him to the ground” in which he must root himself (238). He sees such a gesture as
akin to suicide: “To die! A momentary pang for eternal relief.” But it is hauntingly
seductive:

> There, at his feet, lay the gaping chasm; a ready grave awaiting him.
One step further, one bound into space, and all would be over. From
the darksome hollow a cold mist rose up, and crept upon him, and
enveloped him, as with a shroud; he felt chilled to the heart. . . . Then

\(^{340}\) Hegel, *Phenomenology* 19 (sec. 32).
from out the cavernous profundity he heard a voice calling to him—
calling to him to come.

He feels drawn to a gesture of self-abnegation in the face of “terrible reality
reveal[ing] itself in naked horror.” It both seduces and horrifies him. His body spasms
as if it wants to die and, against his will, “loosen[s] the stones under him.” Overcome
by vertigo, “nearer to the brink, still nearer” he slides . . . (240).

All along Raleigh reads this attraction—especially in its fatal form—for the
“deep recesses” or all-too-real voids of Nature as the ultimate sublime gesture of
“commun[ion] with nature”: “He looked up to the lofty mountains, clad in sombre
grandeur, with wondering admiration, and longed to explore their hidden passes, to
scale their dizzy heights. The deep recesses of dark ravines had a fascination for him. .
. . Here he could commune with nature, untrammelled and undisturbed” (87).

Throwing yourself into an abyss might well be the ultimate sublime gesture, the
acting out of a “phantasm of a pure and unmediated experience of ‘nature,’” to use
Clark’s phrase. Such an all-or-nothing self-effacing gesture of settlement (or
unsettlement) is certainly one way to overcome the “culture/nature dichotomy” and
indigenise yourself.\(^\text{341}\) But Chamier presents this moment of fatal “choice” as a
parody of settlement, a bathetic moment. It is a gesture of abasement that for Ch
temporarily represents less an act of real self-destruction on Raleigh’s part than a desire for self-
abnegation, a desire that he might be what he is not: a natural settler; it also represents
a test of sentiment, an attempt to plumb the depths of feeling in the self. Chamier
suggests that to confront such negative phenomena can be both unsettling and
potentially liberating, cathartic even.

To return to Raleigh on the brink of the void: “he paused, held back by an
invisible hand.” His “conscience” calls him: “And then ‘a small still voice’ spoke to
him, in thrilling accents that calmed the tempest of his soul” (242, 240). Raleigh feels
fated to live, like Manfred when he finds himself in a similar position: “my brain
reels—and yet my foot is firm: / There is a power upon me which withholds, / And
makes it my fatality to live.”\(^\text{342}\) However, for Raleigh, as for Manfred, this is a false
anagnorisis: the voice calls him to “work,” to “be up and doing,” to be a good settler
(242). He clambers up to the “high level ground” again—which presumably
represents the distanced (“high”) and equanimous (“level”) position he thinks he

\(^{341}\) Nigel Clark 88.
\(^{342}\) Byron, Selected Poems 472 (I.ii.22-24).
ought to occupy—but is overcome once again with “vertigo”: “Then everything seemed to whirl round, darkness closed upon him, and he sank prostrate,” not dead but “in a dead faint.” He wakes, weighed down again with a “crushing sense of faintness and oppression.” Then comes the sympathetic gesture from his dog that sets in motion his real peripeteia:

He started at the feel of a cold soft touch to his cheek. His petted [sic] Tiny was nestling up against him, and was licking his face. . . . That dumb expression of love struck a sympathetic chord in his heart, and relieved the agonising tension of his overstrained feelings. He covered his face with his hands, laid his head on the ground, and wept. (243)

The practical upshot is that Raleigh has come back from the brink. The lesson of his isolation in the back back country has been to remind him that becoming “colonised” is for the most part an unchosen or fateful process (149). Throughout the process of his “emigration and colonial experience,” he has felt at the mercy of forces beyond his control and invaded, even animalised by the process; Chamier implies that this feeling is only fitting (154). As Sailor Jack suggests to the new chum, you must allow yourself to be “colonised” so as not to be tormented by your position and the place, not to mention its native vermin. He mockingly suggests eating in the dark so you cannot see the flies, going naked to avoid the fleas, exposing one part of your body to the mosquitoes to save the rest (148-50). Raleigh agrees that there is nothing to do but “learn . . . to rough it with a vengeance” when you are consigned to such a purgatory (151).

Chamier pushes it further, suggesting that a kind of metamorphosis into animal form is the Circean fate of the settler seduced by the new place, hence Raleigh’s “unpleasant retrospection” that he is like the sheep in his erratic and self-destructive ways (112). Settlers as such are more like Circe’s pigs: hence the narrator’s description of the pig as the exemplar of the “successful colonist,” who “possesses to an eminent degree the thoroughly human attribute of adapting himself to circumstances” (163). Of course, this necessity of “adapting [your]self to circumstances” requires that you not be “troubled with any scruples as to questions of the rightful ownership of property,” be it that of other settlers or the “native” peoples of the place (163). Whether you like it or not (unsettled settlers like Raleigh do not),

343 Homer, The Odyssey; trans. E. V. Rieu; rev. D. C. H. Rieu and Peter V. Jones (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991); for the episode on Circe’s island, see chapter X.
you have to live by the “rule of the bush”: “to help yourself to whatever you can get wherever you go” (59). That is to say, however Raleigh spins his own position, as “pastoral-philosophical,” “aesthetical” or unsettled, there is no other place for him. As he suggests, the settler makes do with what they have got, or rather, does without: “we accommodate ourselves to circumstances, that’s all. How do we do? Why, we do without” (58).

Raleigh’s attempted sympathetic identification with Nature has ended in a confrontation with his own unsettlement. He remains “like one haunted by some undefined dread” for the rest of the novel, by “a feeling of mal du pays” or homesickness for this place where he never really made himself at home that “haunts [him] and excites in [him] strange misgivings” (186). Nonetheless, this gesture of sympathetic identification points him in the right direction. The real peripeteia of the novel comes in chapter XII when Raleigh comes upon an old shepherd, Sergeant Sims, chasing his own wayward sheep, one young ram in particular. For Raleigh, Sims is like the chamois hunter who pulls Manfred back from the brink of the void and brings him down to earth. 344 It is, as the narrator describes it, “one of those critical moments,” those Epicurean swerves, “which decide the course of events both great and small, and which are as applicable to a flock of sheep,” or the life of a solitary young ram like Raleigh, “as to the fate of a mighty army” (329). Sims suggests to Raleigh that if Raleigh thinks he is “‘a ne’er-do-well, without home or profession—nay, not even with an object in life. . . . A solitary tramp by the world’s highway,’” as he says he is, then he has “‘mistook his vocation’” (344). Raleigh responds by declaring his pessimism and “deliver[ing] himself of a short account of his chequered career . . . making himself out to be just the sort of being he was not,” at which Sims asks deflatingly: “Have you ever been in love, my boy?” (345). Raleigh answers, “‘That means matrimony, I suppose. . . . I have no idea of putting my head in a yoke to drag another helpless being after me’” (346-47). He concludes:

“Whatever my failings and deficiencies may be, at least I am not of the cart-horse type, willing to plod in one unvarying round, inured to monotony, hardened to drudgery. Let me live a Bohemian—a vagabond even—sooner than sicken and die in the cold shade of

344 Byron, Manfred 473-79 (I.i, II.i)
insipid respectability. I have but one longing left dear to my heart, and that is—*liberty.*" (348)

That dichotomy—respectability versus liberty—or the dialectic of the two will indeed mark the rest of the trilogy, but Sims’s response is prophetic:

“My young friend, you may yet learn to be happy despite all of your fine arguments. If I mistake not you are just cut out for the very thing you have set your mind against."

“What is that, pray?”

“Domestic life.” (348)

This is hardly a true anagnorisis for Raleigh. In hindsight, the dramatic irony that domesticity will be his fate hangs over the trilogy. But this is a turning point of sorts. Over the course of the novel, with the help of his mentor Valentine and his confidante Alice Seymour (“See-more” no less), Raleigh comes to realise that living as a hermit is not the answer. In the last few chapters of the novel, he decides to move down to town to put his philosophy to the test in society. There he meets Alice, who will be his confidante throughout *Siren*—and the most significant object of his affections in the series of (unsuccessful) love affairs that make up its narrative and mark the process of Raleigh’s resocialisation. She advises Raleigh only half-jokingly, “now that you are settled *fresh* amongst us you must turn over a new leaf.” He answers, “I am prepared to start a *volume*, if I only knew how to begin. What would you have me do first?” She suggests that he “*have [his] hair cut*”—in other words, cast off the motley of the pastoral philosopher or the guise of the aesthete, and, what seems less likely but turns out to be the case, “to give up his high notions and aesthetic style, and just to fall into the common groove, and learn to think and act like an ordinary mortal”’ (568, 569). Or as Valentine puts it in the final lines of the novel: “Raleigh, my child, we shall have to tame you down to the ordinary standard. You shall become a respectable member of the community, and be no longer PHILOSOPHER DICK” (569).
Things apparently became less rosy during Georgy’s third year at Heathstock/Horsley Down. To go by *Philosopher Dick*, he argued with Lance or “Dale” over his prospects and wages (389-404). As is his wont, Dale suavely tells Raleigh that “[i]t seems rather a pity that, after spending some years in acquiring a practical knowledge of sheep-farming, you should give it up. I have done my best to afford you useful opportunities, and now they are to be thrown away” (*PD* 391). He thinks him impractical—and ungrateful—and reiterates to him the settler’s mantra: “A fixed object in life is of great assistance to any young man who is desirous of getting on in the world. . . . Thrift and work . . . is the royal road to advancement” (*PD* 391-92). Raleigh replies ironically (and equally characteristically), “No doubt of it!” (*PD* 392). Dale thinks that when it comes down to it Raleigh lacks the “energy” required to be successful as a settler, to which Raleigh replies that energy “indulged in to excess” makes you “unhappy”—and has become “almost a national epidemic, a moral distemper” among the English (*PD* 394, 395). For Dale, this opinion is “damnable” and “thoroughly un-English”—with which Raleigh would happily agree (*PD* 395). Raleigh’s theory is that what the successful settler needs—and Dale has, by implication—is what he lacks most: “capital, luck, and cheek” (*PD* 396). At this point, Dale silently withdraws his offer of the position of manager, and when they finally settle up he gives him a check for “only about half the amount he expected to receive” for his three years work (*PD* 392, 407). Apparently Raleigh “had never made any definite terms for his services on the station, but had left it with his employer to pay him according to his deserts” (*PD* 407); Dale chooses to pay him only a cadet’s wages, despite the fact that Raleigh had “performed the regular work of one of the shepherds” after his first year, and to subtract the considerable “money value” he set on his “patronage” and the “practical knowledge” Raleigh had gained as a cadet (*PD* 408).

This goes to confirm Raleigh in *his* theory of the settler, but he decides “to pocket both the cheque and the imposition” and to take it as a confirmation of what he says has become another of his “pet theories” and a valuable Epicurean lesson: that “most of the vexations in life were of our own making—nay, of our own seeking” and
that you can only be robbed if you value highly what was taken and get vexed about it. So, “thus it happens that a man may be robbed and yet be none the worse; but then—the man must be a philosopher”: an Epicurean philosopher (PD 409). There were perhaps always underlying status issues between Georgy and the Lances, over and above the fact that they thought him and his ideas “queer” (PD 395). Though the Lances had done very well for themselves in New Zealand (while Georgy had it all to do), back in India Georgy’s family were of higher status, having worked themselves up by fair means or foul to that delicate position between the aristocratic grandees who ran the Company and the mid-level John Company men like the Lances and their cadre. In this final interview in *Philosopher Dick*, it is suggested that Lance only took on Georgy as a gesture, as Dale puts it, of “the high regard I always bore your gallant father” (PD 393). Chamier may be overplaying the breakdown in his relationship with Lance: as it turns out, Georgy would return as an Assistant Surveyor for the Provincial Government and base himself at Horsley Down—though John Mallock would be in charge by the time Georgy returned in late 1866.345 Early that year, Lance had met with an accident returning from an unsuccessful bid for election to the Superintendency; he went to London to consult doctors and then on to France to recuperate—and to live.346 His brother Henry soon followed him to Europe.

Nonetheless, it took Georgy a while to finally decide to leave the station. During his third year at the station, Lance sent him to Christchurch “to transact some important business” on his behalf (PD 94). While there, he first met “Dr. Valentine”—probably Dr Matthew Morris (1833-1918), who would become his good friend and mentor (Morris was also a friend and correspondent of Samuel Butler).347 Morris, who had initially won his colonial spurs as a boundary rider in North Canterbury, had begun practice in Leithfield in 1862 and soon worked the whole of North Canterbury.348 Though Sarah Courage describes Morris as “a grave and silent

man,” Chamier presents him as something of a gay bachelor and has Raleigh follow his example in *Siren* (*PD* XVII-XVIII). He suggested that Georgy move down to Leithfield to live with him to combat his solitude, as Valentine advises Raleigh: “You say you love solitude; believe me, my child, it doesn’t love you; it is bad for you” (*PD* 33). The narrator suggests that, “[a]lthough a lover of solitude, Raleigh was not naturally unsociable. He fled from the resorts of men not from a dislike of his fellows, but from a yearning to be alone,” to escape “the artificiality of society” (*PD* 88, 181). But it has made him sick at heart. Valentine has a suggestion: “I have been thinking what a priceless boon it would be to me if you would only come and share my cottage with me” (*PD* 33). He appeals to Raleigh’s artistic aspirations:

Here, in this God-forsaken hole, you are lost—utterly thrown away. You are intellectual, with cultivated taste; you are fond of art, and you paint well; with me you might find some field, you might make a little studio, and find a sale for your pictures. You could write for the press, and obtain all sorts of congenial employment. I am quite sure you could scratch out a pleasant living. . . . (*PD* 34)

But Georgy did not take up Morris’s offer immediately; instead, he returned briefly to visit his mother in France.

Chamier’s granddaughter Frances Warner’s comment about a photograph taken when Georgy was in Nice (fig. 17) is insightful:

He has a pleasant, handsome face, though with a slightly truculent expression, as though determined to go his own way in spite of all, which in fact he did. His thick curls surround a high forehead, there is no beard, but a dark line on the upper lip. It is a serious face, he had not yet learned to be a sceptic, to step aside or to develop an objective humorous look at life. (Warner 3)
She overstates the case, but Georgy/Raleigh as we see him in *Philosopher Dick* is certainly a little po-faced, less so in *Siren*, where in the company of women he more easily forms sentimental attachments. Alice Seymour, his mentor in *Siren*, gets him right when she first meets him at the end of *Philosopher Dick* murmuring about his “disenchantment” (561):

> the young artist by her side, with his slender but hardy figure, his pensive and amiable look, and the long brown locks which he brushed back with an impatient movement of the hand from his intelligent forehead, had nothing sour-visaged or splenetic about him. There was something almost comical in the contrast between the lugubrious language and that complacent countenance. (*PD* 562)
Throughout the Canterbury novels Chamier is sceptical about settler society, but the motive force of Raleigh’s sentimental education in the novels is his growing scepticism about his own motivations: he will learn by experience (and from Alice) that he is one of “the unconscious blind” when it comes to “knowledge of his own character” and to laugh at his own misfortunes—not just others’ (SSS 80).

Judging by _Philosopher Dick_ (XIX-XX), it was around Christmas time in 1863, after three years at the station, that Georgy/Raleigh finally decided to move down to Leithfield, officially known as Kowai until 1877 and dubbed “Sunnydowns” in the novels, to live with his friend Morris/Valentine.\(^{350}\) It is here that Chamier’s second novel, _A South-Sea Siren_, is set.\(^{351}\)

![Map of the Province of Canterbury New Zealand](image)

**Fig. 18.** John Marshman [and Henry Selfe Selse], “Map of the Province of Canterbury New Zealand” (detail), _Canterbury, New Zealand, in 1862_, by John Marshman [and Henry Selfe Selse] (London: G. Street, 1862) frontispiece. Horsley Down is in the high country north-west of Mt Grey—the designation is only partially visible here;

\(^{350}\) The complicating factor is Chamier’s own later testimony, probably misremembered or overstated, that suggests that he had been working as an engineer since 1861 or 1862—see _Candidates’ Circulars_ 1879: 4 and 1884: 6; “Progress Report of Commission Appointed to Report on the Public Works; Together with Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence, and Appendices. Part 1: Railways,” _PP SA 25_ (1880.2): 149; “Progress Report from the Select Committee on the Construction of Telephone Tunnels; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix,” _NSW P LA V&P_ (1897.5): 50.

\(^{351}\) Douglas 119.
Leithfield/Kowai is about two kilometres inland on the south bank of the Kowai. The river given as the “Courtenay” here has become more commonly known as the Waimakariri.

Georgy soon became what Raleigh mockingly calls “a public functionary of the first magnitude,” taking up various positions with local bodies: principally, he was clerk to the South Sefton Road Board, from 1865 called the Kowai Road Board, which was instituted and elected in January 1864; from late 1865, he also served as engineer to the Road Board.352 In the novels he is variously described as clerk to the Magistrate’s Court and the District Council Board, and Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages—in fact, the Registrar was Morris (PD 525, 524-26, 528; SSS 15, 120, 301).353 “Was ever poor mortal favoured before with so sudden and glorious a rise?” asks Raleigh (PD 525). If we take the later date for his relocation (1864), he may well already have been working for a year or so on and off as an engineer prior to these appointments, perhaps as a “road surveyor” for the Road Board or a local contracting gang or directly for one of the local settlement developers like Leith (of Leithfield) or Dampier (at Northport), who prior to the advent of the Road Boards would raise labour themselves and be paid by the Provincial Council in Crown land.354 Though he was apparently “indolent on principle” and resisted both “work per se” and “the outward show of activity,” as Raleigh suggests of himself, it is probably true that like him he “did more than he confessed to, and pretended to be idler than he really was” (SSS 112).

Leithfield had been founded by John Leith (“Sunny” in Siren), about 1857 and centred on his “accommodation house” (the “Royal Mail Hotel” in Siren), built on the southern bank of the North Road ford over the Kowai River at the foot of Mount Grey (“Mt Pleasant” in Siren), about thirty miles (48 km) north of Christchurch and about 1¼ miles (2 km) inland from the sea. He had the land surveyed for subdivision by Charles ffrench Pemberton, District Surveyor of the Ashley District, and announced

354 Frances Warner 2.
the subdivision in the *Christchurch Press* in August 1862. Leith branded it “the Sanitarium of Canterbury” and always stressed its healthful climate and environs: “Visitors will find the Accommodation equal to any in the Province, and the air and scenery all that can be really wished by Ladies and Gentleman desirous of a change for a benefit of their health—being close to the sea, and Cobb & Co.’s Coaches running daily to the house from and to Christchurch.” The novel goes further, with Sunnydowns being described as “The Sanitarium of the Southern Hemisphere” (*SSS* 101). It was both a centre for the survey and administration of North Canterbury and a market town, serving the Ashley and Hurunui farming districts, which by 1867 numbered ninety-six farms. Monthly markets were established there in late 1864, held on the first Thursday of the month from eleven to three, closing with a market dinner in the logroom at Leith’s Hotel. A coach ran three times a week to Leithfield from Christchurch until Cobb & Co. started a daily service in 1864. Aside from the usual stores and tradespeople’s premises, the schoolhouse and the church and vicarage, there was a magistrate’s court—presided over by local Justices of the Peace, including the Lances and Morris—and a police station cum jailhouse.

Georgy’s sketch, which he gave to his friend Morris, captures the settlement soon after its founding. The view is northward along Leith Street (later Leithfield Road). Matthew Morris’s homestead, where Georgy probably lived, consists of the house and stables just beyond the cluster of buildings in the left foreground (the Weld Arms Hotel); in *Siren*, Raleigh’s little house, the Growlery, is situated on the hillock on which the mill stands, overlooking the settlement (*SSS* 12). Leith’s Hotel is to the left of the hillock, the Road Board Office where Georgy worked to its left on Leith Street and St Paul’s, the “English Church,” away to the far left. Sarah Courage was “struck by [Leithfield’s] resemblance to an English village”: “pretty in its small way, and homely looking,” even “picturesque.”

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357 Hawkins 80; see Acland, ch. 3: “Plains Stations North of the Waimakariri” (64-90) and ch. 9: “Stations between the Hurunui & Waipara Rivers” (260-86).
360 Courage 103.
In the sketch, the settlement looks modest and a little scattered, but by 1865, going by *Siren*, the settlers apparently thought it “quite a promising young township.” As the narrator puts it, “ADVANCE SUNNYDOWNS! was the inspiring motto . . . of the budding township” (100), and indeed, Sunnydowns had “advanced” at a tremendous pace, and was looked upon as one of the most brilliant results of the “go-ahead” spirit. It had done wonders. In the absurdly short space of three years it had developed from an embryo state, consisting of a solitary roadside hotel and a few rude shanties, into quite a promising young township, with macadamised streets, rows of shops, a couple of churches, and a goodly sprinkling of public buildings; this nucleus dotted round with freshly—painted wooden cottages, patches of gardens, and growing plantations. (230)

Chamier’s scare-quotes mark his cynicism about the “progress” of the place. In the following watercolour by Chamier looking inland from the seaward side, Leithfield looks entirely more settled—almost pastoral, in an old-worldy sense, but hardly bustling. This watercolour shows part of Sarah O’Connell’s Mount Grey station with its house and outbuildings, the windmill in the centre, Mount Grey in the background.
By May 1864, Georgy had taken up an appointment as the “Road Surveyor” or “Engineer” for the South Sefton, later Kowai Road Board, which had its office at Leithfield.\(^\text{362}\) When he first met the five founding members of the Board—Pemberton, Dampier, Innes, Dodd and Weld, the chairman—they were engaged in an “unofficial but mysterious confabulation over some local matter,” to go by the corresponding scene in *Philosopher Dick* (PD 526; in *Siren*, Pemberton is “Markham,” Dampier is “Beaumont” and Weld is “Cerulean”).\(^\text{363}\) This cabalistic atmosphere seemed to be the spirit of local government at the time, which seemed to be entirely about the cultivation of personal financial interest and social status. Georgy’s annual salary was £300—not a great deal of money, but more than he would earn in his next position working directly for the Provincial Government.\(^\text{364}\) He would have had to supplement

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\(^{362}\) Chamier’s first letter to the Provincial Government on behalf of the Road Board, a “Report on the Roads of the South Sefton,” is dated 25 May 1864 (letter 227 [1], *Kowai Road Board*); see Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain), letter to the author, 15 June 2005; *G. R. Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies* (C224f; omnibus card 1749, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch).

\(^{363}\) Hawkins 382.

\(^{364}\) “Table of Accounts for Various Road Districts for the Year to 10 June 1864,” *Province of Canterbury, New Zealand: Journal of Proceedings of the Provincial Council*, Session XXIV—1865 (Christchurch: James Edward Fitzgerald, 1866) 137; “Account of Receipts and Expenditure of the Kowai Road Board to December 31, 1864,” *Province of Canterbury, New Zealand: Journal of
his income somehow, perhaps by “pen and pencil”; in *Siren*, it is suggested that Raleigh “was able to supplement his small official salaries with pen and pencil, by contributions to the press and occasional landscape sketches.” He was recognised as “our correspondent,” and also as “our local artist” (SSS 112).

Georgy would have taken up an engineering position only reluctantly; it would have represented a retrograde step for him. In *Successful Man*, Tim will feel “depressed” when he is offered a position in Melbourne as a lawyer; to fall back into the profession in which he has been trained and has worked back in the bad Old World, even though he is desperate for work, represents for him “the awakening from a . . . youthful dream” of “freedom and adventure, the romance of the bush.” Georgy may have felt likewise: that if, as Tim has it, this was “the road to a respectable competence, if not to fortune, . . . unfortunately it was the beaten track [that] I had come out sixteen thousand miles to avoid” (SSM VII).

The advent of the new district road boards—and so Georgy’s new position—coincided with an upsurge in activity in the region with the goldrushes in West Canterbury and what D. N. Hawkins in his regional history *Beyond the Waimakariri* calls “a new era in the field of provincial communication”: “District road boards were established to give settlers control of their own roading, and an improved coach service began to operate along the main routes; the investigation of a possible railway route to the Hurunui and of a telegraphic link with Nelson were also completed.”

Now that most of the productive land in the province had been claimed and enclosed, settlement was intensifying with the setting up of a communications infrastructure and the groundwork for large scale public works. The road boards were responsible for “the building of culverts and bridges, the forming of new accommodation roads, and the provision of swamp and storm drainage,” not to mention the most onerous job: the levying of rates.

On 14 January 1865, Georgy made his first annual report as Road Surveyor for the Kowai Road Board, which was published in the *Christchurch Press* and details the works he had supervised over the previous year.

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*Proceedings of the Provincial Council, Session XXIV—1865* (Christchurch: James Edward Fitzgerald, 1866) 151.

365 Hawkins 266.

366 Hawkins 380-81.
KOWAI ROAD BOARD.

We have been requested to publish the following report from the Road Surveyor of the Kowai Road Board for the information of the ratepayers:

Road Board Office,
January 12, 1865.

Sir,—I have the honor to forward to the Road Board my annual report upon road works done in the Kowai district during the year 1864-5. The works effected by the Road Board during the past year comprise:

1. Improvements on Great North road.
2. Forming and opening out two main lines of road; the Bangiola Ford road, and the Mount Grey road.
3. Improvements on bye-roads.

(These works are described and the expenditure itemised.)

The total expenditure on these roads is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North road</td>
<td>£1077 17 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Grey road</td>
<td>£1452 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangiola Ford</td>
<td>£380 10 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bye-roads</td>
<td>£176 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£3088 8 3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The works completed comprise, 8½ miles of road-forming, 190 chains of metalling, and the construction of two twelve-foot bridges and 23 culverts.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

GEORGE CHAMIER,
Road Surveyor.

To the Chairman of the Kowai Road Board.

Fig. 21. George Chamier, “Kowai Road Board” (excerpt), Press [Christchurch] 14 Jan. 1865: 4.

He made two other official reports that are still extant: “Report on the Roads of the South Sefton,” presented to the Road Board in May 1864 and “Report on the Main North Roads Kowai District,” presented to the Road Board in April 1865.367 The job was a fairly easy introduction to engineering, as Edward Dobson suggests: “The level

367 Kowai Road Board, letters 227 (1) and 533 (1).
character of the Canterbury Plains, and the abundance of gravel suitable for roading metal, has made the construction of the main roads through the eastern portion of the province a very easy task.”368 Georgy did supervise the construction of several bridges and culverts, which in a few years would become his stock-in-trade in Australia.

In 1865, the South Sefton Road Board changed its name to Kowai Road Board and the office (oddly, given the name) shifted from Leithfield/Kowai to nearby Saltwater Creek on the coast.369 Saltwater Creek or “Northport” was established by Christopher Edward Dampier about 1856 twenty miles (32 km) north of Christchurch on the bank of the Salt Water swamp. Like Leithfield/Kowai, it was originally part of Sarah O’Connell’s Mount Grey station. The actual Saltwater Creek, called the Farquhar by the original surveyors, Captains Thomas and Torlesse, flowed into the Ashley about two hundred metres from its mouth.370 Its port was officially opened in 1859. James Lance had invested in Northport in 1864, taking a position as Chairman of the Saltwater Creek and Kaiapoi Coasting Stream Navigation Company; Georgy followed suit, buying land to build a house there and some as a speculation. Though Siren does not record a move to Saltwater Creek, in the 1865 electoral roll for the Ashley district he is described as a “household[er]” at Saltwater Creek.371

Siren focusses on the three years Georgy spent at Leithfield and Saltwater Creek. Going by Raleigh’s routine, he got up late, worked, read, corresponded and did his own “household duties.” He most liked to recline and smoke in the bucolic attitude, “profoundly indifferent to time and occupation,” to talk “on any subject except business”—usually in male company, hence the palavers that punctuate Siren—and to flirt and philander when in female society (SSS 112). This might have seemed to him—or was by default—the best way to put into practice his “boasted philosophy”—what he calls his Epicurean “equanimity” (SSS 315, 12). Events would test that equanimity. So where Philosopher Dick is about the dangers of solitude as a test of philosophy and the sublime experience of Nature, Siren tests Raleigh’s philosophy in society, female society especially—and tends to the ridiculous. As

369 Hawkins 382.
370 Hawkins 63.
Stevens puts it, “the ‘philosophical hermit’ . . . will now have to cope in local society with the other less ‘metaphysical’ sex.” As far as Raleigh’s sentimental education is concerned, *Siren* is all about temptation: about the comic incompatibilities of what Raleigh calls the “critical position” between “the intention that prompts and the opportunity that guides our actions,” as “Dr Val” puts it in the prologue to *Siren* at the end of *Philosopher Dick* (PD 509). The opportunity to exhibit his sympathetic intentions turns out to be the variety of amorous intrigues that drive the plot of *Siren*.

In this prologue, both Valentine and Alice end by predicting that Raleigh will, as Valentine puts it, “give up his high notions and aesthetic style” and in so doing become “an ordinary mortal,” “a respectable member of the community, and no longer . . . *Philosopher Dick*” (PD 569). Raleigh will have none of that: Georgy/Raleigh is represented in *Siren* as a vociferous, if somewhat hypocritical critic of the Victorian discourse of respectability—of “keeping up appearances”—as it plays out in small-town settler society in Canterbury, in what Stevens describes as the “ingrown, tight, gossiping little society of Sunnydowns.” If the mores of which they defend the appearance could not really be described as puritanical, as Kirstine Moffatt suggests they are, they do defend them “puritanically”—rigorously. As such, then, Raleigh is “anti-Puritan.” In this critical spirit, Raleigh refuses “to attend a marriage, a christening, or a funeral” (SSS 20). He is unconventional: an atheist and a devil’s advocate, fond of remarking “inconsistenc[ies] in the ways of the world” and of feeling “the symptoms of opposition” (SSS 55, 4). All in all, he is considered a “most reprehensible influence” (SSS 19).

All this critical steam is in keeping with the Schopenhauerian manifesto he outlines in the second palaver on truth in *Siren* (IV). There he asserts that whatever the moral or “ideal” aspect of truth, “truth in her everyday [or “real” or “positive”] aspect,” is a sham: “Society is one vast make-believe—a sham. . . . Deception is essential to our common existence” (SSS 46, 45). Or, as he puts it elsewhere, all “[c]onventional life is a species of slavery to which ordinary men and women readily

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372 Joan Stevens, Introduction xiii.
373 Joan Stevens, Introduction xv.
submit” (*PD* 493). And this is universally true: “nature’s garb is universal illusion” (*SSS* 52). He sees the duty of the philosopher as being to point out that “truth, in real life, is nearly always plain, and not unfrequently ugly and repulsive”—“not sympathetic.” By contrast, “[w]hat we really do admire and worship under the name of truth is not the thing itself, but our fond illusion of it; it is like the exquisite blue of those rugged hills in the distance.” Leithfield is just such a place *on the plain*, “not unfrequently ugly and repulsive” (*SSS* 46). Nonetheless, there are hints of the older more laissez-faire Chamier already, in what Raleigh calls “the philosophy of common sense [that] would incline us to make our lives as advantageous and comfortable as possible”: “It is well, at times, to look stern reality in the face, but who could discard hope and fancy and the thousand illusions which contribute so materially to the buoyancy and happiness of our lives,” that is, “illusion is [not] naturally harmful” (*SSS* 48, 47, 50).

But for all his so-called disillusioned perspicacity about settler society and “knowledge of character,” his powers of “psychological study,” Raleigh will prove himself to be one of “the unconscious blind” when it comes to “knowledge of his own character” (*SSS* 80):

> It is a well-known peculiarity with many of the most keen-sighted of men that they are as blind as a bat where their own intentions and sentiments are concerned; they are not hypocrites, they do not knowingly deceive themselves—they simply cannot see. And what tends to aggravate the mischief is that not unfrequently they cannot see that they cannot see. (*SSS* 80-81)

Despite his best efforts, he becomes disastrously entangled in affairs in Sunnydowns in trying to put his philosophy into practice. If Georgy did likewise, he had a good time nevertheless, as his brother Daniel Chamier bears out, writing in April 1866: “Georgy seems to be prospering in New Zealand & from his last letter would appear to have many friends & to be much liked.”375 He got caught up in the social whirl of Leithfield and the surrounding stations on the downs; like Raleigh, he was “hailed as the coming man”—scholar, writer, mathematician and musician, no less (*PD* 525).

Georgy also loved to “go among the women” of the district—as *Siren* chronicles exaggeratedly and at length of Raleigh. Henry Douglas records in his

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375 *Daniel’s letter.*
George Douglas of Broomfield (1999) that Georgy spent much time with his
grandfather George Douglas (1825-73) at Broomfield, but was also “a friend of both
wives Sarah and Elizabeth,” especially Elizabeth Douglas née Downe, with whom he
apparently kept in touch after he moved to Australia.376 His daughter Daisy also
struck up a correspondence with her stepdaughter Alice.377 The first wife Sarah was
still alive when he did the following drawing of Broomfield homestead in 1865.

Fig. 22. George Chamier, Broomfield Homestead and Mount Grey, [c.1865]. George
Douglas], 1999) n. pag. (between 118 and 119).

The Douglases appear as the “gossiping” Dugalds in Siren (201).378 They are
somewhat uncharitably described as “pretentious” and “claim[ing] to belong to the
beau monde.” Chamier nonetheless looks with good humour on their “attempt at
keeping up appearances” because “this affectation of superiority was only skin deep”;
as he puts it, “[a]t heart, they were plain sort of people” (SSS 105). Like Raleigh, he
likes uncovering the illusions of the “unconscious blind,” but he is prepared to be
tolerant when the problems of self-fashioning these illusions reveal are well meant
and unconscious—unlike Raleigh’s (SSS 80). As for other philandering recorded in
Siren: Raleigh is said spent many evenings at the “Royal Mail Hotel” playing

376 Douglas 119; for the Douglases, see Acland 87.
377 Douglas n. pag. (between 118 and 119).
378 Douglas 119.
backgammon with “Mrs Mac,” Janet MacDonald (SSS 118). She and her husband, “the homely McDonald [sic],” were probably based on Alicia Cameron and her much older husband Donald Cameron, who was the proprietor of the Halfway House at the Main North Road ford at Saltwater Creek (SSS 199). As well, Raleigh accompanies the Siren as her “cavalier servant” to the Race Ball and probably the Races during Carnival Week in Christchurch in November 1865, something Georgy may well have done (SSS 64; see SSS XVIII-XIX). In 1865, race meetings would become a regular event at Leithfield, often with the Lances racing horses from their stable, as would Weld’s Brackenfield hunt. Attendance was compulsory for all locals of “substance”—and hangers-on like Georgy.

Then, on 25 June 1866, Georgy apparently put aside his “vow never to attend a marriage, a christening, or a funeral” to witness the marriage of his best friend Matthew Morris to Ada Cowper Brown, governess to the Carters of Seadown station, at St Paul’s in Leithfield (SSS 20). Another marriage in the grand Canterbury style at which he helped out is recorded in Siren: between “Mary Seymour,” the sister of Raleigh’s mentor Alice, and a local “aristocrat,” Bertie Fitzroy (II). But marriage was not for him: apparently, he was still a confirmed bachelor—and misogynist or “woman-hater,” “opposed on principle to petticoat government of any description” (PD 28; SSS 17). If Siren is to be believed, he was nonetheless entangled in various sentimental amours “in Sunnydowns, where he [was] surrounded with female attractions” like an antipodean Tom Jones or in accordance with what Alice calls his “foreign notions on matters of sentiment” or “Continental manners” (SSS 160, 148, 147).

Quite how much time he would have spent or which provincial events he would have attended in Christchurch is uncertain, but this was an era of “firsts” and openings, some of which would have been of interest to Georgy: in 1863 alone, there was the formation of the Canterbury Musical Society in January, the fete and procession for the marriage of the Prince of Wales in July, the first official Agricultural and Pastoral Association show in the showgrounds in October, and the

379 Douglas 119.
381 Stapleton 10.
openings of the first stage of the Lyttelton and Christchurch Railway from Christchurch to Heathcote, New Zealand’s first public steam railway (a public holiday) and of the Royal Princess Theatre in December. He may have watched Henry Lance’s Canterbury cricket team be defeated by George Parr’s “All England” side in February 1864. Given his love of music, he may have attended a performance of \textit{Lucia di Lammermoor} by Lyster’s Royal Italian and English Opera Company in October 1864, or of the \textit{Messiah} performed by the Musical Society for Christmas 1864. Most of his circle was also associated with the K’Ohio Minstrels, a Christie minstrel group in North Canterbury set up by William Maskell, an entomologist who lived between the Welds and the Douglases; the group from time to time included Georgy’s friends the Courages, the Douglases, and Dr Morris and wife, among others.\footnote{Courage 13-14.} Early the following year, the discovery of gold at Hokitika led to an exodus of would-be prospectors from East Canterbury (“Eastland”) to the West and an explosion in the surveying and building of roads to West Canterbury, which might have piqued Georgy’s interest in getting work for the Provincial Government. All these goings-on in the province, as well as the larger political events like the ongoing territorial wars in the North Island and agitation for South Island Separation, hardly figure in the novels. Chamier’s focus—when he is not describing Raleigh’s romantic and “philosophical” adventures—is always on the day-to-day machinations and intrigues of the little settlement of Leithfield/Sunnydowns.
A South-Sea Siren (1895): Raleigh, Lover or Truth-Lover?\(^{384}\)

For not that which men covet most is best,
Nor that thing worst, which men do most refuse;
But fittest is that all contented rest
With what they hold; each hath his fortune in his breast.

—Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, quoted in *Siren* (113)\(^{385}\)

1 The text

1.1 Publication history and genesis

1.2 Reception

2 *Siren* as colonial comedy of manners: the geography of the narrative

2.1 *Siren* as colonial comedy of manners

2.2 The geography of the narrative

3 Truth and truths: the “moral hell” of Sunnydowns; Raleigh as devil’s advocate

4 Raleigh’s sentimental education: his romantic and philosophical adventures

4.1 Romantic adventures: Alice versus Celia

4.2 Philosophical adventures: the seven settlers

1 *The text*

1.1 *Publication history and genesis*

On 3 July 1895, Chamier left for Europe on the steamer *Le Polynésien* with the manuscript of a new novel, *Sunnydown, A South Sea Siren*, as *Siren* was originally

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\(^{384}\) After Jean Deschamps’s *Société des Aléthophiles* (Fr. “Society of Truth-lovers”)—see his *Mémoires Secrets* 23.

\(^{385}\) Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O’Donnell, 2nd ed. (1596; London: Penguin, 1979) 983 (VI.i.x.29); the fourth line should read “With that they hold.” Unless otherwise specified, all in-text citations in this section, whether page or chapter numbers (in roman numerals), refer to the second edition of *A South-Sea Siren* (1970).

He arrived 28½ days later in London via Paris via Marseilles. In what seems like a very fast turnaround, which suggests that the arrangements had been made ahead of his going to England, T. Fisher Unwin announced in their “List of . . . Autumn Publications” that they would publish the novel for the Christmas market in October 1895. Chamier once again chose to go with Unwin, despite their apparent failure to generate sales for *Philosopher Dick*, presumably for the potentially broader audience and kudos that having a metropolitan publisher brought him, but also because at the time there was a blackban by the Publishers’ Association of Great Britain and Ireland against colonial authors who secured separate publishing deals in their country of residence. To be blacklisted would have limited him to publishing in the Australasian colonies. The novel was again published on commission, in other words, at little risk to Unwin. Chamier paid the cost of producing a fairly substantial print run—it is recorded that at least 750 remained unsold by 1898—and of promoting the novel. This time he chose to publish the novel only as a single volume, at the more affordable price of six shillings.

Unwin advertised *Siren* as being “By George Chamier, Author of ‘Philosopher Dick,’” doubtless to capitalise on the positive reception that novel received; oddly, they did not advertise it as a sequel. The interval of five years between the publication of the novels is puzzling, given that they form a complementary pair: they share a central protagonist—the eccentric “Philosopher” Richard Raleigh—and a number of other major and minor characters; they are consecutive (though there is a

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one-year interval in the action between the novels) and set in contiguous locations; they both adapt eighteenth century fictional models and the rhetoric of sentiment to tell the story of Raleigh’s sentimental education. Reality must have intervened in Chamier’s grand strategy. Given that Philosopher Dick did not sell well, he would have had to raise the capital himself to get Siren published and he may have been pressed for time to write given that he moved about 1890 from Adelaide to Sydney and set up a new engineering practice there. Alternatively, the impediment may have been artistic: he may have struggled to reconcile the idea of a sequel with the stylistic and structural shift that the next phase of Raleigh’s story seemed to demand.

The novel was retitled A South-Sea Siren: A Novel Descriptive of New Zealand Life in the Early Days for publication, which suggests that Unwin wanted to push the romance angle, belying the rather matter-of-fact subtitle. The focus apparently becomes the romantic intrigues of the “Siren,” Celia Wylde, rather than settler society in the small town of “Sunnydowns” (Leithfield). Chamier also presents Siren as a straightforward romance in his 1895 manifesto, “A South-Sea Siren,” published by Fisher Unwin to puff the novel. He suggests that his original intention was to represent the position in settler society of the “fairer sex” that had been neglected in Philosopher Dick:

I feel that I have been to blame in one respect [for the sometimes hostile reception to that novel]—for the fairer half of humanity has been but poorly, I might say shabbily, represented in the story. My only excuse is to be found in the distressing fact that the choice elements out of which to manufacture a captivating heroine were altogether wanting in the wild and desolate regions inhabited by the hero, and I have been a hard-and-fast stickler to truth. But I have tried to make amends in the present book, “A South-Sea Siren,” I have transplanted him for the occasion into brighter and happier regions. Here the ladies have their innings. (SSS GR 110)

In Siren, Raleigh will be in town and in female company, that is to say, “transplanted into brighter and happier regions” and put in the way of female “temptations” (SSS GR 110, 111). He will prove himself “weak-hearted”: “The philosopher falls very much in love—malgré [sic] lui perhaps—he becomes very much distracted from his contemplations, and falls prey to conflicting affinities” (SSS GR 111, 110-11).
But in emphasising the romance of *Siren* Chamier is being disingenuous. Both aspects—romance and the nature of small town settler society—meet in this next phase of Raleigh’s sentimental education. In *Siren*, Chamier puts Raleigh’s philosophy to the test in the small town of Sunnydowns through a series of sentimental romances or “affaires-de-cœur” that tempt him to “conflicting affinities” (148; SSS GR 111). He presents Sunnydowns as a “Dreamland,” an imaginary world where “truth makes but a sorry show” (42, 6). Whatever their own truths (or illusions), most Sunnydowners rigorously adhere to the one Truth of the settlement: “moneymaking,” which is enforced by a collective disciplinary morality or Law of “respectability” or keeping up appearances (61, 298). Raleigh does not buy into this grand illusion. When he is not getting himself tangled up in “affaires-de-cœur,” he goes about Sunnydowns playing devil’s advocate, “intent on unmasking and denouncing the conduct of others” and remarking “inconsistenc[ies] in the ways of the world” (148, 80, 55). He gets into trouble with the Law for his romantic and philosophical indiscretions. But the deeper irony that his confidante Alice points up is that despite his love of “subject[ing]” other settlers to “psychological study” and exposing their blindness to their individual and collective illusions, he is blind to his double illusion: that all truths are philosophically “indifferent” and that the only viable “criterion of Truth” is “[t]he heart,” by which he justifies his philandering to himself (81, 63). In the course of his adventures, he eventually comes around to Alice’s lesson: that he should “turn an introspective glance on his own doings” and “look into his own heart” (80). The example she sets for him of an ironic sentimentality enables him to see a way to adapt himself to settler society, to get settled insofar as an unsettled settler can—though that is not to say he actually settles for good in Sunnydowns. The novel ends with Raleigh and Alice agreeing to rendezvous in Wellington and pick up where they left off.

1.2 *Reception*

*A South Sea Siren* is about as queer a combination of pronounced flirtations and amateurish debating-society discussions as could well be conceived.
Siren attracted about the same level of interest from contemporary reviewers as Philosopher Dick and from a similar mix of periodicals. All but one of the reviews appeared in British publications—though some of these journals and periodicals, like The Athenaeum, did circulate in the British colonies. Though Chamier suggested in a letter to Angus & Robertson that Fisher Unwin thought “the literary reception given to the book . . . decidedly favourable,” most were split on the merits of the novel. Several reviews noted the merits of the novel as “Descriptive of New Zealand Life in the Early Days,” as what the Manchester Guardian calls a “picture of the manners and customs of New Zealand society [that] bears the stamp of truth about it.” But the romances attracted the most attention, comparisons being drawn with Thackeray’s Vanity Fair (1848), the picaresque novels of Fielding, even Byron’s The Island (1823), a South-Seas romance that begins with the mutiny on The Bounty and is set in Tahiti (1.1-8). Reviewers found the novel melodramatic, immoral and in bad taste.

William Wallace’s criticism in The Academy highlights the melodrama:

One gets tired of Mrs. Celia Wylde, the Cleopatresque Becky Sharp, who plays the title-rôle of the story; her “snowy bosom,” “dishevelled hair,” “passionate embraces,” “half-draped figure,” and quite undraped debts, are too much in evidence. One gets even more tired of her lover, Raleigh, who makes love to—or is made love to by—by every woman he meets, from a commodore’s wife to a milkmaid. . . .

Several reviews inadvertently mirror the response of “respectable” local settlers in the novel to Raleigh’s romantic intrigues, tut-tutting that Chamier “sails perilously near the wind, as far as morality is concerned,” as the Dundee Advertiser puts it. Of course, such reviews miss the element of parody and debasement in his ironic adaptation of the conventions of the comic romance—he would happily have agreed

394 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
397 Wallace 196.
398 Rev. of PD, Dundee Advertiser, War and Pessimism endmatter.
with the *Glasgow Herald* that his story was “disfigured by a vein of vulgarity which more than once develops itself in passages of grossly bad taste.”

It is clear that, as with *Philosopher Dick*, most reviewers were reading for moral, but also formal, closure in line with the conventions of the Victorian realist novel. *Siren* was thought formless and overlong—“singularly amorphous [sic]” the *Glasgow Herald* called it. The relation to the main plot of the philosophical palavers in which Raleigh and his mates discuss issues of the day occasioned much critical comment. *The Athenaeum* notes that “[t]he ‘philosophy’ [of *Philosopher Dick*] is continued in the shape of discussions on several of the questions of the day,” which “rather intercept the thread of the story, and contain nothing particularly new or striking.” That they “intercept the thread of the story” is to the point: as the *Glasgow Herald* suggests, they were introduced “by way of diversifying [the] work,” but also to provide a philosophical back story for Raleigh’s romances and his and the narrator’s critical descriptions of settler society.

So it hardly matters that what the *Academy* evocatively describes as “long and incoherent speeches in a South Sea Tobacco—and Spirits—Parliament” seldom rise above the level of “amateurish debating-society discussions.” As Raleigh himself suggests at the end of the fourth and last one: “‘would you, . . . like a press-reviewer, expect from us something ORIGINAL?’” (229). It is in the nature of the place that such adaptations of “high” culture to local conditions will be patchwork jobs and seem debased or provincial from a metropolitan perspective.

What is different about the reception of *Siren* is that Chamier showed his hand, albeit in a roundabout way, in a review in the form of a letter to the Adelaide *Country* by his friend Millar that looks to have been ghost-written by him (as was Millar’s review in the *Liberty Review* of London). It was the only local review. Chamier wanted to attract more local interest for his novels, bemoaning Unwin’s lack of promotion in the colonies in a letter to a local publisher: “The London Publisher has done nothing whatever towards pushing the sale of the work, or making it known

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400 “Our Library Table,” rev. of SSS.
401 Rev. of SSS, *Glasgow Herald*.
402 Wallace 196.
in the Colonies. . . . No copies have yet been forwarded to the Australian Press.”

Millar’s letter makes much of the “attention” at Home to increase Chamier’s critical stock; it begins: “Have the readers of the Country read the truly charming Antipodean romance, “A South Sea Siren,” by George Chamier, author of “Philosopher Dick,” which has just been published by T. Fisher Unwin, and is attracting considerable attention in the best literary circles here?” It seems Chamier had Millar write his reviews to draw attention to aspects of the novel that he thought had been misread or overlooked. Millar credits the novel with being more carefully constructed than most critics had or would. For example, in the Liberty Review, Millar highlights the deeper structural relation of the palavers or “symposiums” to the main plot to point up the fact that “[t]he author is evidently a keen observer of life as well as an original and fearless thinker.” He contends that they are “cleverly dovetailed into the movements of the fiction,” the philosophical palavers alternating with “forceful[ly descriptive] fiction”—thinking with life, to use his binary.

Millar goes on to suggest that it is “the humanity of the book,” its interest in “[h]uman—very human—nature,” that captures the reader. It is Chamier’s “humanism,” his focus on what Millar elsewhere calls the “delineation of colonial character”—or settler autoethnography, rather than plot that distinguishes him among novelists writing in the nineteenth century about New Zealand. It became a keynote of later criticism of his fiction, Siren in particular. Only Sygurd Wisniowski’s Tikera; or, Children of the Queen of Oceania (1877) is comparable in intent and significance, but there the ethnography is more conventional, despite Wisniowski’s philo-Maori bias, and spliced into a straightforward adventure plot set in the North Island. For Evans, it is Chamier’s reading of settler society as thoroughly provincial that is novel: “His Sunnydowns is the first of many dreary provincial townships and Raleigh the first of dozens of provincial sensitives who will be confronted with the problem of not being able to get out of them.” How exactly Raleigh might be confined in Sunnydowns is significant, given the way the constrained nature of movement within

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404 Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
405 Millar, letter to The Country 7.
406 Millar, rev. of SSS 7.
407 Millar, rev. of SSS 7; letter to The Country 7.
409 Patrick Evans, Penguin History 60.
the settlement shapes Raleigh’s narrative, but what is more important is the status of the novel as the second “more settled” novel of Chamier’s autoethnographical trilogy, in which he thematises the relation of the unsettled settler to small town settler society.

Millar and the other contemporary reviewers did not address the relation of *Siren* to Chamier’s other novels—only once was it noted in advertisements or contemporary reviews that *Siren* was a sequel to *Philosopher Dick*. Later critics have read the novels as a complementary pair, focussing on what Lawrence Jones calls “the loose dialectic which structures *Philosopher Dick* and its sequel, *A South Sea Siren*.” Whereas Jones sees this dialectic as driving a conventional settler coming-of-age (or coming-of-age-as-a-settler) narrative, in Raleigh’s case about “the necessary process of discarding illusions both about his own philosophic self-sufficiency and about the possibility of finding in New Zealand ‘a new country,’” Nelson Wattie focusses on Raleigh’s adaptation to small town settler society: “The thematic bond [between the novels] is a concern for questions relating to the individual and the community. In *Philosopher Dick* a “Man Alone” is able to explore his own inner nature; in *A South-Sea Siren* the same man must come to terms with social realities and, especially, encounters with women.” As we know from Chamier’s manifesto in *Good Reading*, that is what he intended. He signposts the trajectory of Raleigh’s narrative in the segue to *Siren* that ends *Philosopher Dick*—this segue accounts for the lack of what Stevens calls “introductory preliminaries” to *Siren*. In this segue, we get his first impressions on arrival in Sunnydowns of the place and the local people, most of whom appear again in *Siren*, in particular Celia and Alice, the principal “contenders for his soul.” The point of the action of *Siren*—the adaptation to small town settler society that continues Raleigh’s sentimental education—is foreshadowed there. His mentor Valentine and confidante Alice counsel him to quit his life of isolation and domesticate himself in Sunnydowns, reiterating Sims’s earlier counsel at what was unbeknownst to Raleigh the turning-point of *Philosopher Dick*: that “domestic felicity” was to be his fate (*PD* 465). This he does in *Siren*.

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413 Joan Stevens, Introduction xv.
2. Siren as colonial comedy of manners: the geography of the narrative

2.1 Siren as colonial comedy of manners

McEldowney’s backhanded compliment that Siren was chosen to open the Auckland University Press’s New Zealand Series because it was considered “shorter, better organized, more even—and possibly duller” than Philosopher Dick is typical in its ambivalence of the few more charitable later readings of the novel—but has a grain of truth.414 Siren does more closely approximate a conventional realist novel than Philosopher Dick, in keeping with its focus being altogether more on the here-and-now, on what Evans calls “the hideous bustle of life in a small colonial country town.”415 But it has its own formal logic in line with Chamier’s general unwillingness—or inability—to fit with what Jones calls “conventional fictional modes” and with his penchant for improvisation.416 It is formally more tightly structured and less heterogeneous—less “formless,” to use McCormick’s word—than Philosopher Dick, though in part it retains the episodic quality of the earlier novel.417 There, Chamier’s literary model was the sentimental picaresque, with its characteristic “fragmented” narrative that aimed at the generation of a series of discrete affective moments of “heightened consciousness.”418 This strategy is echoed in the melodramatic tableaus of Siren and what Stevens describes as its “traditional twofold structure” that alternates “fiction and philosophizing” in the style of Fielding or Henry Brooke’s The Fool of Quality (1767).419 But on the whole the narrative of Siren is less discontinuous—and less heterogeneous—that that of Philosopher Dick, as befits its status as the second “more settled” novel of Chamier’s trilogy, which moves toward both social and formal cohesion or closure.

In Siren, Chamier has Raleigh play the errant hero of latitudinarian sensibility in the style of Fielding’s comic romances, Joseph Andrews (1742) and Tom Jones (1747), putting his philosophy of sympathy to the test in a series of romantic

414 McEldowney, A Press Achieved 74.
415 Patrick Evans, Penguin History 60.
416 Lawrence Jones, “New Zealand Novel” 929.
417 McCormick, Letters and Art 75
418 Todd 104-05.
419 Joan Stevens, Introduction xvi.
temptations or “conflicting affinities” (SSS GR 111). But Siren turns out to be more of a colonial comedy of manners than a comic romance, in a free adaptation of Molière or his sentimental heirs Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Raleigh’s struggle to maintain his “equanimity” in the face of temptation occasions much satire on the “moral hell” of small town settler society in his (and the narrator’s) critical or unsettling descriptions of its hypermaterialism and disciplinary morality of “respectability”—its one Truth, I will call it—and in the philosophical palavers between Raleigh and his fellow truth-seekers about the nature of truth and settler society (12, 3, 298). In the drama of Sunnydowns, everyone plays a particular role, usually marked by Cratyllic names—among those we have met, some are individualised like Raleigh’s insightful confidante Alice Seymour and the temptress Celia Wylde, while others are stock characters like Muster the sheep farmer. Raleigh finds himself drawn to the role of tempter or devil’s advocate.

Chamier works with a more limited range of narrative and non-narrative elements than in Philosopher Dick, as befits the closed society he represents here. In the main, the narrative consists of free indirect discourse in the narrative past (or “past-present”) tense, with description, dialogue and some retrospective narrative, interspersed with quotations from poetry and popular folk songs. He once again plays down conventions of plotting like plot development and suspense, as befits a comedy of manners, but here he employs an “infrastructure” of four structural narrative elements and sections to provide a greater impetus to closure in the novel. The four structural narrative elements of the novel are

a. the main plot complex, Richard Raleigh’s narrative, which has three strands: the ongoing “friendship” of Raleigh and Alice, his affair with Celia Wylde, and his romantic and philosophical adventures, and the scene-setting material:

b. the three tableaus of the temperance subplot, the narrative of Celia’s brother Tom Muster (VI, XII, XXV-XXVI);

c. the four philosophical palavers (I, IV, VIII, XX), and
d. a number of descriptive interludes (II, V, IX, XVIII, XXI, XXIV).

As with Philosopher Dick, there is only one narrator, a heterodiegetic, that is, covert external narrator, who tells both Raleigh’s story and the story of the settlement, and

420 Abrams 29-30.
the narrative is variously focalised. But here the narration is less often focalised through Raleigh, as if to imply that, although he is still the central protagonist, he is not always the centre of attention. Chamier also wants to get some distance on Raleigh: to show us Raleigh interacting socially with other settlers—and often in an even less sympathetic light than in *Philosopher Dick*, perhaps to indicate that his philosophising appears all the more out of place in society.

Raleigh’s narrative, which drives the whole, falls into four structural sections and fits with the conventions of the comedy of manners, which relies on the device of the complication for what plot development there is:

1. the exposition: Alice and Celia vie for Raleigh’s affections (chapters I-V);
2. complication 1: Celia schemes to dupe Raleigh (VI-XVII);
3. complication 2: Celia is unmasked as a schemer (XVIII-XXIII);
4. the denouement: Raleigh is once again duped by Celia and loses everything, but he finds a way out—with Alice (XXIV-XXVIII).

Each section includes one or more episodes of two to four chapters, not necessarily consecutive (section 1: II-III and V; section 2: VI-VII and XI-XII, XIII-XV, XVI-XVII; section 3: XVIII-XIX and XXI-XXIII), with each section interrupted by at least one palaver. The exception is the last section, where Raleigh’s and Muster’s narratives come together, which is uninterrupted and constitutes the denouement of the novel (section 4: XXIV-XXVIII).

The plot of Raleigh’s narrative is more complex than this summary suggests. In its externals, it loosely recalls Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1848), as Chamier himself suggests in *Good Reading*, with Alice as Amelia Sedley and Celia as Becky Sharp (*SSS GR* 111-112). In the exposition (I-V), Alice and Celia vie for Raleigh’s affections. After Alice’s sister is married off (not to Raleigh), it is hinted that she and Raleigh might be suited. But he is seduced by Celia and waxes sentimental about her “affinities” (64). He and Alice agree to disagree about sentiment (and Celia) and be friends. In the first phase of the complication (VI-XVII), Celia schemes to dupe Raleigh, among others. He seems to see through her schemes, yet is tempted to bail her out of financial straits nonetheless. Meanwhile, his own seductions multiply (Miss Bella, Mrs Janet McDonald, wife of the publican, and Maggie Grant, the farmer’s daughter); he has become “fashionable” (116). He and Alice are rumoured to be engaged, but she criticises him for his philandering; Celia too is jealous. It all gets too much for Raleigh, so he goes bush, calling on Delamer, Prowler and Bland, and even
joining a survey party for a time. Though he has Raleigh decide in favour of friendship with Alice, he is dragged back into Celia’s orbit and tempted to bail her out.

In the second phase of the complication (XVIII-XXIII), Celia is unmasked as a schemer. Raleigh accompanies her to Carnival, where she scandalises society and then shows her true self, attacking Raleigh for his “regard for appearances” and Alice for disingenuousness (211). But he is not yet fully “disillusion[ed]” (213). In the denouement (XXIV-XXVIII), Raleigh fears he has lost Alice to Brindsley and made things worse by helping Celia with her brother Muster and invoking another scandal against “appearances,” losing his job (and Muster) in the process (299). The “bubble” of Raleigh’s popularity has burst (306). He decides to leave. But Muster is found, Celia leaves and he finds out Alice has decided against Brindsley—because she wants a sentimental lover. He decides “Love”—with Alice—is his “salvation” (317). When they meet, she hints that she has always known this and they part with a kiss and agree to meet in Wellington, where her family is to move and he has been offered a job as a journalist.

The temperance subplot, Tom Muster’s narrative, runs alongside Raleigh’s narrative and serves both to parody contemporary temperance narratives and to exhibit the moral Law of the settlement at work. It is comprised of three episodes: we see Muster when high-functioning or temperately intemperate and his “downward career” is related (VI), in a typical intemperate episode (XII), and at what is apparently his nadir, a near fatal “spree” (XXV-XXVI; 69, 281). It is at this point that his and Raleigh’s narratives come together: in a perverse exercise of the Law of the settlement, the unsettled settler Raleigh has to enforce that Law upon his fellow settler, to play the part of the voice of “reason” to his “unconscious” (284, 283).

The philosophical palavers—or “symposia,” as Joseph and Johanna Jones call them with a nod to Plato—have usually been seen as the problematic element of the novel. They do not simply offer, as De Mauny suggests, “pale reflections of standard Victorian debating themes” or, conversely, serve for Chamier to “show off his learning,” as Evans would have it. Whether or not colonial intellectual culture was derivative or Chamier’s philosophising leaves something to be desired is beside


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the point. The discussions illuminate the mainly male intellectual and cultural scene in
the Canterbury settlement at the time, but they also set up a philosophical back story
for Raleigh’s romantic and philosophical adventures, and his and the narrator’s
critical descriptions of settler society. As Joseph and Johanna Jones argue, they “set . . .
a theoretical framework in which Raleigh’s actions and motives can be examined as
he stumbles through a series of relationships with the women [and men] of the
settlement and eventually achieves some degree of self-knowledge.”423 For this
reason, they cluster around the first third of the novel, in which the world of
Sunnydowns takes shape.

Broadly speaking, the palavers concern the nature of truth and settler society:

a. how religious ideas about damnation exemplify the relativity of truth (I),
and
b. the relativity of truth exemplifies the universality of “illusion”—of society,
settler society especially, as “sham” (45; IV);
c. how national education restricts “self reliance and private enterprise,” and
its corollary, that settler societies should be liberal rather than bureaucratic
(99; VIII); and

d. how religion exemplifies the role of sentiment as an antidote to the
“thoroughly practical and mercenary age,” which takes its most radical
form in the speculative colonial settlement (220; XX).

The palavers point us to a definition of the unsettled settler as an individual who
follows their own truth in the face of the sham one Truth of settler society, and to the
questions as to what might constitute the fittest social order in such a settlement and
how an unsettled settler might fit into such an order. Leaving aside the latter question,
if Sunnydowns is represented as a kind of “moral hell,” hypermaterialist and
moralistic, Chamier will suggest that it must be redeemed by the extension of a
Humean “social sympathy” throughout settler society as the basis of a benign order of
laissez-faire (3).424 The palavers are always followed by interludes that describe
goings-on in Sunnydowns, as if to bring us down to earth and make us draw the
consequences of the philosophising for settler society.

423 Joseph and Johanna Jones 19-20.
2.2 The geography of the narrative

The infrastructure of *Siren* is reinforced by the geography of the narrative. The action of *Siren* takes place in and around the small town of “Sunnydowns” (Leithfield) on the North Canterbury downs over about two years in the middle eighteen-sixties: from one year after Raleigh arrived there—from about December 1864, given that *Philosopher Dick* ends at Christmas 1863—until a depression set in, probably the depression of 1866-67 (14; XXI). Sections one and two (the exposition and complication 1) take place from December 1864 through 1865, sections three and four (complication 2 and the denouement) from Carnival Week in November 1865 through 1866. The novel is set in and around Leithfield on the downs and inland toward and about Mt Grey (“Mt Pleasance”), with an excursion to Christchurch for Carnival (XVIII-XIX). There are seven main settings:

1. the town of “Sunnydowns” itself, on which the narrative centres and which Raleigh’s hut, the “Growlery,” overlooks, and
2. “Glenmoor,” the Seymour homestead, on the downs two miles up the North Road.

Both of these settings are in location 2 on the map (see figure 23 below); all the other settings, bar Christchurch, are in the periphery of the town (marked location 2.5):

3. the “Dovecot,” the Wyldes’ sheep farm, away to the north-west near Mt Pleasance, with their in-laws the Musters’ hut nearby,
4. the “Shooting-Box” at the foot of Mt Pleasance on the back country or western side, where Prowler the land shark lives,
5. the residence of Bland, the Contended Man, near Mt Pleasance on the Sunnydowns or eastern side, and
6. the Survey Office inland to the south-west “on the confines of a large swamp and surrounded with bleak and arid plains” (164)—the inauspicious site of a future township.

Lastly, there is

7. the provincial city of Christchurch, even further south, which is treated as a secondary centre in the novel (location 1).
Chamier presents the geography of the settlement of Sunnydowns as regular in the extreme. It consists of the all-too-settled precinct of the town (location 2) and a relatively unsettled—and for this reason, unsettling—periphery that surrounds it and serves as an “otherworld” to the world of the settlement (location 2.5). The two worlds are like light and dark: the settlement is seemingly enlightened and social, its periphery savage and asocial. In the periphery, in “the borderland of civilisation,” as the narrator calls it, “deeds of darkness” like the slaughter of animals and, ironically, surveying go on (167, 16). It is associated with irrationality, Muster’s intemperance, for example, or with uncanny phenomena like apparitions and delusional states, as if the disciplinary order of the settlement were unravelling around the edges. And this otherworld is where Raleigh goes when he is excluded from society. But the settings in this periphery, the Wyldes’ and the Musters’ nearby, Prowler’s and Bland’s near Mt Pleasance, Markham’s Survey Office and environs, and the Seymours’ homestead
are also associated with truths that run counter to the one Truth of the settlement and provide Raleigh with more or less persuasive models of how to settle that are alternatives to the one Truth of the settlement. The most important of these is the Seymours’ homestead, which forms a complementary pair with Raleigh’s hut. His hut that overlooks the settlement is like a sanctuary of unsettlement, of “outside insideness,” distanced by its elevation from the settlement itself and marked out by its atmosphere of philosophical fog. It is where the palavers take place and Raleigh writes his literary “lucubrations” (304). Equally, the Seymours’ homestead, Glenmoor, which is described as “a little oasis in the [unsettled] desert” that surrounds the settlement, serves as an outpost of the settlement, an oasis of “inside outsideness” perhaps (61). Interestingly, Raleigh and his confidante Alice hold audiences at each other’s homes, but their most significant meetings—like their final rapprochement—take place on the roads between, as if to highlight the inside-outside dialectic of socialisation that informs Raleigh’s narrative.

Sunnydowns promotes itself as a natural settlement: a “perfect site,” “a locality . . . cut off from the busy outside world” in a place that seems to offer “a fair and fresh field to thrive upon” (100, 162, 197). Elsewhere it is described as a “Sanitarium,” a naturally healthy location, as Leithfield, the model for Sunnydowns, had been (101). But Chamier represents the settlement as a kind of penal enclosure, as befits its disciplinary morality. In keeping with Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarian model of the penal institution, its geometry is circular—not unlike the “charmed circle” of the human Siren’s admirers, interestingly—and centralising to facilitate surveillance (108). Movement within the settlement is similarly constrained. The lines of force in the settlement work on a centrifugal-centripetal or push-pull axis: individuals are included or excluded and pushed out to the periphery of the settlement according to the dictates of “fashion,” in other words, whether or not they can manage to keep up appearances. When Raleigh is in fashion or “fashionable,” he spends more time in town and is included in goings-on in the settlement; when he is not, he is excluded

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425 Advertisement in the 1865 Southern Provinces Almanac, quoted in Stapleton 6.
and pushed out into the periphery—he ends up out of fashion and is forced to leave (116).

The first ten chapters take place in the town of Sunnydowns and its immediate environs, at the Growlery in town, and nearby at the Seymours’ estate, Glenmoor (location 2), with three excursions to the Wyldes’ farm, the Dovecot, on the periphery of the town (location 2.5), as the scene is set and the action gets underway. In chapters XI to XVII, the action moves out from the town, as Raleigh’s philosophical adventures take him out among the workings of settlement: at the land shark Prowler’s, at the Wyldes’ uneconomic farm, on the survey and at the Survey Office, and at the “producer” Bland’s (location 2.5). Then the action moves briefly right into Christchurch (location 1) for the Carnival. From chapters XX to XXVIII, we are returned to the settlement with excursions to the Wyldes’ farm (locations 2 and 2.5) for the denouement. At the very end of the novel, Raleigh heads off to the provincial capital, Wellington—or rather, as we know, to the provincial metropolis of Melbourne. Broadly, then, the narrative moves from the town (location 2) to its periphery (2.5), to the provincial city (1), back to the town (2), and to the provincial capital—and, potentially, the provincial metropolis (0).

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Fig. 24. The geographical movement of the narrative of *Siren*.

This zigzag movement, which typifies Raleigh’s push-pull relation to settler society, will be familiar from *Philosopher Dick*. And once again, in keeping with the grand
narrative of settlement as a centripetal movement toward the city that Chamier uses to structure his trilogy, in the course of the novel Raleigh is moved one step inward to the city—or rather, toward the provincial metropolis where the next novel of the trilogy, Successful Man, will be set.

In comparison with Philosopher Dick, the movement of the narrative of Siren is less extensive and centres more on its principal location of the town of Sunnydowns, as if to represent Raleigh’s feeling of confinement there. If in the context of Chamier’s trilogy Raleigh moves one step inward toward the city, the trajectory of the series of the romantic and philosophical adventures that make up Raleigh’s narrative can also be conceived as a double circular movement, in keeping with the symbolic geography of the settlement. In Siren, Chamier has Raleigh play the errant hero of latitudinarian sensibility, but he does not let him ramble randomly or with much latitude. He wants Raleigh to come around to Alice philosophically and romantically—she remains constant and he orbits away from and back to her, skirting the void or “gulf” between them (187). In this sense, the movement of the narrative invokes the fatalistic quality of Raleigh’s lengthy vacillation over quitting the station in Philosopher Dick. In his romantic adventures, Raleigh circles away from Alice, pushed and pulled by Celia and his other “affinities,” but comes back to her by the end. His philosophical adventures move similarly, as Chamier offers him a series of models for right action—of how to settle—on a kind of “learning curve” that also returns him to Alice. Chamier implies that Raleigh needs to find a way to marry his philosophical theory of Truth—that there are many truths in practice, but that they might be able to co-exist sympathetically—with his romantic sentiment that “[t]he heart” or sympathy ought to be his “criterion of the Truth” (63). He begins as the world-weary devil’s advocate (and misogynist), but ends up at Alice’s “sensible” or clear-eyed sentimental domesticity— provisionally at least: he is not yet ready to settle down, though he is heading that way (236). If he begins as more outsider than insider, by the end of Siren he comes to see a way to get by inside settler society—as an outside insider. It is to the nature of the society where Raleigh finds himself confined and sorely tried that I now turn.

3 Truth and truths: the “moral hell” of Sunnydowns; Raleigh as devil’s advocate
Although many of us may exclaim in the bitterness of our hearts—

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,
yet we should remember that it is this very “cheat” that makes
life tolerable to us.

—George Chamier, *Siren* 48, quoting Dryden, *Aureng-zebe* (1675).\(^{428}\)

The novel begins with Raleigh presiding over an unsettling discussion on “the
doctrine of eternal punishment”: “‘So we are not to be damned, after all!’” says Major
Dearie (1). Raleigh disagrees; he holds that “we have invented a sort of moral hell to
take the place of the old sulphurous institution.” By implication, that “moral hell” is
Sunnydowns. Its “devils” are manifold, as Raleigh declares: “There are so many sorts
and conditions of devils . . . that we have ample material to choose from to suit our
altered conditions” (3). His are largely of his own making. Though he finds himself
drawn as usual to the role of the critical outsider in his philosophising, here as tempter
or devil’s advocate, he also puts himself in the way of female “temptations”: his
tempter is the serpentine Siren Celia and, as usual, his temptation is to extremes of
sympathy—to an unbounded sensibility or “passion” in her case (*SSS GR* 110; *SSS*
29). And though Sunnydowners might like to see theirs as “a puritanical society,” it is
morally duplicitous—or devilish—through and through (30).

For Raleigh (and Chamier), this duplicity reflects the Schopenhauerian truth
that “nature’s garb is universal illusion”:

“Towards man, nature’s garb is universal illusion; her lights are
everywhere misleading, her teaching is prevailing doubt, and by
Divine law the Gorgon-face of reality is shrouded from his sight.

“This, according to the Indian philosophy, is Māya, ‘the veil of
deception, which blinds the eyes of mortals, and makes them behold a
world of which they cannot say either that it is or that it is not, for it is
like a dream. . . .’”

[S]o is our frail human nature . . . surrounded and protected at all
points by a thick mist of illusion, which softens to our eyes the
unsufferable glare of truth. . . .” (52)\(^{429}\)

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\(^{428}\) John Dryden, *Aureng-zebe[; or, the Great Mogul]: A Tragedy* (London, 1675) 49 (IV.i),
For Chamier, settler society is radically illusory, because settler worlds are wholly imaginary in nature: they are magicked up and grounded in or by fantasies of well-foundedness or natural settlement. Sunnydowns is no exception. He has Raleigh frame his critique of settler society there in terms of the Victorian rhetoric of appearance and reality—of what Carlyle called “truth” and “sham.”” Raleigh sees Sunnydowns as a “Dreamland” where “truth makes but a sorry show”: “appearances go for everything,” but are not to be trusted, and truth is entirely “conventional,” that is, there are many truths—or rather, lies, because the truths are all illusions (42, 6, 299). “Truth-speaking,” by which he presumably means speaking some kind of Truth with a capital “T” that lies beneath the truths, “is not de rigueur”—though he excepts his own romantic sentiment that “[t]he heart” ought to be the “criterion of the Truth” (7). In sum, “[s]ociety is one vast make-believe—a huge sham.” Not that this is really a moral failing, because “[d]eception is essential to our common existence”: in “personal appearances,” “social interchange,” even as far as “the ‘inner man’” is concerned (45). Settlers habitually deceive each other—and themselves. They do not see the “thick mist of illusion” that cloaks settler society for what it is, let alone their own illusions (52).

Chamier suggests that the illusory quality of settler society seems to inhere in the place itself: “What we . . . worship under the name of truth is not the thing itself [Truth], but our fond illusion of it [a truth]; it is like the exquisite blue of those rugged hills in the distance,” that is to say, it is an illusion. In contrast, the truths Raleigh seeks to uncover will not be pretty—like the plain: “truth, in real life, is nearly always plain, and not unfrequently ugly and repulsive” (46). Chamier alerts us to this disjunction in the nature of the settlement from the first palaver, where he sets up a polarity between the atmospheres of Raleigh’s hut and the settlement: as Kevin Ireland suggests, life in the settlement is a “dynamic bustle,” characterised by golden light—and the peddling of illusion as Truth (from Raleigh’s perspective); the palavers are “stuffy and static,” characterised by smokiness—and truth-speaking. These represent the two poles of the story: the fog of philosophical theories and the (false)

429 Raleigh is quoting Schopenhauer, World as Will and Idea, vol. 1, 9 (sec. 3)—see World as Will and Representation 8. Schopenhauer—like Chamier here and elsewhere—alludes to Schiller’s parable about the danger of unveiling Truth, “The Veiled Image at Saïs” (1795).
glare of the settlement, where there are, as Alice puts it at the end of *Philosopher Dick*, “no theories about anything” (*PD* 568). Most settlers are blinded by the golden light of the settlement to its real nature, to its rigorous adherence to one Truth.

That one Truth: “moneymaking.” In practice, as the narrator puts it, there are “no ideas beyond money-making” in Sunnydowns: no “comfort” or “embellishment” in the homesteads and no “scientific farming” (61, 105). The place has to be made “to pay”: “To fence in as much land as possible, to run a plough over it and obtain a few wheat crops from it without manuring or systematic cultivation, then to sow with English grasses and to paddock sheep, was the only rule recognised by the pioneer settler, and the only practice which was admitted to pay” (61). This hypermaterialism is driven by a “‘go-ahead’ mania,” a mania for “material advancement” marked by a thoroughgoing positivism, literally positive in its optimism, but also positivist in its rigour (232, 101):

> The prevailing notion was then . . . that the salvation of mankind lay in energy. The trumpet call was to be “up and doing.” The universal motto was PROGRESS. . . . The destiny of man was to advance. The precise nature of this forward movement—its purpose and direction—might be moot questions, but no difference of opinion existed as to the paramount necessity for “getting on.” (113)

Here are displayed the two dimensions of this hypermaterialism: the energism and boosterism or upward movement characteristic of speculative settler capitalism (“to be ‘up and doing’”), and the progressivism or forward movement of settlement (“to advance”), often reconfigured as an outward movement, as in the idea of the expanding frontier familiar from the contemporary mythology of the American West.\(^{432}\)

As the settlement inflates in two dimensions, we end up with the symbolic geographical form of the bubble—a “South Sea Bubble” perhaps—in which the one Truth of Sunnydowns is writ large. The process by which the settlement takes shape can be thought of as an act of sublimation, not in the sense of the naturalising gesture from *Philosopher Dick* of equating “the Native” with Nature, but in the sense of sublimation as literally “making sublime.” However natural the resulting settlement

might seem, it has the quality of a planned settlement. To extrapolate from Kant’s two senses of the sublime in the Critique of Judgement (1790), this act has two moments:

a. a negative gesture of sublimation as clearance—as in the exclusion of the “natives” or first settlers of the place, not to mention the native flora and fauna, even its geography—creates an imaginary void, what John Newton calls “a terra nullius that invites . . . settlement” (this is a variant of the “dynamic” sublime, the sublime of “might” or force), followed by

b. an altogether more positive gesture of sublimation as market capitalisation—as in the hypermaterialism of settler society—tries to fill that void by creating or inflating a market for economic and symbolic capital (this is a variant of the “mathematical” sublime, the sublime of “magnitude”).

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Fig. 25. The symbolic geographical form of the settlement 1.

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Therefore, the mundane economic positivism—the “‘go-ahead’ mania”—of the settlement is grounded in a more fundamental geopolitical positivism (232). Nonetheless, Maori remain a hypothetical presence in Sunnydowns—fitting, given that it would have seemed to settlers of the time that there were not many “natives” around the place. Their exclusion is sublimated in talk of the “Native Question” that displaces “native affairs” to the North Island: the frontier is elsewhere—“the red-jackets march off to the front to fight—or rather, not to fight—the Maories” up north in Auckland; natives are potted or poisoned in Australia; the “Native Question” is debated at length in the Legislative Council—and in the “Government organ” of the press away in the national capital (256, 169, 56). Raleigh himself contributes “a couple of articles on the ‘Native Question’” (314). This move literally imagines Maori away and allows settlers to stay on their side of the cultural border. The metaphor of the mushroom that Chamier uses to describe such settlements aptly describes their rapid and malignant growth, as they seem to spring up from nowhere as if by magic, but also suggests that such “mushroom townships” are parasitic—that they live off the decay of a previous settlement (PD 95). This hint as to the geopolitical nature of the settlement goes unremarked. Through this rigorous imaginative gesture of self-justification, we end up with a settlement that is complete and comprehensive, however insecurely rooted it might be, echoing Irving’s definition of “a settler” in the opening palaver: “an answer” to the question as to the well-foundedness of the settlement “that is complete and comprehensive and which requires no comment,” an answer that resolves “[a]ll difficulties and apparent contradictions” (2). For Parson Tupper, it is “a miracle”; for Raleigh, it is a “moral hell” (2, 3).

This double act of sublimation puts in place the clear differentiation between the world of the settlement and its otherworld and between who or what is inside and outside its “charmed circle” (108). The ground plan of the settlement takes the circular or “radial” form Constantinos Doxiades describes in Ekistics as often characteristic of utopian settlements insofar as the natural limits of the settlement like geographical features—here the sea and Mt Pleasance—and the settler and “native” population allow. It is a version of the typical “circle the wagons” self-defensive gesture of the frontier settlement, but with guns turned inward, as it were, in the

absence of any apparent threat from the local “natives.” The more immediate threat is that of the naysayers within, like Raleigh and Muster, against which the settlers defend themselves by means of the disciplinary morality by which the regime of the settlement is maintained. Though the bustle of the settlement gives the appearance of a “genial sociability,” the one Truth of Sunnydowns is rigorously enforced by a collective disciplinary morality or Law of “respectability” or keeping up appearances (105, 298).

In The Gauche Intruder, Jennifer Rutherford gives an account of the process by which settler societies sublimate their collective aggression toward other peoples in a certain idea of “the Good”—I have called it the Law—of the settlement. It has three aspects:

a. “the fantasy of a good and neighbourly nation,”

b. “a sustained aggression to alterity both in the self and other,” and

c. repeated reference to “a subjective and symbolic zero point—an encounter with the void.”

Her account aptly describes the inward workings of the Law of Sunnydowns. The “genial sociability” of Sunnydowns represents just such a “neighbourly” fantasy; putting aside the question of aggression against the Maori “other” in their exclusion from the settlement, “alterity” in the settlement is managed by a system of self-surveillance in accordance with Bentham’s penal model (105). The void Rutherford addresses is Patrick White’s “Great Australian Emptiness,” the bush or the desert being its most familiar embodiments. Raleigh encountered something like this void in Philosopher Dick—there his desire for self-abnegation amounted to an “aggression to alterity . . . in the self,” namely, a gesture of settlement by an unsettled settler. His eventual exclusion for truth-speaking in Siren will embody an opposite but equivalent gesture on the part of the social body, whereby the settlers cast out the unsettler. But the void Chamier will have Raleigh encounter in Sunnydowns is the imaginary void at the heart of the settlement left by this collective effort of sublimation in the service of one Truth that does not enable the many truths of the Sunnydowners to coexist sympathetically. It manifests itself as a “void” within the settler that is felt most


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keenly by unsettled settlers like Raleigh, what he calls “the painful void in [his] inmost being; his intense craving for communion and sympathy” (316).

The Law of Sunnydowns works in accordance with Bentham’s penal model to manage “alterity.” The Sunnydowners are governed—or govern themselves—through a regime of self-surveillance that ensures that everyone is “kept within proper bounds” (19). It is as if the glare of the settlement illuminates everyone and everything equally: everything is seen; everyone is known; there is one standard for everyone. This collective morality is effected by marriage-broking, charity, “ostracism,” “keen rivalry . . . out of public spirit,” and “scandal” or “gossip” (28, 101, 106). But the settlers’ apparent “frankness of manner and open-heartedness” is illusory; their real imperative is “to keep up appearances” and preserve their social “credit” (27). Those who do not obey the Law of the settlement find themselves excluded—as the unsettled settlers Raleigh and Muster will be—in what amounts to a gesture of “aggression to alterity . . . in the self,” or rather, to the “other” within settler society, to use Rutherford’s phrase. Interestingly, Chamier takes these disciplinary modes of social interaction to be stereotypically female, in keeping with his assumption that the town is a female location (as against the male back country). Accordingly, he chooses female figures to embody the discourse of truth and illusion that informs this society: truth is “the Gorgon-face of reality”; the various illusions collectively represent “Māya, ‘the veil of deception’” (52). It is women who hold the balance of power in Sunnydowns; hence the novel proper begins with a wedding feast—for Raleigh an assertion of female power, a time when “the feminine element is in the ascendant”—as if to affirm this female order (15). After the ceremony, the wedding party circles “round the outskirts of the budding township,” resetting the roughly circular boundaries of the settlement, which is shaped like a “budding” flower (20). And Alice’s solution to the problem of Raleigh’s unsettlement is the only female one and the one he will choose in the end.

Raleigh does not buy into the one Truth of Sunnydowns. He refuses to “bustle”; as the narrator puts it, “The young man was incurably indolent, and what tended to make matters still worse, he was indolent on principle,” that is to say, “he disliked the outward show of activity,” of “work per se” and “bustling”—all the manifestations of “PROGRESS” at all cost (112, 113). But his indolence is deceptive:

437 Rutherford 11.
“[h]e did more than he confessed to, and pretended to be idler than he really was. . . . although, as a matter of fact, he got through a good deal of work, nobody ever saw him doing anything” (112). Nonetheless, like all the settlers, Raleigh has a clear social role; his plays the part of “the ‘philosopher’” of Sunnydowns (19). Chamier has him go about Sunnydowns in search of truths to unsettle others—to spread a little “fog” in town where there are “no theories about anything” (PD 568). Paradoxically, then, his truth-speaking brings to light the “thick mist of illusion” that cloaks the settlement (52). So where, in *Philosopher Dick*, Chamier conceived of Raleigh as akin to Shakespeare’s Jaques, the melancholy philosopher, here he has him play devil’s advocate, “intent on unmasking and denouncing the conduct of others” and remarking “inconsistenc[ies] in the ways of the world” (80, 55).

Raleigh pursues his seductive insight about the disjuncture of appearance and reality into every facet of Sunnydowns society. For his part, he is anti-institutional, being apparently “under a vow never to attend a marriage, a christening, or a funeral” and proud to not act “appropriate[ly]” (20, 22). And he has no interest in the staples of small town social discourse, especially gossip: “he had no society gossip, and hated small talk, . . . despised local politics, and affected profound indifference as to the state of the weather” (121). But more importantly, he loves to unsettle other settlers with his “shocking” philosophical “paradoxes” and what seem to other settlers to be extreme relativist positions on truth and such like in the palavers and elsewhere (61). As Irving says in response to Raleigh’s philosophising in the opening palaver: “I don’t see the advantage of discussion on these matters—they only unsettle a fellow” (8). He is generally thought to be both “in . . . bad taste” and “the most reprehensible influence,” “evil” even (34, 19). For his part, he enjoys “the symptoms of opposition” and his position as a kind of philosophical lone wolf: “Raleigh was somewhat different from the everyday run of men, and he affected a still greater divergence” (4, 116). He calls his outsider status in the settlement “originality”; other settlers think him “a strange, solitary, and mysterious being.”

Raleigh’s shifting status in Sunnydowns exhibits the Law of the settlement at work. In line with Bentham’s model, he is the object of constant surveillance, subjected to a regime of discipline both by others—and by himself. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes such a regime as working according to a “double mode,” through “binary division and branding,” which classifies individuals as “mad/sane; . . . normal/abnormal” and so forth, and through “coercive . . . distribution,” which
defines for the individual “who he is; where he must be; . . . how a constant
surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way.”438 The regime of
Sunnydowns fits this description. It works geographically, as befits a new settlement:
the characteristic division is the “inside/outside” binary; the characteristic distribution
is to assign individuals social roles and include or exclude them from the settlement.
So long as he is in fashion, Raleigh “the ‘philosopher’” is tolerated as a dissenting or
“outside” voice within the settlement, though from time to time he is branded a
“reprehensible influence” and banished to his hovel on account of his truth-speaking
that is at odds with the one Truth of the settlement (19). Though Raleigh thinks he can
keep his distance on settler society, he is repeatedly drawn back into the ambit of the
settlement by the intrigues of the Siren, his sentimental regard for Alice Seymour and
his other romances; when these romances go awry, he is excluded by other settlers—
though he reads it as his “turn[ing] his back on the place . . . to get away from all old
and painful associations” (243, 305). Though his narrative as a whole takes the form
of a circle away from and back to Alice, at any particular moment it is driven by this
push-pull dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, as his romantic and philosophical
adventures play out.

As for Alice, she thinks that his role as devil’s advocate is self-aggrandising
and exemplifies his tendency to “fly . . . to extremes”: “You only argue for the sake of
arguing—to show off. The more monstrous the proposition the better you like it” (181,
62). Instead, she wants Raleigh to learn from the “many different conceptions” of the
truth he uncovers on his philosophical adventures (63). If the Schopenhauerian critical
impulse to dig beneath appearances—to “unmask . . . and denounc[e] the conduct of
others”—is the ground of Raleigh’s unsettling criticism of small town settler society,
Chamier would not have him uncover some kind of Truth with a capital “T” (80). If
his criticism serves a Truth, it is that there are “a great many different conceptions” of
the truth in Sunnydowns, despite its outward conformity to one settled Truth (63).
Most settlers are blinded to other truths by the false glare of the settlement’s one
Truth, though in private they might voice their own truth—without admitting it to be
just one truth among many, which would be too unsettling. At one point, Chamier has
Raleigh voice his Epicurean insight that “illusion is [not] naturally harmful”: “It is
well, at times, to look stern reality in the face, but who could discard hope and fancy

438 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New
and the thousand illusions which contribute so materially to the buoyancy and happiness of our lives” (50, 47). But most settlers remain blind to the fact that their illusions are illusions; they are “the unconscious blind” (81):

many of the most keen-sighted of men . . . are as blind as a bat where their own intentions and sentiments are concerned; they are not hypocrites, they do not knowingly deceive themselves—they simply cannot see. And what tends to aggravate the mischief is that not unfrequently they cannot see that they cannot see. (80-81)  

Chamier implies that unless the settlers can see that their illusions are illusions the many illusions (or truths) of the Sunnydowners will be unable to coexist sympathetically and “the wretched void” between settlers will remain unfilled (54). His answer—and the lesson Alice will impart to Raleigh—is to extend throughout settler society a Humean “social sympathy” as the basis of a benign order of laissez-faire. This is an entirely Schopenhauerian move: from an elevated anti-humanist perspective on human illusions to an acceptance of a more radical illusion—a belief in human sympathy. It is a recipe for self-overcoming based on recognising the fellow “suffering” of others: here the suffering is settlers’ collective “unconscious blind[ness],” their blindness to the fact that their collective illusion—the Truth of the settlement—is an illusion, that each settler has their own truth, or rather, their own illusion.  

The irony of Raleigh’s narrative is that despite his love of “subject[ing]” other settlers to “psychological study” and pointing out their blindness to their collective and individual illusions, he is blind to his double illusion: that all truths are philosophically “indifferent” and that the only viable “criterion of Truth” is “[t]he heart,” by which he justifies his philandering to himself (81, 63). Without this self-consciousness, his “Truth-speaking” is mere “moralising,” as the narrator suggests: “It did not occur to the moralising philosopher, who was so intent on unmasking and denouncing the conduct of others, to turn an introspective glance on his own doings; it did not occur to him to look into his own heart” (80). That Raleigh should “turn an introspective glance on his own doings” and “look into his own heart” will be Alice’s lesson for him and the key to his adapting himself to settler society, to his fashioning

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439 The phrase echoes Schopenhauer’s description of the will as a “blind and unconscious striving” (World as Will and Idea, vol. 1, 195 [sec. 27]—see World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 149).

440 See Schopenhauer, World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 374-80 (sec. 66-67).
a practicable position for himself inside settler society. He loves to unsettle others but has failed to come to terms with his own unsettlement, which feels to him like a “painful void in his inmost being; [an] intense craving for communion and sympathy” (316). Unconsciously, he tries to fill that void in a series of “affaires-de-cœur,” not realising until the very end of the novel that it is the romantic and philosophical “gulf” between his confidante Alice and himself that he needs to overcome (148, 187).

4 Raleigh’s sentimental education: his romantic and philosophical adventures

4.1 Romantic adventures: Alice versus Celia

In Raleigh’s romantic adventures, there are two poles of temptation. Alice, constant, self-sufficient and ironic, represents the “good” pole of sense (or ironic sentimentality) and real sympathy; Celia, fickle, needy and manipulative, represents the “evil” pole of passion (or unbounded sensibility) and the appearance of sympathy. Raleigh will circle away from Alice, pushed and pulled by Celia and his other romantic “affinities,” but come back to her by the end. Her pole will be revealed to be his lodestar, “the star on high to guide his course,” their “affinity” more “subtle”: “his kindly Mentor . . . by whom he rather enjoyed being scolded [and] to whom he was bound by a subtle affinity transcending the ties of ordinary friendship” (313, 277).

To begin with, Raleigh thinks himself “altogether too insignificant a person to merit the distinction of being bewitched” by the arch-tempter the Siren Celia and therefore “outside the pale of enchantment,” outside her “charmed circle” (37, 38, 108). He sees himself as “an indifferent looker-on” to the Siren’s affairs, uninterested in “good and bad” or moral responsibility. Nonetheless, he is swayed by “interest,” that is, by the sympathetic occasion, so he “can[not] . . . help sympathising with her sufferings,” personal and financial (38). Things take a different turn at their first private meeting (V), when he is easily seduced by her “embrace”: in their “wrestling match” “an overpowering sensation thrill[s] through his whole being and paralyse[s] all his faculties.” He is “spellbound” (39).

The encounter brings about a change in Raleigh. He has always professed to be a “misogamist”—in Philosopher Dick he seems to be entirely celibate and publicly, as the narrator says, he has “always derided sentimentality, and tried to make out that he was quite incapable of a great passion” (116, 238). But from the moment
of his encounter with the Siren, the extremes of sentiment seem to open up to him. He
develops a tendency to wax “dangerously sentimental” in female society, as he
suggests to Alice: “I appreciate any kind of sympathy from your charming sex;
indeed, every sentiment is more or less acceptable to me except one—indifference”
(143, 62). At once, he becomes “fashionable” in female society and his seductions
multiply: “[o]nce he became fashionable, there were no limits to the public attentions
he received from the fair” (116). He continues to insist, somewhat disingenuously,
that these romances are carried out in a “platonic spirit” on his part, with him playing
the “director of consciences” (122, 148). Inwardly, he struggles to maintain his
equanimity amid these “conflicting affinities” (SSS GR 111).

Aside from Celia and Alice, with whom his relationships are “platonic,” there
is Miss Bella (see X), Mrs Janet McDonald, wife of the publican, whom Raleigh
“compromise[s]” with her husband and the “censorious world” (310; see X, XIII,
XXVII), and Maggie Grant, the farmer’s daughter and milkmaid, whom he is with
when attacked by Muster (see X, XIII, XXV). He runs the gamut of sentimental
poses: from the unbounded sensibility of the lover (with Celia), to the affective
manipulation of the cad (with Maggie), to the affective sympathy of the guardian
(with Muster), to the more “platonic” sympathy of the lover as confessor or
“philosophical director” (with Janet—and the Siren when she is in crisis) or friend
(with Alice), which sentimental friendship is the only affinity that proves lasting
(140). He thinks all this posing manifests what he has always called his
“Bohemian[ism],” a kind of conscious self-fashioning; Alice’s lesson for him will be
that it is a mere “pose,” a self-defensive imposture (PD 155, 242).

All these affinities will come back to haunt him when he ceases to be
fashionable and is ostracised by Sunnydowns society at the end of the novel. But
before this final act of exclusion, which represents the disciplinary morality or Law of
the settlement acting outwardly on him, there is an earlier episode in which he enacts
it inwardly. His affinities literally come back to haunt him in the nightmare
reenactment of Flaubert’s “Temptation of St. Anthony”—the Temptation of St.
Raleigh perhaps—that constitutes a turning-point of sorts in his narrative (150; XIV).
This unsettling experience of psychological introversion takes place the night after
Raleigh has entertained Janet, Maggie, Alice and Celia in succession at the Growlery
(XIII). Janet temptingly reveals the “aching void” in her heart her first love left and
that her husband does not fill, Maggie that she is to be married; both imply that they
would prefer Raleigh (143). Alice criticises Raleigh for his “false sentiment” and “affaires-de-cœur” while “setting up all the while to be a . . . misogynist”; Celia breaks in on her, mocking his pose as “a director of consciences” (148).

After they have all left and Raleigh is dwelling on “[his] case,” he is visited by Delamer bringing him a copy of “the ‘Temptation of St. Anthony’” (150). That night, like the hermit of the Temptation, he has a succession of three nightmares about his affairs, one “pathetic,” one “terrifying,” one “fantastic” (153). In the first, he is confronted by “hallucination[s]” of “Love in Protean shapes,” while outside “Reproach and Calumny roam in the hideous darkness” (151). It is as if the “Conscience” of the settlement—bodied forth as his own—is visiting him to “smite him” for violating its Law. He wakes to the realisation that he has become “seriously entangled in [his] affaires-de-cœur” and risks “dangerous complications” (152).

The second is a waking nightmare in which he is visited by “the devil”; in an echo of the bathetic experiences of Philosopher Dick, it turns out to be his black mackintosh hanging outlined in the moonlight (153). In this uncanny moment Chamier might be hinting at the falsity of Raleigh’s position of devil’s advocate—as just a cloak for another undisclosed position perhaps; more likely the devil represents the Law of the settlement—Chamier represents it as a “moral hell” after all—alerting Raleigh to the moral implications of his action (3). Accordingly, Chamier has this visitation recall to Raleigh his “critical position,” in the terms of the discussion with Valentine that prefaces Siren. As Valentine puts it there, “the so-called merit or demerit which attaches to questions of conduct is mainly dependent on the intention that prompts and the opportunity that guides our actions, while the erring may justly plead extenuating circumstances through temptation” (PD 509). In acting according to his romantic sentiment that “[t]he heart” ought to be his “criterion of the Truth,” Raleigh has allowed himself to act according to opportunity and left his intentions unquestioned (63). Alice will say that to plead temptation to justify his philandering to himself, as he is wont to do, is a self-defensive imposture. The threat of the Law is imaginary but terrifying; the next nightmare decides him to leave the settlement.

In the third nightmare, his lovers parade before him “attired in Oriental fashion,” but all of a sudden set to fighting—except Alice, now dressed as Schiller’s veiled figure of Truth from “The Veiled Image at Saïs,” but with her “eyes . . . veiled
in tears” rather than the “thin and ceremonial robe” of the poem. She remains a “silent spectator,” not intervening on behalf of the settlement, but searching his intentions with a “reproachful gaze.” He will come around to her now “half-veiled” truth but is not yet ready to profit from her example; instead he “quail[s] under that searching glance, and trie[s] to escape from it, but c[an] not” (154). He feels his decision is made for him. The upshot of this unsettling encounter with the Law of the settlement is that he feels he must get away from “compromising associations”—from the temptations of women and from Sunnydowns. As he puts it, he decides “not to attempt resisting temptation but to flee from it; . . . [to] run away” and “abandon . . . the field of his amorous conflicts” (153, 155). He leaves town and spends the next few chapters (XI-XVII) roaming about in the periphery of the settlement; while he is there, Chamier will have him survey a range of settler positions or “philosophies” that might help him get better settled.

I have only touched on Alice and Celia, the pair of moral antagonists Chamier has vie for Raleigh’s soul in the “moral hell” of Sunnydowns (3). Celia is “a creature of impulse” with “a highly sensitive temperament” (32), but “possessed of a devil” (33). Her “devil” is that, like Raleigh, “sentiment [is] the food she lived upon,” but she takes it to extremes: her flirting “exceed[s] the bounds of passion” like “a disease” (29). Her “magnetic influence” tempts Raleigh away from his much vaunted ideal of equanimity to extremes of sympathy, toward the “evil” affective pole of passion or unbounded sensibility (280). Her other function in the novel is to lay bare the “vices” of the settlement by living them out: like the settlement, she lives on credit and seduces her investors, in doing so exploiting the moral duplicity of keeping up appearances, as she insinuates when Raleigh confronts her about her seductions and uncharacteristically suggests she “maintain some decent regard for appearances”: “Appearances! A cloak for every vice and falsehood. . . . I know something of what is going on behind the scenes, and know how to expose it too” (211).

Alice, on the other hand, represents the “good” pole of sense (or ironic sentimentality) and real sympathy. She is “sensible” and “practical,” not “erratic” like Raleigh, nor needy like Celia (236). In this she is a fairly conventional sentimental heroine, playing the sympathetic heroine to Raleigh’s unsympathetic hero, though her unconventionality does add interest to the stereotype. For Raleigh, she is exemplary

441 Schiller 51.
(he again displays his stereotypical view of women)—she is “thoroughly
domesticated,” but unconventional nonetheless: she “shows considerable indifference
to the prudish conventionalities that encompass her sex, and she openly expresse[s]
her contempt for mere outward appearances,” in that she is “ready to speak her mind .
. . with slight regard for the observances of conventional society” (237, 236, 237).
Raleigh thinks she will be the one he needs “to cheer his solitude, to take him by the
hand and indicate a way out of his difficulties”; what he really needs is a
“philosophical” foil to put his position—his personal truth—to the test (313).

To this end, Chamier has Alice alert Raleigh to the dangers of the mere “pose”
and “unconscious blind[ness]” (242, 81). The irony of Raleigh’s narrative is that
despite his love of “subject[ing]” others to “psychological study,” he has yet to learn
the truth of “unconscious blind[ness]” for himself (81). He is blind to his own double
illusion: that

a. the “great many different conceptions” of the truth he discovers are
philosophically “indifferent,” and that

b. the only viable “criterion of Truth” is “[t]he heart,” so that “‘every
sentiment is more or less acceptable to [him]’” (63, 62).

The first principle Raleigh thinks allows him to take refuge in a kind of relativism that
(hes thinks) absolves him from defining his position vis-à-vis settler society and his
own position per se, the second to justify his philandering to himself. But if he is not
self-conscious about his own illusions, his “Truth-speaking” is mere “moralising”—
and amoral besides (80):

It did not occur to the moralising philosopher, who was so intent on
unmasking and denouncing the conduct of others, to turn an
introspective glance on his own doings; it did not occur to him to look
into his own heart. Had he done so he would doubtless have absolved
himself of all sin, and have declared that his intentions had been
strictly honourable throughout. . . .

Despite himself, he is one of the “unconscious blind”:

Raleigh deserved at times to come under this category of the
unconscious blind. He might not be “a good young man” . . . but he
was good at heart, without guile or treachery, moved by a steadfast
desire to do what is right. . . . He prided himself on his knowledge of
character, although he admitted to have often been deceived; but he
took no credit for the knowledge of his own character, because in that respect he considered deception impossible. Thus he discarded the time-honoured maxim “Know thyself!” as he maintained that every man of ordinary intellect and sincerity must in the very nature of things understand his own feelings and disposition. Raleigh would admit of no doubt on this point. “We may not be able,” he used to say, “To see ourselves as others see us”; for no one can look through another’s eyes, but we are bound to see ourselves as we really are. We may hide our nakedness from outside view, we cannot conceal it from the inner eye of our own consciousness.” (80-81)

So he says, but he does not search his own “naked” truth.

Raleigh thinks he is “Stoic” in his equanimity, as Alice says, “cultivating SUBLIME INDIFFERENCE towards the world in general”—including the truths he discovers and his affairs of the heart (242). He thinks this “sublime state” enables him to “overcome the world” (174). He quotes Spenser in his defence: “It is the mind that maketh good or ill, / That maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor” (113). That is as may be, but Alice’s lesson for Raleigh is that he is hardly indifferent—impartial, that is—to himself. His professed self-consciousness is a mere “pose,” another self-defensive imposture (242). He cannot pretend to be sublimely indifferent to himself: he should open his eyes to the fact that he too is one of the unconscious blind. He cannot allow his self to remain a sublime void, to leave unexamined “the painful void in [his] inmost being; his intense craving for communion and sympathy” and the pose of self-consciousness in which he cloaks it—while unconsciously trying to fill it in a series of “affaires-de-cœur” (316, 148). He must “turn an introspective glance on his own doings [and] look into his own heart” (80). For this reason, Raleigh “dread[s], even more than words of reproach, the subtle irony of her . . . glance” (202), because she “sees more” deeply into his self than he himself does—hence her surname (Seymour): “Alice was too honest and too outspoken for him. He rather winced, under that clear, honest gaze, which while it revealed nothing beyond a frank, cordial, and even sympathetic spirit, yet it seemed to pry into his own troubled soul, and to

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unmask the secret of his hidden transgression” (238-39). His “transgression” is not just his romance with Celia, it is his moral hypocrisy: that he fails to live up to his own “ideal standard” of self-consciousness (242).

Raleigh circles away from Alice, pushed and pulled by Celia and his other “affinities,” but she remains his lodestar. Through her subtle influence, Alice pushes him to define and refine his own position, to fashion a more practicable self beyond what she calls the “false sentiment” of his romantic poses—and the philosophical ones that underlie them (148). He thinks himself “thoroughly disillusioned,” but needs to see his own illusions for what they are (243). She suggests that he will have to learn for himself the Humean lesson of the good illusion: that “[t]here is a practical side to life that cannot be ignored. The philosophy of common sense . . . would incline us to make our lives as advantageous and comfortable as possible” (48). In the end, Raleigh will settle on a more practicable—and properly self-conscious—position (not unlike hers, at it turns out).

4.2 Philosophical adventures: the seven settlers

For Raleigh, all this posing manifests his Bohemianism, a conscious self-fashioning that enables him to keep his distance on settler society; for Alice, it is just imposture—and hiding or running away when things are not going well is avoiding the issue. Chamier implies that Bohemianism is an aestheticised position that is not going to help Raleigh get settled, or rather, help him fit into settler society, insofar as an unsettled settler can. To this end, he parades before Raleigh in the course of his romances a number of typical settlers who exemplify the range of settler positions—or truths that run counter to the one Truth of the settlement—that is open to him.

As with his romantic adventures, his philosophical adventures follow a kind of learning curve that moves Raleigh away from and back to Alice. It was she (along with Valentine) who counselled him at the end of Philosopher Dick to relinquish his life of isolation and domesticate himself in Sunnydowns, and it is she who will enable him to see a way to get by inside settler society. Raleigh’s philosophical adventures cluster around the middle of the novel, especially in the second half of the first complication (XI-XVII), as Raleigh struggles with being fashionable and takes refuge out among the workings of the settlement. In the middle of this series of adventures,
he reviews his trajectory as a settler: despite, or perhaps because of his “affaires-de-cœur,” he feels unsettled—and not productively so (148):

He concluded that he had missed his way in life at the start. . . . He had no settled purpose in life; he still felt within him the stirring of a morbid unrest, dissatisfied with the present and disquieted with anxious concern for the future.

“I live in a state of suspense,” he muttered to himself, as he rode slowly along the solitary track. “I lead a useless existence, doing no lasting good either for myself or for others. I am beset with temptations [and] haunted with fears. . . . I must seek for some worthier aim in life, some more stable foundation for happiness.” (186)

To enable Raleigh to find this “more stable foundation for happiness,” Chamier presents him with seven settler positions or ways of settling:

1 the way of Platter, a fallen aristocrat: the optimism of the new chum (VI).

As we know, Raleigh had rejected this position nigh on arrival as fated to disillusionment. Then there are the materialist positions:

2 the Sunnydowns way: shamming materialism (IX), and
3 the way of Percival Prowler, the land shark: unashamed materialism (XI).

The first is the object of Raleigh’s criticism throughout Siren; the second embodies the hypermaterialism of the settlement, but without the sham of moral scruples. Then there are two examples of self-sufficiency:

4 the way of Archibald Bland, the Contented Man: adapting yourself to circumstances and becoming a “producer” (185; XVI), and
5 the way of John Seymour, a retired barrister: cultivating your own garden (V).

Though Raleigh admires Seymour for his successful transplantation of his garden and himself to the new country (“I love New Zealand!” is his catchphrase), neither his example nor Bland’s injunction to “attach yourself to the land and become a producer”—and “without reflecting much upon it”—will work for Raleigh (60, 185). Settling could never come that naturally to him. Both Delamer and Alice are more practical:

6 Delamer’s way: the “man of the world” or pragmatist (307; X, XXVII), and
Alice Seymour’s way: “sensible” sentimental domesticity (236; V, XIII, XXI).

This is not to mention Mr Perverse the lawyer, Frank Markham the surveyor, and all the others who proffer advice all-too-freely to him.

Delamer, whom Raleigh meets for the final time just as he has made his decision to leave Sunnydowns for good, criticises Raleigh for “be[ing] rash and act[ing] upon . . . impulse,” as well as for being “[m]isanthropical” and hiding away when things are not going his way. He suggests: “You have to hold your own” (307). He gives Raleigh his recipe for a kind of laissez-faire living, a happy fatalism or Epicureanism: “life is all ups and downs, cloud and sunshine, good and bad luck. Nearly all these troubles and vexations about which men rave and go frantic pass over in no time, and things right themselves of their own accord” (309). Raleigh is not ready for this counsel yet—though with time it would become the byword of Chamier’s “Epicurean philosophy” (Letter to Grainger 3). As he puts it, he still feels like he has “no definite purpose in life. In his mind’s eye he [sees] himself drifting about on an unknown sea, buffeted by adverse winds, carried by treacherous currents.” Why? Because “[h]is heart [i]s a blank, . . . there [i]s no star on high to guide his course” (313). Alice is to be that star, but he has not come round to her yet.

So to Alice’s way: though, as Stevens suggests, Alice is an unconventional heroine in local settler fiction in being “unsentimental and frank” (though she is not against sentimentality per se), “speak[ing] her mind . . . with slight regard for the observances of conventional society,” her “sensible” or clear-eyed sentimental domesticity seems entirely conventional and not a position Raleigh might consider taking up (237, 236). It is her “subtle irony” towards Raleigh’s position and his extreme romantic and philosophical gestures of and about sentiment that are original—and key to her place in Chamier’s narrative of sentimental education (202). Alice teaches the virtue of honesty with yourself, of laughing at yourself—though she has a good laugh at Raleigh too—and of seeing the comedy of small town settler society for what it is: ridiculous, rather than immoral.

Alice can be read, then, not as a “Puritan” heroine, as Kirstine Moffatt argues, rather as a Humean one, that is to say, she might represent what Moffatt calls “stability,” but she does not represent “moral purity,” at least not in a straightforward

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443 Joan Stevens, Introduction xvii.
sense. Her (and Chamier’s) sine qua non for settler society is Hume’s idea from the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) of extensive sentiment or “social sympathy,” the idea that there is “some sentiment, common to all mankind” that is “the foundation of morals.” In her criticism of Raleigh’s supposed “SUBLIME INDIFFERENCE,” she implies that he cannot buy out of settler society. He needs to find a way to get by inside settler society, which would be tantamount to confessing that he is “human after all” and bound by social sympathy like everyone else, that he is still a settler, however “disillusioned” about settler society he might be (243). Her own “subtle irony” towards his and other settlers’ positions embodies a way for the many truths of the settlement to coexist sympathetically and for him to maintain his critical distance on settler society (202). It is like the kind of “mitigated scepticism” Hume advocated as a middle path between the dogmatism of the “greater part of mankind,” who are “naturally apt to be affirmative and dogmatical in their opinions and . . . have no idea of any counterpoising argument” (like the settler majority with their one Truth-ism), and “Pyrrhonism, or excessive scepticism” (like the unsettled settler Raleigh when he plays devil’s advocate). It is scepticism “corrected by common sense and reflection.” The example of Alice points Raleigh toward a more practicable—and properly self-conscious—position, an ironic sentimentality that will give him a way to marry his philosophical theory of Truth with his romantic sentiment that “[t]he heart” or sympathy ought to be his “criterion of the Truth” (63). More than that, he will come around to loving her for her example of how to get by in settler society.

But Raleigh will not come around to Alice’s *via media* until the very end of the novel. This anagnorisis requires that he first be ostracised for good by Sunnydowns society in a final act of exclusion. This happens at the climax of the novel at the intersection of Raleigh’s and Muster’s narratives (XXV), when Celia uses the seemingly fatal “spree” of her brother Muster to draw Raleigh back into her orbit (281). Throughout Muster’s narrative, Chamier parodies the conventions of contemporary temperance novels by framing his narrative as an exaggerated Jekyll and Hyde story. But his real aim is to exhibit the Law of the settlement turned back on

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444 Moffat, “Puritan Paradox: An Annotated Bibliography” 14 (see also Moffat, “‘The Puritan Paradox’: The Puritan Legacy” 257).
445 Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning . . . Morals* 41 (5.2); 74, 75 (9.1).
itself: the episode forces one settler, an unsettled one at that (Raleigh), to enforce the Law of the settlement upon another settler (Muster), who is unsettled in his own way—as a “confirmed drunkard” who is for that reason adjudged morally “reprobate” (69). Raleigh is co-opted to play the part of the voice of “reason” to Muster’s “unconscious” (284, 283).

In a fit of pique that he is no longer fashionable, exacerbated by the gossip abroad that Alice is apparently to marry Brindsley, Raleigh has “secluded himself as much as possible from all society” (278). Out of the blue, Celia sends him a plea for help. He goes, thinking himself safe because his “sentiment [had] long since disappeared”—after her scandalising during Carnival in Christchurch a year previously (279). But on arriving Raleigh falls prey to “the same magnetic influence that had formerly overcome him” and, in a moment of extreme sentiment, “seem[s] to lose . . . control of his senses” once again (280). He agrees to watch over Muster at his hut as he lies unconscious in “a fit of delirium” after a spree (289). He goes to the hut. We see Muster as Hyde, in his fugue state transformed into a bestial apparition, and mercifully “unconscious” but “scarcely human in appearance”—“like a wild beast caught in a trap” (283). Raleigh feels doubly “tortured and oppressed,” both at being forced into the role of guardian—or guard—and pulled back toward Celia and away from Alice, who might now be “lost to him for ever,” and at his own fortunes, at “his misguided course in life, . . . the coldness of friends [read: Alice], the loneliness of existence, and the heartlessness of the world.” There is a sense in which he is again enacting the Law of the settlement inwardly in punishing himself for his failure to fit into society. He is led once more to contemplate suicide, asking himself whether “life [was] worth living under such circumstances,” as he had done at his nadir in *Philosopher Dick* (285; see *PD* 238-240). What seemed like a radical gesture of settlement there, here manifests the disciplinary morality of the settlement. He is caught between the devil and a hard place: his “choice” is settlement or suicide. He will accept being settled (to a degree), but not without resistance.

Soon after, Maggie visits and cheers Raleigh up by letting herself be seduced. But he finds himself again voicing the Law of the settlement in questioning his own critical position, while “unconsciously” but violently resisting it, reminding us of his kinship with Muster: “The position was getting to be rather critical and compromising, for while, with the best intentions in the world, he reminded her that it was quite time she departed home and urged her to go . . . he had unconsciously put
his arm round her waist, and would not let her go” (287). As she tries to free herself, Muster suddenly awakes and overpowers Raleigh, who is saved by two assistants sent by the doctor who hear Maggie’s cries. Muster is again rendered unconscious by sedation; Raleigh falls asleep in a kind of fugue state not unlike Muster’s. After a “fitful sleep” he awakes, close to “a fit of delirium” himself: he has no sense of time because his watch has been broken and his fugue deepens as he starts to see things: “He . . . shuddered under some undefined dread; he continued to hear ominous sounds in the air; and he sometimes fancied he saw shadows flitting about the room” (289).

Raleigh is torn between guarding Muster and going to work at the Council—one of his duties as Clerk to the District Council is to open the Council Chamber. He “settle[s] it with his conscience” that Muster is asleep, and goes back to Celia’s to warn her that he has to go; she is in a state and rebukes him for leaving Muster, then seduces him; he says he loves her and, oddly but very properly, falls asleep (290). Scandal erupts when he is discovered in this compromising position by a band of settlers who have come to tell Celia that Muster has escaped and is thought to have drowned. Raleigh is dismissed for his impropriety and having neglected his duty to Council; as the Chairman suggests, the “show of respectability” demanded by the Law of the settlement entails at the very least he respect the institutions of marriage and work. But the chairman lets drop to him that he really has to go because the scandal has made him “a convenient scapegoat” for the Council in a time of retrenchment (300). For the chairman (and Chamier), Raleigh’s “ticklish position” goes to prove that in such a place “appearances go for everything”—and Truth for nothing (298, 299). It seems “TOUT EST PERDU—all is lost” for Raleigh: not only has he lost his job, he is “no longer popular” (301, 295). It seems he has been ostracised for good by Sunnydowns society and will be forced to leave town, “cast adrift on the world” in a final act of exclusion (301).

However, Raleigh is most concerned that he might have “alienated his best friend, and disgraced himself in the eyes of his beloved Alice.” He now realises that she is—or ought to be—“the idol of his heart,” in other words, his lodestar. As his “idol” (like Schiller’s figure of Truth), she incarnates his truth; we are again alerted to the fact that this truth will be sentimental, that is, “of [the] heart” (301). There is some to-ing and fro-ing: she tells him off for his affair with Celia in a letter; he explains himself in return to her and to the local paper; he applies for several local jobs. He secludes himself in the meantime. Alice does not answer him and when he feels “he
c[an] stand the state of suspense no longer,” that he will not be able to settle and will have to leave, he decides “to turn his back on the place; to get away from all old and painful associations” (305). At this point, Delamer visits him with good news: Muster is alive; the Wyldes have decamped and been bankrupted, but Raleigh will be able to sell the land he took as security on his loan to them to the Government for a new railway.

Delamer leaves Raleigh with an important message even as he gives up on him. He suggests that rather than seclude himself, he ought like a “man of the world” to have “shown [him]self everywhere” in society and “met [his] traducers face to face” (307). For him, Raleigh’s problem is that he refuses to act “to get on in the world”—and to see what is in front of his face, namely Alice (311). A letter from Alice has apparently been waiting for him at the post office, but, as he says to Raleigh, “you never stoop to consider such trifles. And then you complain of the world. Why it is the world that may justly complain of you, and the world a toujours raison [is always right]” (312). Or to give Talleyrand’s maxim in full, “tout le monde a toujours raison”: majority rules. The implication is that Raleigh is going to have to find a way to get settled, to get by in settler society with other settlers. Delamer suggests, just as Alice and Valentine had done at the end of Philosopher Dick, that he should “[m]arry . . . and cultivate [his] ideal,” in other words, put his ideal of love and his “devotion to sentiment” into practice (311).

In the last chapter (XXVIII), Raleigh notices a letter Delamer has left for him. It is a letter offering him a job as a journalist in Wellington—a “career after [his] heart” (318). He suddenly realises—this is the real anagnorisis of the novel—that his “boasted philosophy,” that is, his supposedly Stoic philosophy of “SUBLIME INDIFFERENCE,” has not done him any good (315, 242). He asks himself: “‘What good purpose has it ever served?’” His answer suggests that he has finally taken Alice’s counsel to heart: “‘We fancy ourselves; we almost claim to be a sect apart, to plane in a higher atmosphere. . . . [W]e look down with lofty commiseration upon the grovelling multitude; but in what way do we show ourselves really superior to ordinary mortals? . . . Judging from myself I should say [we do] not.’” This is tantamount to admitting, as Alice had suggested at their last meeting “that [he is]

human after all” and bound by social sympathy like everyone else, that he is still a settler, albeit an unsettled one (243). He concludes that his abasement or elation—whether he feels “cast down to the lowest depths” or “elated to the skies”—has been governed entirely by “chance” (315). Delamer is right: he ought to have been more laissez-faire and admitted that “life is all ups and downs, cloud and sunshine, good and bad luck. Nearly all these troubles and vexations about which men rave and go frantic pass over in no time, and things right themselves of their own accord” (309).

Raleigh realises that it was not “the shifting news of his worldly prospects that affected him [most] deeply” after all: “it was really the painful void in his inmost being; his intense craving for communion and sympathy; and, above all, his love for Alice Seymour” (316-17). He has finally come around to Alice; he now knows that her sentimental domesticity will be his fate: that, as he thinks to himself, “[i]n Love, in Love alone, could he find salvation!” (317). More than this admission that love, not lovers, is his “salvation,” it is Alice’s example of how to get by in settler society, her ironic sentimentality with its “subtle irony” towards his and other settlers’ positions, that is the key to Raleigh’s anagnorisis (202). Chamier implies that she offers, in herself and by her example, an answer to the problem of his unsettlement and points Raleigh toward a more practicable—and properly self-conscious—position. Her message for Raleigh remains the one from Cervantes she wrote in his album at the end of *Philosopher Dick*:

Let not thine efforts fail,
Even though hopeless seem
The distant haven;
Nor once remit thy toil,
Nor ever slacken sail.

True love can never change,
And only he
will prosp’rous be,
Who firm and true remains,
Nor ever seeks to range. (PD 564-65)\(^{448}\)

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It is a simple message of encouragement, but with an ironic twist: with the hindsight of *Siren*, it looks like a subtle criticism of his philandering—and a tacit admission of her own sentiment toward Raleigh. At that moment, Alice approaches, having just now received his letter. She admits that she has been his all along whatever has happened; they reconcile and agree to rendezvous in Wellington. The novel ends with her “paying the toll” to be allowed to part with a kiss and “vanish[ing] in the evening shadows” (319).

*Siren* may seem to close all-too-conveniently, but in fact Chamier characteristically leaves open the question as to whether Raleigh can really get settled. He does not allow Raleigh’s narrative to close out in a conventional way. Instead, he ironically subverts the customary sentimental closures: the romance plot does not end in marriage; the temperance plot does not end in death; the kind of sentimentality he has Raleigh settle on is of an ironic sort—not to mention the fact that Raleigh ends up being ostracised by all the other settlers but Alice, losing his government job and having to leave Sunnydowns for good. Alice’s ironic sentimentality, a Humean social sympathy mitigated by scepticism, to which Raleigh comes around in the course of the novel, does not get him settled. But at the very least, if Raleigh begins as more outsider than insider, by the end of the novel he is beginning to see a way to get by inside settler society—if not, as Valentine suggests at the end of *Philosopher Dick*, to fit in “as a respectable member of the community,” a well-settled settler, “and be no longer PHILOSOPHER DICK,” then as an outside insider or unsettled settler (*PD* 569). And in the course of his sojourn in Canterbury, Raleigh will have learnt at least that he needs “to turn an introspective glance on his own doings [and] look into his own heart,” to learn to laugh at his own failings, not just others’ (80). He will have begun to come to terms with his own position as a settler, in accordance with Spenser’s maxim that he quoted early in *Siren*: “fittest is that all contented rest / With what they hold; each hath his fortune in his breast” (113). It is this chastened version of himself Chamier will have “scramble through” into the Melbourne of *Successful Man* to put this ironic sentimentality to the test—and write for himself the next instalment of his trilogy of sentimental education (*SSM* II).
It was expected that the towns of Kowai/Leithfield and nearby Saltwater Creek/Northport would “blow,” but the boom did not eventuate because a new road was opened up to West Canterbury through Arthur’s Pass further south and the railway bypassed both towns. Coastal shipping also declined as a result. A general depression afflicted the district in 1866 and there were many “victims to the ‘go-ahead’ mania” that had boosted the settlement in the previous few years (SSS 233). Georgy was not among them. It is suggested in Siren that Raleigh was made “a convenient scapegoat” for the “financial difficulties” of the District Council (or rather, the Road Board), due to his outrage to respectability and dereliction of duty after being discovered in flagrante delicto with the Siren (SSS 300). In fact, Georgy just got offered a better position. He did fail to dispose of his “waste piece of land” in Saltwater Creek that he had hoped to sell to the Government for public works (SSS 315, 231). But there was plenty of land-sharking going on elsewhere in North Canterbury, and wherever the sharks went, the surveyors followed to clean the bones for the Provincial Government: to collect the Government’s due and tidy up the titles. There was a word about that the Chief Surveyor, Thomas Cass, was on the look-out for more assistant surveyors to cope with a renewed demand to survey “new” land for sale, that is, “waste” land or land “leased” under old pre-emptive rights that were now illegitimate.

Georgy took his chance to leave Leithfield and the Road Board and climb the bureaucratic ladder. He put his case to Charles fFrench Pemberton, the Government Surveyor responsible for the district north of the Ashley River, whom he knew from his time on the South Sefton Road Board. Pemberton put in a word for him with Cass. James Lance or his connections may also have helped Chamier get the job: Lance had represented the electorate of Sefton on the Canterbury Provincial Council from 1865-

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66 (likewise his brother Henry from 1862 until about 1865). In Philosopher Dick, Dale furnishes Raleigh with "letters of introduction to some of the leading families" in Christchurch, presumably to get him some work (PD 96). Georgy must have heard soon after that the position was his if he wanted it because in September 1866 he resigned (with a testimonial) from the Kowai/South Sefton Road Board. He was officially offered the job by Cass on 2 October.\textsuperscript{452} He accepted and the appointment was gazetted on 15 October.\textsuperscript{453}

\textsuperscript{452} Thomas Cass, letter to George Chamier, 2 Oct. 1866, letter 556 of Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867.

\textsuperscript{453} New Zealand Government Gazette: Province of Canterbury 15 Oct. 1866: 1; Cass had notified him officially one week earlier (Thomas Cass, letter to George Chamier, 8 Oct. 1866, letter 560 of Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867).

His salary was set at £250 per annum, plus “the usual field allowances for equipment,” and he was given an office at Horsley Down.454

His superior, Pemberton, was something of a “reformed rake,” if *Siren* is taken as writ. He appears there as “Frank Markham,” who “was much given to blow,” to sound off, usually under the influence of alcohol, “and by universal assent could spin a good yarn.” His yarns (and amorous adventures) echo Raleigh’s: “He related with much gusto some of his racy experiences when a student in the Old Country, and dwelt with much complacency on his youthful adventures among the girls” (SSS 167).455 Georgy clearly liked Pemberton for his “original turn” vis-à-vis the survey:

A flavour of military discipline had been imported into the survey proceedings, and the men had been trained to answer to given signals. Instead of the usual frantic shouts and gesticulating, the order to advance, retreat, step to the right or to the left, plant the flag-pole or remove it, was sounded with the bugle. There was much trumpeting to and fro, which gave enhanced importance to the evolutions, and seems to afford an endless amount of gratification to all concerned. (SSS 158)

Chapters XIV to XV of *Siren* give a taste of the survey party at work and play, describing Raleigh’s encounter with a six-man party, comprising Markham, his chief assistant, Norman, another younger assistant, the “effeminate Edwards,” a cadet “as aide-de-camp” and a bugle-boy Teddy Rose (160, 158). They also had a cook, described in XIV as “black Dunno” and in XV as Jim Bows, a drunk (161, 165). It is uncertain whether Edwards, the assistant, or the “curly-headed” cadet is meant to be Georgy (160). They are surveying the site of a future township inland and to the

454 Letters 543 and 556, *Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867*; Thomas Cass, letter to Charles ffrench Pemberton, 3 Nov. 1866, letter 559 of *Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867, Survey Staff Salary Letter Book 1867-76*, agency CAAR, ser. 12589, accession CH290: 47/7, Archives New Zealand, Christchurch. Oddly, the *Canterbury Provincial Directory* for 1866-67 does not list Chamier in the Survey Department on the East (or West) Coast, probably because he was not appointed to the Department until late 1866 and had been away in England during 1867; he does appear in the edition for the following year, listed as an Assistant Surveyor for the Survey Department (East Coast) (*New Zealand Directory for 1866-67 302, New Zealand Directory for 1867-68 229*).

455 Douglas 119. There was also a real “Markham” who was a draughtsman for the Survey Department (*New Zealand Directory for 1867-68 229*).
southwest of Sunnydowns/Leithfield “on the confines of a large swamp and surrounded with bleak and arid plains”—possibly the future site of the Amberley township that eventually overtook Leithfield as the centre of the North Canterbury settlement (164).

Survey parties were not all “military discipline” (SSS 158). Georgy apparently liked the mateship and hospitality, and the freedom they enjoyed, which, though “rather affecting the rustic style of the bush,” reminded him of the good times at the station: “Living on the borderland of civilisation, they revelled in their sense of liberty, with a touch of savageness, and a tendency to revert still more into the rude arms of Mother Nature”—in their scuffles and rough humour, mostly occasioned by the dearth of female company (SSS 167). Above all, he relished the yarns. Raleigh’s description of them could apply equally to Chamier’s novels, which afforded him a “diversion” and were not in the least “fastidious”:

They were . . . a lively diversion on the sameness of their ordinary existence. They were . . . not fastidious as to their conversation. They would stoop to pick up the merest crumb of a joke, or open-mouthed would swallow the biggest crammer; puns were much relished, old stories were served up as new, while an ample supply of squibs and crackers came in for dessert. (SSS 167)

It was not the general practice for Pemberton to work with Georgy in the field, however. Cass’s initial instructions to Georgy suggest that he was to lead a survey team of three: himself, and a chainman and a labourer on day wages.456

Georgy’s immediate priority seems to have been to survey all land purchased in the Waipara district by the prosaically named “Canterbury Freehold Land Society,” a short-lived project of the Canterbury Working Men’s Association to enable working men to purchase small allotments of freehold land.457 Soon after, Cass sent him instructions to proceed immediately with the Survey within the following boundaries N. by Hurunui, E. by the north road, S. by South Branch of Waipara and W. to the extent purchased land, he will triangulate the Country.

and connect his triangulation with the existing Trig. Stations and he will survey all purchased lands and Pre-emptive rights connected therewith within the limits I have named. . . .

This area comprises the whole of what was called either the Ashley or the Waipara district—a huge area for such a small team to cover. He stipulated that Georgy should keep a daily journal and submit monthly returns: “you will keep a journal in which you will note regularly how and where employed each day, also note the state of the weather, and anything else of interest as regards the survey this journal may be required of you at any moment so it is necessary to be particular in keeping it regularly.” The journal does not survive, though it may well have provided material for him to reconstruct his life in hindsight in the novels—if he was allowed to keep a copy.

Georgy was to begin the district-wide survey from his base at Heathstock-Horsley Down. He did not immediately head off there, instead staying about Leithfield into November, supposedly working, for which he attracted a mild rebuke from Cass—as he would later for occasionally being remiss with getting his paperwork in on time. Surveying unsurveyed land to secure property rights for settlers by determining the extent of encroachments of land held by pre-emptive rights on purchased sections and to free up “new” land for settlers continued to be the main agenda of the Survey Office during Georgy’s time there. As Chief Surveyor Cass wrote in his “Instructions to Mr CHAMIER,” Georgy’s job mainly involved surveying such sections and the roads necessary “to give access to each section . . . and to provide through communication to the back country.” To put it plainly, his job was to facilitate the settlement of the back country, as Cass’s successor Cyrus Davie wrote to Georgy: “You cannot be too vigilant and earnest in your endeavours to prevent the country being blocked up from purchase through the want of necessary

458 Letter 590, Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867.
461 Cass, letter to George Chamier, 12 Nov. 1866, letter 601 of Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867.
462 “Instructions to Mr Chamier,” letter 592, Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867.
roads[.] The Government look to each Surveyor to do his best to prevent this from being done.”

Though it is uncertain how much time Georgy spent in Christchurch, he would make some important contacts in the engineering fraternity while working for the Provincial Government, headquartered at the impressive Provincial Council Chambers on the Avon, in particular, William Thomas Doyne, Railway Engineer (c.1864-c.1866), to whom he would be articled from 1869 to 1872, and Edward Dobson, Chief Engineer (1854-67) and Railway Engineer (1867-68), who would be his boss in Melbourne.

Fig. 27. James West Stack, *Government Buildings Canterbury*, [c.1860], *Timeframes*, A-210-016, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. (Reproduced by permission of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.)

Despite the fact that the capital Christchurch was virtually bankrupt because of a ratepayers protest led by the Ratepayers’ Mutual Protection Society or “Dirt and Darkness Club” in 1866, there was still a lot of construction going on in the province: in August 1866, the Cook Strait telegraph cable was completed; in September, the Christchurch Town Hall was opened; in October, the first section of the Southern Railway to Rolleston was completed. Work had begun on construction of the Lyttelton or “Moorhouse” Tunnel, known as the “Hole in the Hill,” but also on the

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463 Cyrus Davie, letter to George Chamier, 8 Mar. 1867, letter 80, *Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1867-1869*. 201
general topographical survey “recording the levels of the country . . . over the whole province.”464 Georgy may well have been involved in this general survey—if his time was not entirely taken up surveying “new” lands for sale. All government surveys in Canterbury were carried out at that time by staff surveyors, rather than contracted ones, so there was plenty of work for the Government employees.

Christchurch had gone from “a town of false fronts and lean-to additions,” of gimcrack Melbournification, as Gardner describes it, to something closer to its final form as a model of mock English domesticity.465 It was now a relatively large colonial town: in 1867, eighty-five percent of the 54,000 strong Pakeha population of Canterbury lived in Christchurch and its suburbs.466 Besides having “most of the great inventions of the civilized world,” as Dobson the Provincial Engineer boasted, it had its own roller skating rink, museum, Theatre Royal (and Royal Visit in 1869). For Dobson, this was evidence of its promise coming to fruition: “we have all this in a country which fifteen years ago was almost an unknown land, but which is now, by God’s blessing, the happy home of prosperous thousands of our fellow-men.”467 Chamier sees it somewhat differently in Siren—these were all “Old-World foibles,” evidence of “a rather servile imitation of life in the Mother Country”:

The new settlement . . . had got over the first rude stage of its existence and was just budding into civilisation; it had a fair and fresh field to thrive upon, free from all the corruption and hereditary taints of the Old World; but human nature remains always the same, and the Englishman, away from his native land, carries with him all the customs, tastes, and prejudices, and most of the vices of his nationality.

Thus life in the colony, whenever circumstances would permit, was but a rather servile imitation of life in the Mother Country; there was little or no attempt to revert to a purer, simpler and more primitive mode of existence. (197)

For him, Wakefield’s ideal city had always had “a dull uniformity about it; its very regularity is a weariness,” and, as always, he preferred the erratic line: “the straight and the square may be the correct principles to act upon, but to walk on—give me the crookedest lane; it has more of the line of beauty in it” (PD 443).

466 Grey 238.
467 Dobson, “Public Works” 8.
But in the novels Chamier is most interested in what he sees as the characteristic dichotomy in settler society in Canterbury between “the steady routine of life, the sober sense and industrious thrift of the people,” marked by work and respectability, and “the reckless extravagance” evident at moments of crisis and marked by dissipation and excessive sensibility. In sum, Canterbury is “Money-making and the nobbler!” (PD 442). He sees this extravagance as most apparent at socially transgressive times like Carnival in November, when there was “a general state of popular effervescence, a spluttering and boiling over of the social cauldron, when much of the scum rose to the surface, and every species of dodging, swindling, and gambling came into operation” (SSS 196). But he also hints that there is something fundamentally excessive or manic about settler society in Canterbury: if it was not the “popular government mania,” it was “the ‘go-ahead’ mania”—this mania will be even more evident in the “Marvellous Melbourne” of Successful Man (SSS 58, 232). For Chamier, there is something magicked-up and hyper about even the most sober colonial settlements. The settlements are not so much blooms as mushrooms: puffed up “colonial mushroom townships . . . elated to bursting with their present importance and future grandeur” (PD 440-41). And to dissent from the settlers’ collective sentiment of manic self-congratulation, as Georgy would, was just not done:

“Look at me,” is the everlasting refrain; “a few years ago I was a barren waste—now see!” And you are supposed to fall down and worship at the shrine of Modern Progress. The people live in state of mutual admiration at their own superhuman efforts. . . . [T]hey have done wonders, and, what is better still, they have made them pay. He concludes, with a wry reference to the burgeoning birthrates in the settlement, that “[t]he thoroughgoing colonial only believes in reproductive works” (PD 440; see SSS 101). As Eric Pawson suggests, it was the “singlemindedness” of Cantabrians’ apparent “subjugation of all to the collective end” that was distinctive. Of course, the province still had its share of frontier chaos: the West Canterbury (West Coast) goldrush had just about run its course, but in May 1866 George Dobson (1840-66), who worked with Georgy in the Engineering Department and was the son of Edward

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Dobson, was murdered by the Sullivan, Burgess, Kelly and Levy gang of bushrangers—later dubbed the “Maungatapu murderers”—while working on road construction in the Grey Valley.\(^4^6^9\) For the most part, though, it was manic devotion to “the steady routine of life,” which was a relentless economism; as Raleigh puts it in *Philosopher Dick*, “a humdrum, bustling, and practical spirit prevailed, servilely devoted to PROGRESS and UTILITY” (SSS 196; PD 95).

At some point during 1867, Georgy is said to have spent time in England—perhaps for further study into “classes of timber,” as he later suggested.\(^4^7^0\) Then again, a continuous string of letters giving ongoing instructions from the Provincial Surveyor to Georgy throughout the year, each six to eight weeks apart, suggests that he was tied up all year on surveying work. At the end of July that year all work in the province was halted by the “Great Canterbury Snowstorm”—it snowed for 4 days and 500,000 sheep and cattle died.\(^4^7^1\) In January 1868, Georgy’s brother Anthony visited on the *Kaikoura*, the first steamship to make the run via the Panama canal, having finished his studies in Germany and come out to the colonies in the wake of Georgy as he had always planned (he also went to Australia at about the same time as Georgy).\(^4^7^2\) 1868 was to be another year of extreme weather events and natural disasters in Canterbury: in February a severe storm hit which caused catastrophic floods throughout the province—water flowed a metre deep in Market Square (now Victoria Square)—and in May another flood struck North Canterbury that put paid to Saltwater Creek/Northport; in August, a tsunami in Lyttelton Harbour laid bare part of the harbour bottom, then swamped the ships at harbour.\(^4^7^3\) There was another drought that summer with bushfires burning continually in the Port Hills.

Georgy did not stay working for the Provincial Government long, leaving for Australia within a couple of years. At the end of *Siren*, Raleigh loses his local government job because of “[r]etrenchment,” having fallen out of favour with the

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\(^4^7^1\) See Lady Barker, “Letter XX: the New Zealand Snowstorm of 1867” (156ff.).

\(^4^7^2\) Chambers; *Daniel’s letter*.

local “civic functionaries” (SSS 300, 295). He casts around for something to do, then goes off to Wellington to take up a career as a journalist at the Monitor and to meet his lover Alice, who is going there too because her father is going into Parliament (SSS 314-15). The first part of this is pretty true: on 4 March 1868, Georgy received a matter-of-fact message from the Chief Surveyor that he was to be laid off:

Sir,

I shall be unable to continue your engagement as Assistant Surveyor after the 31st inst in consequence of the great reduction proposed in the Survey estimates for the financial year. . . . You will return to me all Instruments Maps field books and other property of the Government in your charge

I am Sir,

Your obedient Servant

[Signed] C Davie

Chief Surveyor

It was a case of last in, first out where the retrenchment was concerned. There is no evidence that Chamier went off to Wellington as Raleigh does at the end of Siren, but this imaginary trajectory suits Chamier’s fictional purposes—to have Raleigh head off for a city after he has spent time in the back country and in a small town, perhaps to embark upon a “literary career, upon which he had set his heart, the distinction which he most coveted,” and to discover that he may be “cut out for the very thing [he has] set [his] mind against. . . . Domestic life” (SSS 314; PD 348). After some adventuring through Australia, Georgy indeed fetched up in the metropolis of Melbourne—where he met his future wife, and the transtasman trilogy was completed by a novel of the city: The Story of a Successful Man, set in Marvellous Melbourne. But the writing of it had to wait until he was well set up.

So why Australia? Most probably Georgy chose to head for Australia because he got the chance to become articled to W. T. Doyne (1823-77), whom he would have met when Doyne was Railway Engineer to the Canterbury province, and who was also a frequent traveller between the Australasian colonies, having offices in both

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Christchurch and Melbourne. Doyne’s practice, Doyne and Latouche, consulted for the governments of Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia in the late sixties and early seventies. When exactly Georgy joined Doyne there is uncertain. He would have had to find work after he was laid off by the Provincial Government in March 1868. What would be their first project together in Australia, the Launceston and Western Railway in Tasmania, officially commenced with the turning of the first sod by the Duke of Edinburgh at Launceston on 15 January 1868, though construction did not begin until mid-year—and Doyne came back to New Zealand in 1869 to make a report on the Temuka Bridge. Georgy probably joined him in 1869 after construction had begun, going by his Candidate’s Circular for election to the Institution of Civil Engineers, which records that he was articled to Doyne from 1869 to 1872, and his testimony in 1896 that he had “[a]bout twenty-seven years [experience] in Australia.”

Doyne—and Edward Dobson, with whom Georgy would also work closely in Melbourne—moved permanently to Australia because provincial public works had almost halted in Canterbury by the end of the eighteen-sixties (though Vogel’s national public works policy would begin in 1870—to the chagrin of many Canterbury provincialists). Perhaps it was the lure of the “Lucky Country” or ambition that got the better of him—after all, he was unattached and the opportunities for progressing professionally were somewhat limited in New Zealand. But he also had a rooted objection to the kind of “political patronage” or graft that large-scale public works schemes like Vogel’s would occasion, especially among “entrepreneurial” engineers (though Doyne would turn out to be one such engineer), and he would only grudgingly work for the public service from this point on,
preferring to contract or work for contractors to the Government.\footnote{“Progress Report of Commission Appointed to Report on the Public Works; Together with Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence, and Appendices,” Part 1: Railways, PP SA 25 (1880.2): 154.} He had no objection to taking advantage of familial and professional connexions—like the Lances, Doyne and Dobson—to get work. It seems that, like Raleigh, he was philosophically against the “paternal solicitude” of the colonial system of government, by which the settlers over-regulated themselves according to the “popular government mania” (SSS 57, 58). As Raleigh puts it, “at the Antipodes . . . Old World notions are reversed. . . . The Government, instead of being the master, is supposed to be the servant of the people. We used to be taught, ‘If you want a thing done, do it for yourself.’ Here it is different, \textit{If you want a thing done, apply to the Government}” (SSS 57). Though he later tempered this attitude, favouring limited political regulation but not patronage, he paints Raleigh as a classical liberal who prefers “the example of America” as a solution to the problem of development in a “new country”: we should “teach the Government . . . to mind its own business” and that “government direction” is unnecessary, because “Government is of itself an evil . . . which should be reduced to its lowest expression” (SSS 58). Later, he would also prefer the American “line” in engineering.\footnote{“Progress Report of Commission [on] Public Works” xlvii; “Progress Report of Commission [on] Public Works” 153.}

Whatever the case, Georgy’s practical end-in-view in following Doyne on his professional travels for the next few years seems to have been to become a fully-fledged engineer and secure his independence by going into private practice. He was twenty-six or -seven now and at some point he was going to have to settle down and work himself into a position to give himself the luxury to write—and he may have heard from Doyne about the flourishing literary and club scene in Melbourne. As it turns out, independence was another decade off—and writing two decades away.

\textit{A literary home}

If writing was not Georgy’s way out, Chamier does suggest that he began writing in New Zealand, if only “a few stray notes, and . . . sketches,” as he later remembered (SSS GR 107). It is said of Raleigh in \textit{A South-Sea Siren} that “[h]e was indefatigable in his attempt to enter the field of journalism.” His various topics are listed—and his media: “leading articles, reviews of books, local skits, and fierce denunciations of
public abuses.” It is said that he “persisted in spite of repeated failure, and the galling
apathy of the public,” but “most of the effusions . . . found their way into the editor’s
wastepaper basket, while the few that obtained insertion in the leading newspaper,
were published anonymously and never paid for” (SSS 260). So it is probably true, as
Joan Stevens suggests of Siren, that some sections of the novels, in particular their
“semi-journalistic evocations” of back-country and small-town life may have been
published at or near the time in newspapers.482

Nonetheless, of the relatively brief period from 1859 to 1868 or 1869 that
Georgy spent in Canterbury, Chamier made much—about a thousand pages, in fact.
Why did his time in Canterbury impact on him so deeply that he wrote at such length
about it? He was young and it was the making of him—though he would later say it
left him “without any perceptible accession of personal dignity, that I am aware of, or
of any tangible profits either” (SSS GR 107). It saved him to a degree from his father’s
aspirations (and consoled him after his death) and from the Chamier tradition.
Moreover, it gave him first-hand experience of the “dismal comedy” of station and
small-town life, sublime and ridiculous respectively, and the self-inflicted isolation
and alienation which were to be the material of his first two novels (PD 63). It set him
on his life and career path, transforming him from new chum, to “colonized” old
hand, to local and provincial government official, to independent author—or so he
seems to have thought at the time or liked to think in hindsight, going by the ending
of Siren. The novels record this process. For Wattie, it was the briefness of his
transmigration of New Zealand, along with the fact that he wrote with the wisdom of
thirty years’ hindsight, that gave him perspective on the place as a writer.483 But ten
years is a not insignificant period to spend in one place, and things moved uncannily
fast in the “early days”—witness the changes in the course of Georgy’s Canterbury
sojourn of the eighteen-sixties.

482 Joan Stevens, Introduction xvii.
483 Nelson Wattie, “Philosopher Dick: Adventures and Contemplations of a New Zealand Shepherd,”
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Australia
1869-1908
In late 1868 or early 1869, Georgy followed William Thomas Doyne to Australia as his Articled Clerk (or Assistant Engineer). He was to spend about forty years in Australia, from about age twenty-six to sixty-six: first adventuring in the wake of Doyne through various colonies, then entering the public service in Melbourne (where he met his future wife), then setting up in private practice in Adelaide (and marrying and having a family), and finally moving his practice to Sydney (where he would finally be in a position to write). His early years there saw him lead a relatively transient life as he moved around following work: to the colonies of Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria. It could be said George was still favouring the periphery over the centre, staying in the outlier colonies, rather than heading immediately for the two metropolitan centres of Sydney and Melbourne—though his movements would have been conditioned by the need to follow his superior and go where there were public works underway.

Doyne was an ideal teacher for Georgy, even if they would come to differ on the rights and wrongs of “entrepreneurial” engineers. He had been an engineer for close on thirty years—in England, the Crimea, Wales, India, Ceylon, New Zealand and Australia, though by 1869 his health was failing from overwork. Furkert records that throughout the eighteen-sixties and early-seventies, Doyne was “almost continuously employed by the Governments of Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, so far as his shattered health would permit.”

Aside from being a gifted and experienced engineer, geologist and analytical chemist, according to his Institution of Civil Engineers obituary, he was “unusually well read and informed on most subjects . . . of a sanguine temperament . . . and of great conversational powers,” for which he was “much endeared by his subordinates.” He and Georgy would have got on—though they might well have had differences about militarism: Doyne was battle-hardened, having been Superintendent-General of

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485 Furkert 55; see “Memoirs of Deceased Members: Mr. William Thomas Doyne” 273.
486 “Memoirs of Deceased Members: Mr. William Thomas Doyne” 273.
the Army Works Corps during the Crimean War and having come under attack with his survey team at Cawnpore during the “Indian Mutiny.”  

Their first stop was Tasmania. Doyne was Chief Engineer (and the largest shareholder) on the Launceston and Western Railway for the Victorian firm of Overend and Robb. Georgy (now George) was his assistant. The engineers Overend and Robb, for whom Chamier would later work, won the contract to build the railway.

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Work began on the line at Jingler’s Valley near Young Town in August 1868, but things soon went astray: it took a year for the first 6½ miles to be completed; Doyne’s juniors, including George, were often left in charge; costs mounted and compensation had to be paid. He left in dudgeon; George followed. In 1870, the Government would inquire into Doyne’s management of the project and he would be censured for underestimating the costs of construction on the railway—by a third—and for being an absentee engineer.490 It was George’s first lesson in the practice of “entrepreneurial” or profiteering engineers, who would under-quote to secure themselves contracts and then invest in their own projects. George was safe because he was contracted to Doyne, who seems to have emerged relatively unscathed from the fiasco.

In late 1869, George accompanied Doyne to report on the harbour at Fremantle, Western Australia, where Doyne had been contracted as “Consulting Engineer to the Government of Western Australia.”491 They then headed off to Ceylon on the Avoca in December 1869.492 It was probably to supervise railway construction work, given that Doyne had once been Chief Engineer on the construction of the Ceylon Railway Company’s Colombo-Ambepussa line from 1857 until the project ran into difficulties and was nationalised in 1861.493

The time George spent working with Doyne on construction engineering projects on railways and hydraulic works would pay off later when he would do a lot of work in those fields as a resident and consulting engineer in Adelaide in the late eighteen-seventies and eighteen-eighties. Throughout his career, railway work would be his bread and butter—though he published nothing about it until late in life (“Hanyang Iron and Steel Works” [1910]). In 1871, when Doyne settled down for good in Melbourne, where his practice had been based since 1865, to save his health.

490 “Doyne” 102.

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George would stay for a while too. The period of seven years George spent in Melbourne in his early thirties—conflated with his more settled domestic life in Adelaide over the following decade—is recorded in Chamier’s third novel, *The Story of a Successful Man*. It was to give him something of a taste of settled life.

*Australia 2: Melbourne*

1871-77

In *Successful Man*, Chamier describes the reasons why his autoethnographical narrator Tim chose to emigrate in terms that echo Raleigh’s: Tim sees “the Old World [as] ‘played out’” and the new as offering “‘a fair field and no favour’” (*SSM* I), and says, “I longed for freedom, for adventure,” to “[shake] off the shackles of conventionality,” the “irksome restrictions” of the Old World. But his feelings on arriving in “Marvellous Melbourne” are just as ambivalent as Raleigh’s were on his arrival in Canterbury:

> My first impressions were of wonder not untinged with disappointment. I was forcibly struck with the amazing prosperity of the place, but dissatisfied with its character. I had fled from established systems and old-fashioned civilisation to a new world, which I had fancied something radically different. I had expected to find quite another order of things, with boundless vistas of opportunity, freedom, and adventure, instead of which I found myself in a bustling hubbub of the most modern type.

As he says, “It was too much like what I had come from, without the charm of artistic beauty or venerable associations. I should have preferred it less civilised” (*SSM* II).

At first, before Tim finds a job and starts socialising with his workmates, he feels “a stranger in Melbourne”: “All was strange and repellent, and a sense of utter loneliness and estrangement overran me.” He is living “far out in the suburbs” in

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494 *Sands & McDougall’s Melbourne Directory* 381; Hubert William Coffey and Marjorie Dean Morgan, *Irish Families in Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 1 (Abbott-Dynan), rev. ed. (South Melbourne: H. W. Coffey and M. D. Morgan, 1983) 229. There were some Chamiers of the “illegitimate” line of John Chamier already living in Melbourne, whether or not George knew of them or their residence there: the family of Henry Arthur Chamier (1830-1919), the eldest son of Thomas Arthur Chamier (1805-65), the fourth illegitimate child of John Chamier and Sophia Cookson. He is said by the family to have emigrated from Madras to Victoria about 1850 to try his hand at goldmining. In fact, he arrived at Queensland about 1852 and spent a year there before moving to Ballarat, Victoria (J. Kelvin Chamier, e-mail to the author, 24 Sep. 2004).
“humble lodgings” and “friendless” amid “the countless multitude” (SSM VII). Even though George was coming from Canterbury and had felt himself thoroughly “colonised” there, he may well have felt similarly alienated, at least initially, in Melbourne (PD 149). It was a burgeoning colonial metropolis, the population of Victoria at this time being roughly double that of New Zealand, swelled as it had been by the goldrushes of the eighteen-fifties to about 810,000 in 1874 (as compared to about 340,000 for New Zealand); it had a much more cosmopolitan population, with greater extremes of wealth and class and a broader range of occupations.495

In his writing Chamier elides the more metropolitan and exotic aspects of Melbourne, like the Chinese and Bohemian literary cultures, because he is concerned to represent it as radically colonial, but there is no doubt they would have intrigued George. Though Tim perhaps talks himself down in Successful Man, he sees himself as “a quiet young man, reserved in manner, and of a retiring manner . . . which formed a marked contrast with the rough and boisterous ways” of the other young men (SSM VIII). In this respect, he is different from Raleigh, who is nothing if not confident in society, even if he sometimes isolates himself when disillusioned or to avoid scandal—though Tim and Raleigh are equally alienated from settler society and Raleigh might have been just as reticent if sufficiently chastened by his Canterbury experiences or confronted by the unfamiliar bustling metropolis of Melbourne. George certainly looks wary in the portrait taken soon after his arrival in Melbourne (fig. 29), but that wariness expresses an odd mix of unsettledness and defiance, rather than reserve.

It is this unsettledness that marks the way Chamier presents Melbourne in Successful Man: it is “demoralised” and even more “pushing” than Canterbury—though brazenly so; he sums up its founding principle in the maxim from Horace: “Quaerenda pecunia prima est, Virtus post nummos” (money is to be sought for first of all; virtue after wealth).496 He sees Melbourne as a kind of bubble-world kept puffed up by boosterist rhetoric, a shrine to settler capitalism dressed up with an uneasy mix of unsentimental meritocracy (for the capitalists) and sentimental domesticity (for the workers, the “undercapitalised” class). Tim is suspicious of locals’ willingness to be inspired: “the genuine colonial was expected to practice an

495 H. Mortimer Franklyn, A Glance at Australia in 1880: or, Food from the South . . . (Melbourne: The Victorian Review, 1881) 192.
496 Horace Epistle 1.1.53 (Epistles 56), quoted as the epigraph of chapter III of Successful Man.
attitude of open-mouthed wonderment at the contemplation of his own superhuman achievements—but, though amazed, I was not captivated” (SSM II). He is taken aback by people’s reactions to local political “corruption”: the fact that “nobody seems really concerned about the matter,” that an accusation of impropriety against a politician “does not seem to affect his popularity in any way. He holds up his head in public all the higher for it” (SSM IX). As an associate, Joe Spice, says, “Here, as the flunkey said about the windows in Belgravia, . . . we prefers them dirty.” Because Tim is wary of all this, Spice describes him as not yet “colonised,” unlike Raleigh in Canterbury: “you are still a new chum—you are not colonised yet. When you are, your astonishment will cease, and, if it last, it will be restricted to wonder at the smartness, energy, and progress of the community.” “[S]martness, energy, and progress”: these are the keynotes of Marvellous Melbourne—one may not exhibit surprise at anything else or make comparisons, especially with England (SSM IX).

Fig. 29. George Chamier soon after his arrival in Melbourne, Anthony Chamier Collection, Ross and Cromarty. (Reproduced by permission of Anthony Chamier.)

Then again, Tim and George may differ—aside from the fact that George was already familiar with the Australasian colonies—in that George could well have already had a job when he arrived. He had followed Doyne to Melbourne and may
have continued working for him for a couple more years, assisting him in his general practice and accompanying him on his travels when needed, though Doyne had scaled back his work to save his health. In 1871, Doyne was a member of a board appointed to inquire into the alleged silting-up of Hobson’s Bay, near what is now Port Melbourne; George would have accompanied him on his site surveys and so forth.

In Melbourne, George was to meet Emily (Theyer) Searight, née Gardner, his sentimental “affinity” (SSM XII). Emily was born in Gloucester during the eighteen-forties. All her family were Gloucestershire born and bred. Her father Henry (1807-78) was an innkeeper and postmaster from Painswick; her mother Ann(e) née Thayer (or Theyer) was born at Badgeworth (c.1818-98) and was a stern religious woman, in later life “a tall severe looking woman dressed in black with a widow’s cap.” The family had been living at Nailsworth but had emigrated for the sake of her father’s health. Most of the family arrived on the Violet in 1856 and settled on a sheep station at Strathalbyn, on the River Angas south of Adelaide. Emily either followed later with the rest of the children or travelled under an assumed name. In her youth she was “petite, dark and vivacious,” unlike her brothers, who were “tall [and] fair.” Although she spent her teens on a sheep station, she was not a tomboy; according to Frances Warner, “she was taught to cultivate the feminine arts of music and needlework,” and she was obviously well enough educated to support herself later as a teacher.

497 “Memoirs of Deceased Members: Mr. William Thomas Doyne” 273.
498 “Doyne” 102.
501 Frances Warner 10.
503 Frances Warner 11.
504 Frances Warner 10.
She met her first husband, James Fitzjames Searight, when he was working on her father’s station.\textsuperscript{505} Searight, born about 1849 in Port-a-down, Ireland, was the son of a solicitor and had emigrated with his family at fifteen in 1866.\textsuperscript{506} He and Emily apparently eloped to Melbourne together, she to live in Richmond and work as a teacher and he to live in St Kilda and work as a warehouse man.\textsuperscript{507} When they married on 20 January 1870, possibly because she was pregnant, he was twenty-one and she was in her early twenties (twenty-two by her reckoning, but probably older).\textsuperscript{508} But he deserted her in March, heading to Sydney, as it turns out, probably unbeknownst to her.\textsuperscript{509} She was left pregnant with their son, Fitzjames Searight (1870-1936), born later that year.\textsuperscript{510} He would be brought up by Emily and George with their own children and remain close to the family.\textsuperscript{511} From the mid-'nineties Fitzjames owned his own stock and station, and later, real estate agencies—in Cooma, New South Wales, then in Sydney.\textsuperscript{512} Dolly maintained publicly that Searight senior deserted her and/or died, describing herself as a widow on her certificate of marriage to George.\textsuperscript{513} There was a family story that one or more of her brothers horse-whipped him, perhaps to death—whether for eloping with her, getting her pregnant, or abandoning her.\textsuperscript{514} No record of a divorce exists, but her marriage to George was eventually adjudged legitimate, probably on grounds of desertion.\textsuperscript{515} According to

\footnotesize{505} Frances Warner 10.
\footnotesize{507} Frances Warner 12.
\footnotesize{508} Cobiac (1361/845). Note that the names Searight (also Seawright) and Gardner (also Gardiner or Gardener) appear variously spelt in the historical records; I have standardised them.
\footnotesize{509} Cobiac (116/927).
\footnotesize{510} *Pioneer Index: Victoria 1836-1888, Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Victoria*, CD-Rom (Melbourne: Victoria, Dept. of Justice, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 1998) 23070; Cobiac 21784/1936. On his marriage certificate of 13 January 1897, he incorrectly gives his age as 27, which implies that he was born the same month as his parents were married (Cobiac [1018/18]).
\footnotesize{511} Frances Warner 18.
\footnotesize{513} Cobiac (116/927).
\footnotesize{515} VPRS [Victoria Public Records Ser.] 5335 Index to Divorce Cause Books (VA 2549) Supreme Court of Victoria, 1861-1924, 3 May 2006, Public Record Office Victoria, 11 July 2006 <http://
Frances Warner, she was “too proud to go back to her family” and stayed in Melbourne, supporting herself as a private (unregistered) teacher with the help of some neighbours she befriended.516

George may have met Emily—or Dolly, as he would call her to differentiate her from his mother Emily—as early as 1871.517 On the face of it, she was a widow with a young child. As Jenny Chamier Grove puts it,

When Mrs Dolly Seawright [sic] met . . . George Chamier she was a widow with a young son—or so everyone assumed. The truth was that Dolly had a secret. She was not really a widow. Her husband had simply disappeared into the Australian outback. As there was no death certificate to prove that Seawright [sic] had died, Dolly and George had to wait seven years before he could legally be presumed dead and they were able to marry.518

Whether either of them knew the fate of her husband, by law they would have to wait to marry.519 You wonder too whether George knew that she was older than she let on, as I have assumed; publicly she would always maintain the illusion. It is interesting that she went for younger men with both husbands—and would probably be pregnant at the time of both her marriages. Of course, none of these sins of omission are out of the ordinary, but they suggest at any rate a command of what Chamier might call the arts of “sentimental persuasion.” It seems George had met his “affinity” with whom, in the words of Tim in Successful Man, he had a “spiritual sympathy” which “gr[ew] stronger and purer and more engrossing with married life” (SSM XII). Only time would tell.

Meanwhile, by 1873 the poor health of George’s mentor Doyne had required him to give up practising as an engineer, so George was forced to look for work elsewhere. He decided to play it safe and go back into the public service, much as he disliked the idea. He took a position with the Water Supply Department of Victoria as
Assistant Engineer to the Chief Engineer, George Gordon (1830-1907).\textsuperscript{520} He may have got the position through Edward Dobson, who like Doyne had moved to Victoria from Canterbury in 1869, ending up as an engineer at the Victorian Water Supply.\textsuperscript{521} In \textit{Successful Man}, Tim gets a job in the Water Department just like George did—but behind the scenes as a lawyer in the deeds office. He is in two minds about it:

\begin{quote}
The position was a well-paid and responsible one, and as it promised me a permanent post in the Civil service [sic], I decided to accept the offer. / Henceforth my troubles and anxieties about earning a livelihood were at an end. I gave up . . . any chances of success in private practice or professional distinction, but I secured ease and quiet, and, as I thought, a modest competence for life. (SSM XII)
\end{quote}

George would spend four years working there as Gordon’s assistant (\textit{UW} 24). Gordon “continued the works of the Coliban Water-Supply to Bendigo and other towns of the goldfields district, and also of the town supplies of Melbourne and Geelong and some provincial towns.”\textsuperscript{522} He designed a masonry gravity dam at Lower Stony Creek for the Geelong Water Supply dam, which was built in 1873-74 under the supervision of Edward Dobson (as Resident Engineer) and still stands.\textsuperscript{523}

Georgy learnt a lot working with Gordon about the behaviour and conveyance of water (hydrology and hydraulics) and the design and construction of related structures like dams and culverts, which was to be one of his main areas of expertise; working with Doyne he had learnt about the design and construction of railways and tramways and related structures like bridges, earthworks and culverts. Most of the texts he later published on aspects of civil engineering concerned hydrology and hydraulics, in particular \textit{The Utilisation of Water in South Australia} (1886), \textit{Capacities Required for Culverts and Flood Openings} (1898), his most influential engineering work, and \textit{Property in Water} (1903).

\textsuperscript{520} Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain), letter to the author, 15 June 2005; Joan Stevens, Introduction xi. See “Memoirs of Deceased Members: George Gordon,” \textit{MPICE} 170 (1907): 387;
\textsuperscript{521} Starky; Furkert 154; Janberg; “Edward Dobson,” \textit{Cyclopedia of New Zealand} 360-61.
\textsuperscript{522} “Memoirs of Deceased Members: George Gordon” 387.
Once again though, George was following in the wake of an entrepreneurial engineer, which is all very well when they are rising, as Tim puts it in *Successful Man*: “the best plan for a young man to get on in the world is to get in tow with some rising man and stick to him—to follow his fortunes” (*SSM IX*). But it is not so good if they get themselves in trouble, as Gordon would when he fell victim to the “Black Wednesday” purges of the civil service in January 1878—though George had left by this point. What is more, George was now in his mid-thirties and keen to strike out on his own. He may well have come to feel chained to his position, having taken up regular employment with a view to getting married and setting up a home with Dolly, but at the cost of his personal independence. Tim feels that way when he sacrifices “independence” for “practical existence”:

> it was a final adieu to all fond dreams of a life of happy and congenial independence, to the pursuit of fortune in enterprise and adventure, to all the promised liberty of a new world. . . . That day my visionary life ended, and my practical existence began. I had weighed hard cash against poetry, and chosen the coin.

That “practical existence” probably felt “altogether too commonplace”: 
I found myself landed on the road to a reasonable competence, if not to fortune, but unfortunately it was the beaten track. I hated the beaten track; I had come out sixteen thousand miles to avoid it. I had cherished vague aspirations after freedom and adventure, the romance of the bush. . . . I had slipped my collar to run wild. But all to no purpose, for here I was, through that dire necessity which controls our fate, to be chained up again, to be fed and well cared for, but to have to work for regular hours at a regular avocation. (SSM VII)

George had always chafed at having to walk the “beaten track” and soon he would be off again—this time to Adelaide.

On the other hand, George would not have thought he “might just as well . . . have stayed at home,” as Tim did at first (SSM VII). He enjoyed his new life. He involved himself in the “high society” of the gentlemen’s clubs, which seemingly lacked the class strictures of the Old World—though getting in was still a matter of who you knew. George would have heard about goings-on at the Yorick Club in Collins Street East, where Doyne and Gordon were members, Doyne being a founding member from 1868 and trustee of the club. Doyne got him in. The Club, founded by F. W. Haddon, the editor of the *Australasian* and the *Argus*, with Marcus Clarke as its first secretary, had a reputation in the late eighteen-sixties and early-seventies as the foremost literary club in the city. Prominent literary members, other than Clarke, were Adam Lindsay Gordon, Henry Kendall, George Gordon McCrae, J. J. Shillinglaw—and G. W. Rusden, the philo-Maori historian. In *Marcus Clarke’s Bohemia*, Andrew McCann argues that “[i]t is on the Yorick Club and the figures who formed it that a romantic vision of nineteenth-century Melbourne is based, a vision in which the colonial city harbours the possibilities of a Grub Street or a Latin Quarter,” a vision of Melbourne as “demimonde” and of the Club as a literary society representing “cultural exclusivity” or “distinction” and “Bohemian revelry.” That said, as McCann puts it, “[t]he reality of the Yorick Club . . . didn’t quite live up to

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525 De Serville 381.
the images of Bohemian revelry associated with it,” especially once Clarke left. By
the time George arrived, the club’s radical first flush was over: Clarke was gone and it
was becoming a rather stuffy social club or “guild of professional men”; membership
had become more a mark of status than anything else. And besides, such a vision of
Melbourne as demimonde, as “a site of grotesque realism in which the colonial city
embodies a seductive kind of transgressiveness,” that drove “the compensatory
romance of literary Bohemia in colonial Melbourne” is at odds with Chamier’s vision
of Marvellous Melbourne, which he represents as a shrine to settler capitalism dressed
up with an uneasy mix of unsentimental meritocracy and sentimental domesticity.

By 1876, George was tired of the Water Supply Department. Perhaps he had
not advanced as quickly as had been promised, as Tim claims in Successful Man:
“‘Put not your trust in princes,’ is a sacred maxim, which I found, to my bitter
experience, applied to many other than crowned heads” (SSM XXVI). Or perhaps he
saw retrenchment coming or realised that the civil service was not for him and wanted
to strike out on his own. Tim is retrenched on Black Wednesday. He sees it as the
result of “red hot democracy” in the Government: “[w]e civil servants were
denounced as ‘aristocrats’” and seen as affiliated with “the Upper House” and
“respectability”: “It was alleged that our leading members had been drawn from the
upper classes; that they were men of education and refinement, consequently that their
sympathies were with Conservative Party; they belonged to The Club; they frequented
fashionable society; they wore bell-toppers; they were connected with the foremost
families of the land” (SSM XIV). Some of this is true of George, but he was not
respectable, a Conservative or particularly well connected. And he made the decision
to leave.

From now on, George would steer clear of working directly for a government
department. When not working independently on contract to the state governments, he
would be employed as assistant to other engineers who were working on contract for
private entrepreneurs carrying out public works on behalf of the state government. His
experience in Victoria of what would now be called public-private partnerships and
“political patronage” in the railway system confirmed for him the importance of the

528 McCann, Marcus Clarke’s Bohemia 35, 69; see Hamilton Mackinnon, “Biography—by Hamilton
Mackinnon—Australian Tales—Marcus Clarke, Book, etext,” Australian Tales, by Marcus Clarke
authors/C/ClarkeMarcus/prose/AustralianTales/biography.html [sic]>.
529 McCann, Marcus Clarke’s Bohemia 31, 30.
government not “interfering with vested interests” or “any other [private] arrangement.” He advocated minimising the role of the Government,
a. to avoid “the possibility of the Government being charged with competing with private interests” and risk for “the country” (the colonial government),
b. to prevent “the Government . . . spending large amounts of money simply for the benefit of private individuals,” and
c. to allow the private “promoters” to take the risk, giving the Government “the power to purchase” the development “when the work was completed.”

For George, private enterprise was best—managed by laissez-faire government regulation.

George’s first sole charge positions were as “contractor’s engineer with several important railways in Victoria and South Australia,” as he would later testify. To start with, he took a job on the Hamilton to Ararat Railway. It was part of the so-called “Pink Line” to the Western Districts of Victoria, built quickly and cheaply in the mid-1870s by the Victorian firm of Overend and Robb (who had also built the Launceston and Western Railway in Tasmania, on which George worked). The previous section of the line from Ballarat to Ararat had been completed in April 1875; tenders were called on 13 October 1875 for the next section that headed southwest from Ararat to Hamilton and Portland. Construction took two years: the line was completed on 26 October 1877 and officially opened on 19 December. It was completed one month late due to a collision on the line which killed one of the drivers (the “Dunkeld Accident”). In all, five workers died during construction, a number not considered excessive at the time.

533 “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 695.
The job halfway between Melbourne and Adelaide facilitated George’s decision to move to South Australia to set up in private practice and get married. In 1878, straight after the Hamilton Railway opened, George got another job as Managing Engineer for the construction of the Kapunda to North-West Bend Railway, this time on the South Australian side of the border, but once again for Overend and Robb. He had “entire charge of that work,” as he put it. This was part of the proposed North-South Railway, the Adelaide to Darwin line, which started at Port Augusta at the head of the Spencer Gulf north-west of Adelaide and headed north, and came to be known as the “Ghan” after the Afghan cameleers that supplied it during construction. Construction did not reach the halfway point at Alice Springs until 1929 and was not completed until 2003. Interestingly, a decade later George would also work on the northernmost stretch, the Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway. As for Dolly, her father had been sick, so she went back to live on the family farm at Strathalbyn to help her mother and to make arrangements for their wedding. He died in February 1878. George and Dolly

would marry on 7 September 1878—just before the railway reached North-West Bend on 23 September 1878.

Before he left for Adelaide, George had this portrait taken (fig. 32), which projects a different man, now thirty-five and apparently confident in his independence, his open face marked by a wry half smile and scintillant eyes—though the smile is really in the eyes rather than the almost mocking twist of the mouth.

![fig. 32. George Chamier before his departure from Melbourne, [c.1877], Jenny Chamier Grove Collection, Kew, Surrey. (Reproduced by permission of Jenny Chamier Grove.)](image)

He was on his way to where he wanted to be.
The Story of a Successful Man (1895): Tim’s Story,
the Story of an Unsettled Settler

To repine over the past is silliness; but to fret over what might have been is merely the height of folly. For my part I always try, “on principle,” to impress myself with the conviction that everything has been for the best. It is a comfortable belief.

I have managed to scramble through life, with the usual “ups and downs”; but not without interest and enjoyment to myself, and, I trust, some measure of comfort and happiness to those belonging to me. I am satisfied with my lot. It has not been an exalted one; but I fancy it is better than being rich and miserable—which so often go together.

Still, having regard only to success in life, I probably made a fatal mistake. I should have done far better by remaining at my post and sticking steadily to my profession... [But] I never had the patience to stick to the beaten track...

I must apologise for this digression. It is my purpose to tell the story of the successful man, which certainly I am not; I am one of the failures.

—The manifesto of Tim, the Unsuccessful Man in Successful Man (II)

1 The text

Publication history

Reception

“Part the Third” of Chamier’s trilogy

540 All references to The Story of a Successful Man, which was published only in serial form, cite chapter numbers rather than page numbers for ease of reference.
2 Successful Man as life of the “representative settler”: the geography of the narrative
   The life of the “representative settler”
   The geography of the narrative
3 Tim as unsettled or “[un]representative settler”
   To settle things with fate: the providential aesthetic
   The story within The Story

1.1 Publication history

In June 1896, Chamier wrote to Angus & Robertson of Sydney, looking for a local publisher for the third, Australian novel of his settler trilogy: The Story of a Successful Man: An Australian Romance. It takes place in the colonial metropolis of “Marvellous Melbourne” during the land boom of the eighteen-seventies. Chamier’s stand-in, now called Tim (no surname), is the lawyer of a “smart,” that is, ruthless, and successful “land boomer” or speculator, Frederick Power, with whom he emigrated and the story of whose rise and fall he tells. Tim could easily be Raleigh grown up and chastened by his experiences in the Canterbury settlement. He is happily married—as Chamier would be soon after leaving Melbourne in 1877—and enjoys his sentimental domesticity, despite his lack of material success. He suffers at the whim of his unhappy boss, but in the end it is his philosophy of “scrambl[ing] through” and taking the “round-about” way in life that wins over his boss’s amoral, go-ahead materialism that brooks no obstacles (II). Power’s “straight line” life only speeds him to an early death—though he is lauded by his public nonetheless; Tim lives happily ever after and writes their story, as Chamier did for his own life.

Chamier had written the novel a couple of years before and had been trying to get it published since—first in England, with the assistance of Dr John Chapman, the Editor of the Westminster Review. He describes the sequence of events in a letter to a prospective local publisher, Angus & Robertson:

[Chapman] met with an accident in Paris & died suddenly [on 25 Nov. 1894]. The M.S. disappeared at the time & has never been recovered. Fortunately I had a press copy with me, & my friend Mr. [Thomas] Harry, Editor of the “Country” paper in S.A. [South Australia] offered
to publish the story in his journal, so that I might get a printed copy of it. 541

The novel had been serialised in *The Country* in weekly instalments between 11 May and 30 November 1895, while Chamier was away in England. 542 In late June, just before he left (with the manuscript of *A South-Sea Siren* in hand), it had looked likely that *Successful Man* was going to be “re-print[ed] in orthodox book form”—or so it was claimed in *The Country*. 543 Shortly after he left, it was somewhat prematurely announced that “satisfactory arrangements ha[d] been made for the publication of his story [*Successful Man*], and also a new one [*Siren*], in book form in London,” then in September that “the novel [*Successful Man*] w[ould] shortly be brought out in book form by a well-known firm.” 544

The prognostications were wrong. Chapman died; all Chamier was left with was a “press copy” (presumably a letterpress copy) of the manuscript. Fisher Unwin chose to publish the “new one,” *Siren*, rather than *Successful Man*, presumably because it was a sequel to *Philosopher Dick*, which they had previously published to a fair critical reception. Harry serialised *Successful Man* for him, so that he might at least “get a printed copy of it.” 545 This was not an ideal outcome, as Harry himself writes: “serial form [is] possibly the most objectionable way in which a novel can be issued,” and, though Chamier suggests that “‘The Country’ ha[d] a very respectable connection in S.A.,” it had “only a small circulation.” Still, it was a means to an end. After the serialisation was complete and no English publisher seemed to be forthcoming, Chamier’s relationship with Fisher Unwin having floundered in the wake of their rather limited promotion and underproduction of *Siren*, he tried to get the novel published by Angus & Robertson of Sydney. 546 This is the substance of his letter to them:

Mr. Harry informs me that it was very well received & that wherever he went he heard it very highly spoken of. The general opinion expressed was that if the story was published in book form it would

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542 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.
545 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.
sell well & become very popular. I should like it brought out in these Colonies if you are prepared to take it up. Of course, the book is wanting in sensational incident, but surely all novels need not be of the “Love & murder” type.

The scene is in Australia, & all the descriptions of life, & speculation are essentially Australian. The “Successful Man” is only a typical character.\(^{547}\)

Despite his puffing, nothing came of it. His next correspondence with Angus & Robertson concerns only the possibility of their distributing *Siren*.\(^{548}\)

Angus & Robertson may have declined to publish *Successful Man* because of the potential for libel suits if they published such a plainly critical satire on Australian society and capitalism with what Harry apparently thought were “personages well known to most Adelaideans.”\(^{549}\) Or perhaps it simply did not fit with their catalogue: Chamier’s “Successful Man,” an amoral land boomer, would certainly not have seemed “a typical character” to Angus & Robertson. At the time, its local literary output was largely confined to “bush” authors like “Banjo” Paterson and Henry Lawson, writing mainly of the life of solitary males on the Australian frontier, or at least, outside the urban settlements. What Russel Ward has called the “‘bush’ patterns of behaviour” that in time would give rise to the “legendary ethos” of Australia, the so-called “Australian Legend,” that is to say, “egalitarianism,” “mateship” and “local nationalism,” were anathema to Chamier and the object of much satire in *Successful Man*.\(^{550}\) But the bush authors’ particular choice of “Australian subjects and background,” as George Ferguson has described them, fast became identified with Australianness, in literature first, and then more broadly.\(^{551}\) Whether or not, as Ward has famously but not uncontroversially suggested, “if we seek the source of the

\(^{547}\) George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.

\(^{548}\) George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 7 July 1896, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.

\(^{549}\) “Theta,” *Country* 6 July 1895: 5.


[Australian] national self-image we must look, almost exclusively, to the bush,” the bush was the focus of Angus & Robertson.552

Whatever Chamier meant by saying Successful Man was “essentially Australian,” it was not “the bush” that defined Australianness for him. And the novel is altogether “un-bush”—and un-Australian too in Angus & Robertson’s terms. As in Philosopher Dick, Chamier shows the desire to emigrate to the Australasian colonies for “freedom and the bush” to be a vain enterprise—because the new settler is, as it were, always already unfree (PD 47; SSM II). Furthermore, the Australia he presents in Successful Man—which is the Australia to which most settlers in fact came—is entirely urban, or rather, suburban.553 Aside from being a thoroughgoing suburbanite, his autoethnographical narrator-protagonist, Tim, is both anti-democratic and against jingoistic nationalism—“un-bush”—and anti-meritocratic, or rather, against the sort of unsentimental meritocracy that rules in his Australia, one in which your social position rests on how “successful” you seem to be and that success is measured in terms of your imagined wealth. Chamier identifies with the “[un]successful man,” Tim, who “scrambl[es] through” his story, casting his ironic eye on the arc of Power’s career—and the “‘ups and downs’” of his own—and ends up settling on a kind of sentimental domesticity, an ethos of heart and home, despite its co-option by the land boomers in the service of suburban development (II).

1.2 Reception

Successful Man turned out to be Chamier’s only Australian novel—but even less well known at the time and latterly in Australia than his Canterbury novels. There is only one review (of sorts), again in The Country, in which it is suggested that “[t]his novel will probably hit the taste of the British public better than ‘Philosopher Dick,’ the author’s first literary venture, which dealt too exclusively with New Zealand bush life to be of interest to the general reader.”554 Harry wrote soon after in The Country that “[t]he first few chapters appearing in ‘THE COUNTRY,’ which had reached London, had attracted the favorable [sic] attention of the critics.”555 Perhaps “the critics” means

552 Ward 171.
554 “Theta,” Country 22 June 1895: 5.
Frederick Millar, editor of the *Liberty Review* and Chamier’s friend, because *Successful Man* never did reach the British public—let alone the critics.

The novel vanished from sight until Carol Franklin rediscovered it in the mid-nineteen-nineties; her exemplary postmarxist reading, “A Lost Novel by George Chamier (1842-1915)” (1994) in the *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, is the only mention of the novel since it was published. She rightly sees it as “filling a significant gap in our [Australian] literature” as a novel of “the ‘city’” and “a valuable lost fictionalisation of ‘Marvellous Melbourne.’”556 Her reading of *Successful Man* concentrates on its unconventional reading of Australian “colonialism/capitalism.” As she puts it, “[m]ost Australian fiction of the period couldn’t or wouldn’t articulate the struggles for power which actually take place under colonialism/capitalism.”557 She argues that in the text Chamier “shows how discourses are mobilised to serve various . . . interests” and “draws attention to both Colonialism’s/Capitalism’s [sic] power base as well as its excluded others.” Most interesting for her, though, are those who find themselves in between—like Tim—whose “interpellation” or complicity in such discourses of power reveal that “there is no outside position” in this world.558 But Chamier does imply that there might well be an outside-inside position: as Tim tells his story, it becomes apparent that he is a split narrator, both a narrator-protagonist embedded in the narrative and telling the story from the inside as it happens, and a constructor-narrator constructing the story from the outside in hindsight. The “psychodrama” of positionality that follows from Tim’s double position in *The Story*—which mirrors the relation of Chamier to the story of his own life—will be my main concern in this chapter.

1.3 “Part the Third” of Chamier’s trilogy

The lack of a third novel suggests the principal limitation of Chamier’s trilogy: he seems to have been unaware that he was writing one.

—Patrick Evans, *Penguin History of New Zealand Literature*559

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557 Franklin 90-91.
558 Franklin 91.
559 Patrick Evans, *Penguin History* 60.
The ending of *A South-Sea Siren*, which ironically subverts the customary sentimental closures and leaves open the fate, mutual or otherwise, of Raleigh and his confidante and lover Alice, suggests that Chamier may have had a third novel in mind. Raleigh has come round to Alice’s ironic sentimentality and become more conscious of his own “unconscious blind[ness]” (*SSS* 81). There is the prospect that he will renew his relationship with Alice in Wellington and that together they will, as Evans puts it, “bring to the nation the same order the old man [her father, Seymour] has brought about with his hoe”—in other words, that they will put into practice their unconventional ethos in which Raleigh’s critical perspective is tempered by Alice’s ironic sentimentality and turned to political ends. He will perhaps make a career in journalism writing leading articles about “‘The Native Question’” and the like (*SSS* 314). Given that in the first two novels Chamier explores life on a back country station and in a small town, the third would follow naturally; it would be set in the city—presumably in the capital Wellington—and “explore the theme of urban responsibility,” as Evans suggests. And, as Wattie puts it, “if that project had been completed, we would have a remarkable trilogy of novels on early colonial life” in New Zealand.

But there was no third novel to continue or complete Raleigh’s—and Chamier’s—New Zealand story and voice that urban and perhaps more political perspective on settler society there. We know that Chamier never went to Wellington himself—he stayed around in North Canterbury to work as a surveyor for the Provincial Government and then migrated to Australia, travelling about as an assistant engineer until he settled in Melbourne in the early eighteen-seventies. All the same, to quote Evans again, “[t]here is no need to see the absent third novel as the great lost work of colonial New Zealand.” He sees Chamier’s Canterbury diptych as moving Raleigh “from countryside to township to colonial metropolis [Wellington] in a remarkably sophisticated anticipation of the large thematic movement of New Zealand writing in the twentieth century.”

He implies that the apparently “absent third novel” is implicit in the movement of *A South-Sea Siren*. And it could be said that to leave the potential trilogy unsettled ironises what Stevens has called Raleigh’s “Philosopher’s Progress” and what has become the grand antipodean narrative of

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560 Patrick Evans, *Penguin History* 60.
561 Wattie, “George Chamier” 100.
562 Patrick Evans, *Penguin History* 60; see Wattie, “George Chamier” 100.
settlement as a “centripetal” movement toward the city that is implicit in this “large thematic movement of New Zealand writing” and requires local cities to serve as alternative metropolitan centres. To do so would be to suggest that New Zealand remains essentially provincial, that sublime matters of state like the solution of the “Native Question” take place elsewhere—in the distant capital or some other hypothetical centre of political power.

What I have read as Chamier’s third novel, Successful Man, does resolve this grand narrative, but has to go offshore to do it. It is indeed set in the city—in the first flush of “Marvellous Melbourne” in the eighteen-sixties and -seventies, during which period Chamier was working there as an engineer, but the external and internal evidence as to whether the three novels comprise a trilogy is conflicting. The exact history and chronological sequence of the production and publication of Chamier’s three novels is not entirely clear. We know Successful Man was written in 1893 or ’94 and circulated in manuscript in Europe before Siren did; we know nothing about the writing of Siren. We know Successful Man was serialised just before the publication of Siren; we do not know whether Siren was serialised or not, though it is unlikely since Chamier never mentions it (likewise Philosopher Dick). It seems both novels were ready for publication in book form about the same time; Successful Man was never published in book form. The internal evidence is also conflicting. Successful Man does not share characters or a spatial or temporal setting with the Canterbury novels and is less straightforwardly autobiographical than they are, though there are many correspondences between the lives of Tim and Chamier (and therefore Raleigh), and enough similarities between the positions of Tim and Chamier as unsettled settlers and narrators of their own life stories to describe it as autoethnographical. As a public school educated lawyer, Tim is further from Chamier than Raleigh is, but like Chamier, he is a professional man, who works—less than successfully—for both entrepreneurs and the government, an author, a family man and a sentimentalist.

On balance, though the novel I will describe will seem very different from those of Chamier’s Canterbury diptych in its subject matter, characters and setting, Successful Man should be read as the third part of what I have called his trilogy of novels about the Australasian colonies. It continues Chamier’s recapitulation of the grand antipodean narrative of settlement as a “centripetal” movement toward the city

563 Stevens, Introduction xvi.
by completing the movement of his protagonists from the back country to the town to the colonial metropolis, here that of Marvellous Melbourne. The irony of his recapitulation of this grand narrative lies not in his leaving the narrative unresolved by never arriving at the metropolis, as Evans implies, but in the nature of its closure, which turns out to be not just social or formal, as it was in the Canterbury novels, but aesthetic. Chamier plays up the irony that Tim’s narrative of Power, a *Story of [the] Successful Man*, mirrors the all-too-closed or -settled teleological narrative of the settlement, *The Story of a Successful [Settlement]*, as it were. The irony is doubled with the addition of Tim’s own narrative, the story within *The Story*: if Tim as narrator-protagonist is an *[Un]successful Man*, as narrator-constructor he may well be too successful—his narrative may be all-too-settled also. At the very least, the three novels constitute an œuvre that manifests a closed set of concerns, whether or not they were conceived as a trilogy: they represent a systematic engagement with what Chamier takes to be the three species of settlement in the Australasian colonies and with the way these settlements deal with the problem of unsettling forces within and without; for him, to be conscious of this problem is to be an unsettled settler—and to unsettle other settlers, not to mention yourself.

2 Successful Man as *life of the “representative settler”: the geography of the narrative*

2.1 *A life of the “representative settler”*

To read Chamier’s novels as unified at a more local level also requires that we establish stylistic and formal continuities between *Successful Man* and the Canterbury diptych. As befits its position as the third novel in Chamier’s trilogy, in which each novel has become progressively less open, *Successful Man* is less stylistically and formally heterogenous than the Canterbury novels. It is at once the most tightly structured and intricate of the three novels, as if the progression were closing in on itself. This is apparent in its external workings: in the articulation and form of the narrative, its adaptation of an Old World literary model, and the nature of the

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565 Patrick Evans, *Penguin History* 60.
narration and positionality of the narrator. But it is also apparent in its internal workings: in the geography of the narrative and the fictional world it navigates.

The plot closely follows the trajectory of Power’s life from childhood to death, falling into three parts of equal length, labelled “Part the first” to “Part the third” (I-X, XI-XX, XXI-XXX), that recount his material rise, his outward success—but “inward” failure, and his personal fall respectively. It follows that the plot is also more extensive than that of the Canterbury novels, taking in the whole life of the “hero” rather than a period of two or three years. In keeping with the genre of what Isaac D’Israeli calls “sentimental biography,” otherwise known as “the psychological life,” the narrative focusses on the “peculiarity of [Power’s] disposition,” in particular, on his “feelings”—or lack of them. D’Israeli suggests that such biographies are often “composed by some domestic friend, or by some enthusiast who works with love,” which Tim the narrator is to Power, though his narrative becomes more and more an exercise in sympathy as he starts to see the negative effects of success on Power. Nonetheless, in keeping with the sentimental persona Chamier has him adopt of the “womanly man,” Tim remains sympathetic to Power, even as Power exploits him for his own ends and casts him off.

But Chamier’s more immediate model is the local genre of the “life” of the “representative settler”—though in passing he parodies other local genres like the “colonial memoir, . . . newspaper reportage and official obituary, [puffing] advertisements for subdivisions” and so on, as Franklin suggests. The “biographical sketches” in T. W. H. Leavitt’s Australian Representative Men (1887) exemplify the genre—and what Franklin calls “[t]he direct link between money and official greatness/goodness” in the ideology of the settlement. They normally begin with a commonplace sermon on some characteristic of local life, then in this light sketch the life of the individual and end by pointing a moral justifying the life in hindsight. The life of “J. Marmaduke Rose, M.B., C.M., M.P., J.P.” asks the question: “what is a representative man of Australia?” The answer? “A man here stands or falls on his own merits. . . . A representative man of Australia is one . . . who, with little or no material


567 Franklin 90.

or social advantages, slowly advances himself to fame, not on other men’s shoulders, or by other men’s influence . . . , but by an honest and persevering course of conduct.” Thus, the representative man is “the successful man,” the meritocrat who “stands or falls on his own merits.”  

Superficially, Successful Man agrees. The obituary of our representative man, “the Hon. Sir Frederic Power, M.L.C., K.C.M.G.,” at the end of the novel, describes him as “essentially a self-made man”: “the sole author of his noble fortune . . . arriv[ing] in the colony . . . without money or friends . . . entirely dependant [sic] on his unaided exertions for his progress in the world.” But he succeeds because he is “a smart man,” a man characterised by “natural shrewdness . . . and extraordinary energy,” and because he is (in hindsight, at least) “far-seeing”: he “realised the immense future in store for Victoria, and predicted the unprecedented rise of its marvellous capital.” This apparent foresight justifies his life; in hindsight his life was “a worthy illustration of the reward attending on energy and enterprise, and . . . a shining example of a SUCCESSFUL MAN” (XXX). So Power qualifies as a representative settler because he is a self-made, smart, far-seeing successful man (Tim is none of these things) and because he is exemplary: he is both typical of the parvenu riche class and a meritocratic role-model—or “the goal of [the people’s] hopes,” as the representative man is described elsewhere in Australian Representative Men.  

Unlike Siren, with its multiple interwoven plots, Successful Man is driven by just one plot: that of the rise and fall of Power. Likewise, Philosopher Dick has only one plot, but it is a looser, more episodic narrative than that of Successful Man. But the story (of Power) and the teller of the story (Tim)—and his story—are tangled together in ways that generate complex and telling positional ironies. That is to say, what seems like one narrative (Power’s story) is in fact chiastic (Gk “crosswise”) in form (the story of Power and Tim). Power and Tim are poles apart. Power, the “representative settler,” is an unsentimental, even amoral hypermaterialist and as such entirely “representative” of the settlement he has helped build up. He quickly becomes materially successful, but at the expense of personal happiness. Tim is materially unsuccessful, but personally relatively happy. Still, he is unsettled because he feels out of place in Marvellous Melbourne—and somewhat compromised by his co-option in business into Power’s schemes and in his personal life into the ethos of

570 Leavitt, “Rev. Canon Watson” n. pag.
sentimental domesticity by which speculative capitalists like Power create a market for their suburban developments. Power’s and Tim’s narratives seem to balance each other out: Tim ends up materially unsuccessful, but personally “successful” (or happy), Power materially successful, but personally not.

Furthermore, though the narrative seems to develop a conventional drive to closure as it follows the trajectory of Power’s rise and fall, it can be read as all-too-predictably parabolic. There is a sense that according to the value system of the settlement Power was always going to be successful in business (and Tim not); Tim was always going to be personally happy (and Power not). The narrative once again exhibits the fatalistic quality we saw in the narratives of Philosopher Dick and Siren—the tight and relatively intricate structure of the narrative reinforces this impression in the reader. Nonetheless, when Power and Tim both arrive at moments of anagnorisis (realisation) towards the end of the novel—Power that he cannot ignore his (and his family’s) personal happiness, Tim that his lack of success in business is not a personal failure—Chamier comes down on the side of Tim. The ethic of “scrambling through” that Tim arrives at echoes Chamier’s own—and it is Tim who gets to “live happily ever after” with his family and tell the story, while Power, though he remains successful in business, dies unwell and alone.

Chamier implies that, despite life on the ground for Tim always being something of a scramble, the fact that he gets to tell his own story helps him to get settled, insofar as an unsettled settler can, to adapt himself to settler society. He has Tim construct his narrative as an aesthetic solution to the problem of his unsettlement. Tim is both embedded in the narrative as a protagonist and its constructor: a “narrator-agent” and a “self-conscious narrator” in Wayne Booth’s terms. 571 He is a split narrator. As narrator-protagonist, he narrates his “ups and downs” as they happen, though they are mostly “downs”: the moments of his initial disillusionment with Australia, the first of several “come-down[s]” (II), of his disillusionment with Power, of his co-option, when “[his] visionary life ended, and [his] practical existence began” (VII). As constructor-narrator, he breaks into the narrative at points and shows his hand: he gives self-reflexive (or “self-conscious”) waivers about where he apparently went wrong in life—unsuccessfully jumping at “’short-cut[s]’” and lacking “patience

with the beaten track” (II), and about how he will tell the story—apologising for his “digression[s]” and protesting his objectivity, innocence and disinterest (II, V).

Likewise, Tim signals where the narrative is heading through the epigraphs that preface each part and chapter. The first part is prefaced by a quotation from James Thomson about success being no respecter of morality that sets the tone of the narrative as a whole: “Success make fools admir’d, makes villains honest; / All the proud virtue of this vaunting world / Fawns on success and power, howe’er acquired.” 572 Parts two and three repeat the Thomson quotation and add another unique epigraph: part two has one with which we are familiar from Schopenhauer’s World as Will and Representation about the path to success and its consequences: “For as our physical path on earth is always merely a line . . . ,” and part three has one from Herbert’s “Avarice” (1633) about the negative effects of money, beginning “Money, thou bane of bliss and source of woe . . .” (part three). 573 Similarly, each chapter is prefaced with an epigraph that sets its course: for example, the first chapter, which concerns the early lives of Tim and Power in England, their decision “to try [their] fortunes at the Antipodes” and Power’s sudden departure, begins with a quote from Shakespeare’s Henry the Fifth: “In the very May-morn of his youth, / Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises” (I). 574 These epigraphs are for the most part not explicitly ironic—they function as structural markers that prefigure the material of the part or chapter they precede, but they are implicitly ironic in that they represent the point of view of the constructor-narrator, that is to say, they hint at dramatic ironies that can only be understood in hindsight or insofar as we anticipate the form of the narrative. For example, the epigraphs that precede the three parts of the novel ambiguately the idea of success, Power’s “straight line” life, and his success in business respectively, alerting the reader to be sceptical about Power’s apparent good fortune.

The rigorous superstructure of Successful Man is reinforced by the precise chronology of the narrative. Its temporal logic is biographical: the narrative takes the shape of a natural life (Power’s), of growth from youth to maturity, as does the

572 James Thomson, and Patrick Murdoch, “Agamemnon,” The Works of Mr. James Thomson, with His Last Corrections and Improvements, To Which is Prefixed the Life of the Author, vol. 3 (London: R. Baldwin, 1802) 75.
narrative of Marvellous Melbourne; it also fits the metaphor of a life as the passage of a day from dawn to sunset (XXX). Such narratalogical devices outline the rigorous superstructure of the novel and naturalise the narratives of the life and the settlement. The novel spans four decades (or thirty years), one decade per “part,” with the exception of chapter one which functions as a prologue: the eighteen-fifties (I), -sixties (II-X: “Part the First”), -seventies (XI-XX; “Part the Second”), and ’eighties (XXI-XXX; “Part the Third”).

By way of a summary of the plot, the three parts develop as follows. The novel begins in the eighteen-fifties with Power and Tim at secondary school in Devonshire; Power is sixteen, Tim thirteen—later historical remarks date Power’s birth to the middle ’thirties and Tim’s to not after 1840. Power vanishes to the Antipodes (I). There is a lapse of seven years. Tim, who is now twenty, having worked for five years as an articled clerk in London, emigrates to Melbourne. It is now the early eighteen-sixties and the first wave of land booming is underway in Melbourne. This is confirmed by the narrator, who records that the events at that point of the story (V) took place a “quarter of a century” ago, that is to say, twenty-five years before the supposed time of its writing in the early ’nineties. Power, now twenty-three, has been at the Bendigo diggings—which were active in the ’fifties—but has returned to Melbourne to set up a land speculation business. They meet six months after Tim’s arrival; Tim begins working for Power (II), who is on the up-and-up with his development at “Balmoral” (V). The events of chapters II to VII take place over the week that follows. Power marries six months later and his daughter, Jessie, is born within the year (X).

“Part the Second” opens with Power launching an apparently successful suburban development, “Brindisi” (XI). Tim continues working for Power until no later than 1868, when he leaves to join the civil service; he himself marries about 1870 (XII). A depression hits Melbourne, and on “Black Wednesday” (8 Jan. 1878), Tim is retrenched after ten years in the civil service (XIV). He is soon back working for Power. Power is now about thirty-four or -five, Tim thirty-one or -two (XV). Power goes to court to divorce his first wife so that he can marry his lover; the trial drags on for a couple of years (XVI-XX).

We rejoin the story in “Part the Third” after a further lapse of three years, so about the middle ’eighties. Power remarries (XXI). Another depression hits Melbourne and Brindisi falls. Power is not concerned; he successfully stands for
political office. He is in his early forties and “at the height of his glory” in business, but beginning to decline physically (XXII). He starts to chase happiness (XXIII). His daughter, now twenty, returns from Europe and is married, so Power must be about forty-five, Tim about forty-two (XXIV). He plans and takes a trip to Europe, being away long enough for his daughter to produce a child (XXV). His new wife dies about a year later. In the meanwhile, he has launched a campaign of philanthropy; as a consequence, he is soon knighted. But the decline in his health after twenty years in business is such that he is compared to “a man of middle age, say from fifty to fifty-five” and it is recommended that he retire for the sake of his health—despite signs of another land boom (XXVIII). This he does. Tim, now himself “middle-aged,” sells a property he bought in the early days and takes a trip to Europe with his family and reflects on his life—hence The Story (XXIX). While he is away, Power dies, only a matter of “some months” after retiring. He is eulogised as “a shining example of a SUCCESSFUL MAN” (XXX).

As this summary suggests, Chamier implies that time is compressed in the fictional world of the novel—in particular, for those in the world of business and public affairs like Power, who rushes himself to an early grave. Tim tells his story at a more measured pace: if his life is something of a “scramble” on the ground, in hindsight everything seems to make sense and to have been “for the best”—hence the retrospective character of his narrative (II). As I have hinted, Chamier implies that this characteristic of Tim’s narration reflects the historical narrative and nature of the settlement of the metropolis of Marvellous Melbourne, which justifies its “demoralised” origins by imagining a break with the past and papering it over with a teleological narrative of progress. In this narrative, the process of settlement is staged in phases:

a. the “early days,” with the “first dazzling outburst of the gold-diggings,” followed by
b. “a progressive stage,” which is a “re-action” as the goldfield disgorges its workforce to Melbourne and is still carried out at “break-neck pace,” then
c. a “steady . . . development” with the influx of population and the growth of local industry.

The city proper arises once the “people [have] recovered their equilibrium and settled down to deliberate business.” By this time, “the great city ha[s] assumed something of its matured character and appearance; its outline ha[s] been traced, its leading features
determined . . . the foundations of its future greatness ha[ve] been laid.” As Tim presents it, then, this narrative is teleological in the Aristotelian sense: the city grows toward its telos (Gk “end”), that is, its goal or purpose (they are one and the same for Aristotle), according to the arkhe (Gk “beginning’) or founding principle that shaped it. This is settlement according to manifest destiny.

It is during the final, apparently settled phase of the growth of the metropolis that Tim arrives in Melbourne. Even so, he finds it to be “a bustling hubbub of the most modern type, roaring, rattling, pushing, striving; splendid and squalid, refined and corrupt, with the extremes of luxurious wealth side by side with rugged poverty”—and borne up by speculative capitalism (II). But in the official historical narrative of the settlement, speculative development, the euphemistic “foundation” of what became the city—not to mention the clearance and, further back, the invasion that were the precursors of the “earliest” settlement—must be imaginatively consigned to the past (as phase b.). As Tim (as constructor-narrator) suggests—not a little ironically—in one of his narratorial waivers, it must be borne in mind that all this took place a long time ago; consequently, my humble remarks convey no reflection whatever on society at the Antipodes as constituted at the present day. . . . But then . . all this refers to a remote past; for twenty-five years—why, as the world travels now, it’s ancient history!

And the world is progressing . . . and nowhere faster or better than in this, the fifth quarter of the globe. As a matter of fact, we are highly proud of our rate of progress; it is our triumph, . . . the feather in our national cap. Take away our progress, and—well, there would be nothing left.

In other words, the settler ought to live without regrets; “the end must be seen as having justified the means” (V). Power exemplifies this principle: for him, should a business scheme fail, he simply “wipe[s] off all [his] liabilities, and start[s] afresh with a clean sheet” (VI). The result is that, as is the case with Power, settlers’ individual and collective “beginnings are buried in obscurity” (IV). To justify his waiver, Tim offers a characteristically Victorian and for Chamier “essentially Australian” equivocation on the word “progress”: “As one of the ‘old hands,’ I can look back with complacency on the errors and follies—may I not include a few little
vices—of our turbulent youth, and congratulate ourselves on the remarkable progress made since the early days. I am speaking as an Australian” (V).

But the loaded words “complacency” and “[self-]congratulat[ion]” imply an ironic distance on this self-justificatory teleological narrative on the part of the author, if not the constructor-narrator. Throughout Successful Man, Chamier plays with the ironic distance between his constructor-narrator who is in charge of the narrative as a whole, telling his story in hindsight and for the most part voicing the position of the implied author, and the narrator-protagonist who narrates the action of the novel as it happens. In this split narrative, the constructor-narrator tells the story from the outside, the narrator-protagonist from the inside. It is in this psychodrama of positionality, this story within The Story, and its relation to Chamier’s back story—creating a double split narrative perhaps—that the significance of Successful Man as the endpoint of Chamier’s trilogy lies.

2.2 The geography of the narrative

The geography of The Story exhibits the positions of Tim and Power relative to each other and to the settlement of Marvellous Melbourne. Leaving aside for now the imaginary location of the settlement as “the fifth quarter of the globe,” the fictional world of the novel comprises four main locations. There is

a. the metropolis of Melbourne, with the minor locations of Lonsdale Street, the “Kangaroo” (and other pubs and eating-houses) and Power’s office;

b. the locations in the suburban periphery, both settled ones like Tim’s place in the suburbs and relatively unsettled ones like Power’s new settlements of “Balmoral” and “Brindisi”;

c. more peripheral, largely unsettled or bush locations like Bendigo, Ballarat and “Rabbitville”; and

575 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
d. overseas locations, both the “Homely” (or Old World) ones of Devonshire, London, Europe (especially Lake Geneva), and less Homely ones like America.

The geopolitical poles of the colonial place are established early: between “at home,” namely, Home or the Old World, and “here,” that is, Australia or the New World at “the other end of the world” (XXV). Initially, Home is represented by the “gold fields of Merrie England,” hierarchy and aristocracy, parents and the professions, and conventional morality, Australia by the “goldfields of Victoria,” democracy and meritocracy, wayward sons, “speculation and enterprise,” and the displacement of conventional morality (I). If in the Old World everyone has their place, in the New one everyone has their price. Tim, like Raleigh, had emigrated “not with a view to getting on in the world, but to get away from the world”; as he puts it, “I longed for freedom,” that is, to “sh[ake] off the shackles of conventionality,” which he identifies with “the Old World, with all its irksome restrictions” (PD 48; II). In addition to seeing “the Old World [as] ‘played out,’” he and Power had imagined the New World would offer “‘a fair field and no favor [sic]’” for “speculation and enterprise” without hierarchy, aristocracy and the other obstacles, standing in the way of the entrepreneur (I). Nonetheless, Tim’s feelings on arriving in “Marvellous Melbourne” are just as ambivalent as Raleigh’s were on his arrival in Canterbury:

My first impressions were of wonder not untinged with disappointment. I was forcibly struck with the amazing prosperity of the place, but dissatisfied with its character. I had fled from established systems and old-fashioned civilisation to a new world, which I had fancied something radically different. I had expected to find quite another order of things, with boundless vistas of opportunity, freedom, and adventure, instead of which I found myself in a bustling hubbub of the most modern type.

Tim suggests that, aside from its possessing “all the concomitants of the most advanced ‘development,’” Melbourne “was too much like what I had come from, without the charm of artistic beauty or venerable associations. I should have preferred it less civilised” (SSM II).

The Melbourne Chamier and Tim present in Successful Man is “demoralised” and even more “pushing” than Canterbury—and brazenly so; he sums up its founding principle in the maxim from Horace: “Quaerenda pecunia prima est, Virtus post
“nummos” (money is to be sought first of all; virtue after wealth). As he puts it, “Money was the god, and the ‘smart [unscrupulous] man’ his prophet” (III). Power sums up his (and the settlement’s) speculative capitalist ethos: “[This] world places happiness in money. . . . You can purchase everything the world has to offer for money—all the rest is visionary and emptiness” (XXIV). Chamier sees Melbourne as a kind of speculative bubble-world kept puffed up by boosterist rhetoric: a monument to speculative settler capitalism dressed up with an uneasy mix of unsentimental meritocracy (for the parvenus riches capitalists) and sentimental domesticity (for those whom the capitalists capitalise on). “[S]martness, energy, and progress”: these are the keynotes of Marvellous Melbourne; it is self-congratulatory, amoral and ruled by fortune, by a curious amalgam of fate and wealth (IX).

As a “smart” man par excellence, Power is the “representative man” of this Marvellous Melbourne of speculative settler capitalism, the meritocratic role-model of the “successful man” (III, II). Tim presents the root cause of Power’s success—his “smartness”—as amoral; he represents him as devilish and instrumentalist, relying on credit, his credibility and the credulity of others to manipulate people to his own ends. For Chamier, the idea of the “representative man” transplants the Victorian cult of the “great man”—like Thomas Carlyle’s “hero”—into settler Australia, but the model is debased. The “great man” becomes the arch-capitalist, the amoral meritocrat. Why so? Perhaps Chamier is parodying aristocratic radicalism in that the new hero overcomes the discontinuity with Old World certainties—hierarchy and aristocracy, and so on—by positing a new aristocracy of “smart men,” whose position is justified by an ideology of biological determinism and elitism, and by their role in local politics and philanthropy. Alternatively, it could be an ironic comment on the representative settler as outlaw, in line with the revaluation of the criminal outsider as hero in what Graham Seal has described as the “outlaw legend” in Australian popular culture.

But Chamier also implies a more radical political-economic argument: that settler societies and their role models—here his focus is Marvellous Melbourne, but the same was true to a degree with the Canterbury settlement—are radically bourgeois capitalist. Franklin agrees; extrapolating on a well-known passage from Marx and

577 Horace, Epistle 1.1.53 (Epistles 56), quoted as the epigraph of chapter III of Successful Man.
Engels’ *Communist Manifesto* that describes “colonization” as a “revolutionary element” in “modern bourgeois society,” she describes settler ideology in Marvellous Melbourne as “colonialism taken to its logical capitalist and individualist extreme.”

It can be read more radically again. Chamier implies that settler society is bourgeois through and through. That is to say, the clearance (or terra nullius) policy and lack of a landed aristocracy creates an apparently open field—viz. “a fair field and no favor [sic]”—for settlement and an ahistorical and relatively rootless, egalitarian society, marked by a market economy based in land booming and other speculation (I). This economy gives rise to a self-fashioned petty aristocracy of squatters and *parvenu riches*, along with a co-opted bureaucracy and working class, who administer the market and serve as consumers of its products. If so, the arch-capitalist land boomer as representative settler would be fitting; Power would exemplify what Philip Fisher in *Still the New World* (1999) calls the “new man” characteristic of new world settler societies driven by the dynamic of “creative destruction” characteristic of “enterprise capitalism.” Like Emerson’s new man, who “always finds himself standing on the brink of chaos, always in a crisis,” Power thrives on what Fisher calls such “permanently unsettled conditions”—in business, at any rate.

Where does that leave Tim? He is not one of the capitalists, the “smart men” like Power: when Power says, “I took you for a smart man,” Tim answers, “I am not smart, and, what is worse, I have a conscience” (XVII). By “conscience,” Tim means an eye for self-deception, whether in others or himself, a critical instinct that gives him distance on goings-on in the settlement. If this instinct fails him at times in his own life, it gives ironic force to the narrative he constructs in hindsight—though he pleads that he is an “indifferent spectator” (XII). As “an innocent chronicler of events,” he says, “I am not writing for ‘a purpose,’ nor do I intend to ‘point a moral’; I shall merely give you the plain facts, and you must do the moralising yourself” (XVI). But his eye for self-deception makes him critical of locals’ willingness to be inspired by their own rhetoric: “the genuine colonial was expected to practice an attitude of open-mouthed wonderment at the contemplation of his own superhuman

580 Franklin 89; see Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto* 220 (sec. 1) and K. Marx and F. Engels, *On Colonialism* (Moscow: Progress, 1959) 10-12.
582 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Society and Solitude: Twelve Chapters* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870) 147; Fisher 5.
achievements—but, though amazed, I was not captivated” (II). And he is taken aback by people’s willingness to deceive themselves about local political “corruption”—the fact that “nobody seems really concerned about the matter,” that an accusation of impropriety against a politician “does not seem to affect his popularity in any way. He holds up his head in public all the higher for it.” As Joe Spice, an associate of Power, says, “Here, as the flunkey said about the windows in Belgravia, . . . we prefers them dirty” (IX). Power is exemplary in this regard: he is “profoundly indifferent to the moral, social, or political aspects” of his speculative developments; for him, business is business (XI). Whereas Power is indifferent to morals, Tim is indifferent to moral cant—he presents it for what it is.

For Tim, all this self-deception is evidence of Marvellous Melbourne’s “demoralis[ation]” (V). He sees it as built into the worldview of the Melbournians: they “cherish . . . fond illusion[s],” choosing to stop at “the veil” of appearances, to credit credibility (over real credit) and to cast a “halo of romance” upon all their actions, individual and collective (XV, IV, XVI). Quite simply, in Marvellous Melbourne, appearance trumps reality—and the appearance of success trumps all. The narrative of Power’s success has this ring to it (and echoes the official historical narrative of the settlement), as when he speaks at the opening of “Brindisi” to the “worshippers of Mammon” (XXVI):

Never was there such hubbub, such enthusiasm, witnessed before. . . . “Smart man . . . Smart Man . . . SMART MAN . . . SMART MAN” . . . was taken up by the crowd with frantic applause. . . .

There he stood—not a prepossessing object by any means, with a dark forbidding countenance. . . . But had he looked as sinister as Mephistopheles himself, it would not have mattered on that jubilant occasion. The elated multitude saw him all couleur de rose, and his saturnial frown appeared to them like the beaming smile of an angel of light. For was he not what everyone [sic] of them was daily struggling and striving to be—A SUCCESSFUL MAN. (XI)

At the auction that follows, Tim sees the “public” as a “gullible” flock, with capitalists as the shepherds, sharebrokers as hawks, “a whole tribe of [presumably metaphorical] Jews” as wolves, with the bank manager as the bellwether of the flock (XI).
Because Tim is wary of the demoralisation, Spice describes him as not yet “colonised” (unlike Raleigh in Canterbury): “you are still a new chum—you are not colonised yet. When you are, your astonishment will cease, and, if it last, it will be restricted to wonder at the smartness, energy, and progress of the community” (IX). In Tim’s description of the land boom as a “prevailing madness,” there is an echo of Charles Mackay’s *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* (1841), in which the speculative bubble is described as a moral corruption, a “moral epidemic” “during the progress of [which] dangerous delusion, the manners of the nation become sensibly corrupted” (XXVII). But for him, it is amoral rather than immoral: the demoralisation of the settlement signals a failure of what he calls “conscience,” a collective self-deception, rather than a moral failure (XVII). It is one of the ironies of the split narration that Tim’s conscience fails him at the time too: he is co-opted into the machine by working for the speculative capitalist Power, greasing the legal wheels of the bureaucracy, and by adopting and advocating the ethos of sentimental ideology by which such capitalists inveigle their victims. This failure of “conscience” provides one impetus for him to reconstruct his life in hindsight.

To return to the geopolitics of the place, Australia itself—and the colonial metropolis of Marvellous Melbourne that epitomises it—is for Chamier an entirely imaginary location or “marvellous place” (XXV). The narrator’s ruling geographical metaphors are of Australia as

a. a place of romance—literally a utopia, a “no-place” (Gk eu-topia): “the fifth quarter of the globe” and not like “any other part of the civilised world” (V, XIV); and

b. displaced, that is, a place where important events happen elsewhere, like Sunnydowns.

Marvellous Melbourne itself is imagined as

c. a speculative bubble,

d. a “mammon”—with Power as Mephistopheles or Faust, having borrowed Mephistopheles’s powers, infernal, magical, ominous and mad (XXVI), and

e. a self-sufficient metropolis, where “local interest” rules, “to [Power] what Paris is to the Parisian, that is, all the world” (IX, XXV).

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The metaphor of Melbourne as Mammon is the dominant one. Tim compares “Brindisi” to John Milton’s “Pandemonium,” which “rose like an exhalation” at the command of Mammon, as in John Martin’s etching (IX).\footnote{John Milton, \textit{Paradise Lost}, ed. John Leonard (London: Penguin, 2003) 21 (I: 710-12). This passage also serves as the epigraph to John Martin’s “Pandemonium” (1827).}

It was created by “almost magical means”—like Melbourne when it arose “as if by magic”: “a range of shifting sandhills, with a sea frontage, and a tract of marshes in the rear, were transformed as if by magic into a . . . seaside resort” (VI, II, IX). As a “mighty magician” and “a ‘POWER’ in the land,” Power embodies this magical quality. He magicks up the settlement of Brindisi, with “[w]hole streets spr[inging] out of the ground like mushrooms”—recalling the “mushroom townships” of the Canterbury diptych (IX; \textit{PD} 95). Not only is he able to inveigle his victims—including Tim—by “fascinat[ing]” them and appear like “an angel of light” when he is as “saturnial” as Mephistopheles, he possesses “the Devil’s gift,” having “acquired by some occult means . . . the alchemist’s secret of modern times [by which] whatever he touched turned to gold” (II, XII). Nonetheless, Power’s bargain—to trade personal happiness for success in business—is Faustian. He acts “as if the devil possessed him”: though he seeks personal happiness, he cannot give up business—it is “a gift
from hell” (II, VI). As Power says to Tim, mistaking Tim’s critical distance or “indifference” for apathy: “Money is not to be made in a half-hearted way, as you do everything. You must give up your whole soul to it—your mind, your heart, your sleep, even your dreams. It must be . . . your sole purpose in life, your everything. That is not in your line” (XXVII). The bargain does go wrong, though his business never fails. Wealth becomes “an incubus [that] crushe[s] him with its weight”—as the narrator puts it, even when “[h]e had solemnly decided to give up business . . . business would not give him up” (XXII, XXVII).

In keeping with its magicked-up nature, the world of the settlement seems to be wholly determined by fate. Fortune favours Power—in business, at least: “To the impartial looker-on [viz. Tim at the time] it really seemed as if a special dispensation attended on my friend, so that whenever the element of chance came in, it would turn to his advantage. Fred. Power knew this, and he trusted to a great extent to his fortunate star. He was a child of fate” (XIII). For Power, the two fortunes—fate and wealth—seem to go hand in hand, because he works entirely according to the logic of the settlement. Hence, Power can describe his schemes as “work[ing the] oracle” (VI). Tim is not so fortunate. For him, an omen spells “a final adieu to all fond dreams of a life of happy and congenial independence.” When he is broke after failing to find a job after his arrival in Melbourne, he finds a coin in the street and takes a meal in a cheap eating-house; seeing the “seedy-looking individuals . . . who had evidently come down in the world” in there determines him in favour of taking the job Power has offered him. At this moment, as he says, “my visionary life ended, and my practical existence began. I had weighed hard cash against poetry, and chosen the coin” (VII). From that point, it seems “Dame Nature” is “evilly disposed” to him—in the form of Power, “the arbiter of [his] fate” (XV). Tim spends the rest of the novel coming to terms with his fate, making sense of the “ups and downs” of his life as being “on principle” “for the best” in hindsight (II).

The symbolic geography that underlies these geographical metaphors has horizontal and vertical aspects. On the face of it, the horizontal aspect is straightforwardly colonial: the centre is privileged over the periphery. Consequently, movement from Home (the metropolis of London) to here (the colonial metropolis of Melbourne) is represented as downward (read, bad). But Melbourne is also represented as an alternative metropolis, a “thriving centre” to the suburban and bush country on its periphery. The centre of the city is the engine of the settlement: it
represents both “civilisation” or “luxury” (II) and the places where business is actually done—back alley pubs and eating-houses like the “Kangaroo,” underground and entered by a “back entrance” down a “by-lane” (II, VII). The fact that business is done underground and somewhat underhandedly signifies the mano a mano nature of colonial business, but perhaps also the geopolitical fact that actual land is changing hands in the speculative market of the land boomers, and that such land probably came into the hands of the speculators by morally ambiguous, not to mention originally invasive, means. And it is a reminder that something cannot be made from nothing, that settlements do not arise magically, which Chamier well knew as an engineer familiar with the groundwork of suburban settlements: the roading, tramways, sewerage and so on. Further, it alerts us to the fact, as Robert Young puts it in “Colonialism and the Desiring Machine,” that “cultural colonization [is] not simply a discursive operation but a seizure of cultural space,” that is to say, the “waste land” where settlements like “Brindisi” sprung up was already peopled—though it may well have seemed empty—and had to be unpeopled directly or indirectly before it could be repeopled with settler suburbanites (XI).

Perhaps in tacit recognition of this fact, Tim represents the city as “corrupt,” belying its appearance of “amazing prosperity” with its antithetical “character”: “splendid and squalid, refined and corrupt, with the extremes of luxurious wealth side by side with rugged poverty” (II). The reality of life for Tim “within the confines of this much despised civilisation” is “cheap . . . quarters over a carpenter’s shop, in a little back street,” “shady localit[ies]” like “Mrs. Cherrytree’s select establishment for young ladies in Little Diddle Street,” and a “countless multitude” with “not one friendly hand that [he] could shake—or borrow a shilling from” (II, VI, VII). Power himself implies that the city is unhealthy compared to his new suburban development of “Brindisi,” which is promoted as morally and bodily salubrious (XI). Accordingly, Power heads out to the country in pursuit of a cure for his ill health: first to an old mining town to recuperate (XVI), then to Rabbitville “on the border” chasing a quack (XXIII). It is a truism that the process of settlement spreads centrifugally through suburban development—away from the engine of the settlement and toward the less settled periphery, and this is how Power represents the process on a visit to a new

settlement: “‘In another three years,’ remarked Power, ‘there won’t be a foot of vacant land left all about here, and twenty years hence this place will be near the heart of the city, and Melbourne will embrace these distant downs.’” Nonetheless, representing the periphery as healthier hints at a paradox of New World settlement: that a settlement is seen as “better” the newer or less settled it is. It certainly requires less cultural work to promote a settlement at the outset, when “[e]verything is new,” than to justify its existence in hindsight (V). Tim implies that, as the settlement becomes more settled, it comes to resemble the Old World. This is what he found when he arrived in Melbourne, as we know. Of course, the idea that “newer is better” is also a function of land-booming capitalism of the sort Tim describes: it always requires new settlements to sell, which relies on keeping alive the idea of the greenfield settlement as a place of promise, a New World in miniature.

To turn to the second and more significant vertical aspect of the symbolic geography of the fictional world of the novel, it fits with the conventional moral valuations, that is, up is good, down is bad—likewise, upward and downward mobility. Hence, Power rises to success and falls as he fails. Emigration to Australia, disillusionment and economic depression represent downward mobility. For example, the “fall” of “Brindisi” is described as “an awful come down” (XXI). It is also “a retrograde motion” in the terms of the settlement’s narrative of progress, which demands that the settlement move onward as well as upward. Downward mobility or debasement does have its positive aspects from a colonial point of view: according to the Law of the settlement, Tim “derive[s] a moral benefit” from his “‘come down’” and “plunge into the lower stratum of life” on finding himself with few prospects on emigrating to Melbourne (VII). This debasement is seen to be levelling, to offer “a fair field and no favor [sic]” to all comers and aspirants to the meritocracy (I). In addition, the meritocratic role model of the arch-capitalist as representative settler can be read as a debasement of the Victorian cult of the “great man”—Carlyle’s “hero”—when it is transplanted into the radically capitalist world of Marvellous Melbourne.

In contrast, development, with the associated “puffing,” “enthusiasm” and inflation, represents upward mobility (XI): hence the metaphors of development as “floating” a settlement and of the settlement as a speculative bubble “blown into existence by puffing, and . . . swollen out to . . . enormous dimensions by public

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586 Doxiades 347.
gullibility” (XXI). The implication is that, for Chamier, the settlement of marvellous Melbourne, rather than being founded on an imaginary void created by clearance, as was the settlement of Sunnydowns, is itself a void. Compared to the bubble-world of that Sunnydowns (see figure 25), which inflated as the world of the first settlers was pushed down and out, but paradoxically seemed to remain weighted to the ground by the effort of these sublimations, the world of this speculative bubble seems to float, barely touching the ground, as if cut off from the history of the place and its peoples. It is not that the first settlers have been imagined out of existence, rather that the new settlement is so imaginary, so fully imagined, that there is no room for them: all other worldviews and “ethical” possibilities have been closed out. “The Native” does not even come into question in Marvellous Melbourne—hence the shading out of the other worlds and exclusionary sublimations in the following figure.

Fig. 34. The symbolic geographical form of the settlement 2.
The place is so completely mediated by capitalism that, in keeping with Marx’s metaphor from *The Communist Manifesto*, “[a]ll that is solid melts into air.”\(^{587}\) It has been totally deterritorialised. Chamier suggests that his Marvellous Melbourne was dreamt up in the heads of speculative capitalists, as Power says of the suburban settlement of “Balmoral”: “I originated the scheme; it all came out of my brain.” Tim likens the process of imagining or “originat[ing]” the settlement to authorship: Power is the “author” of the settlement and the development of the place seems wholly discursive—“dubb[ing]” it with “romantic names,” “la[ying it] out (on paper),” getting political approval through “an Act of Parliament,” and then promoting the settlement through “advertis[ing]” in the press and through “bill-sticking” (XI). As such, he is like “the spectre who stalks behind” the bubble in the quote from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Ode to Tranquillity” (1811) that serves as the epigraph to the Brindisi chapter (XI): “The bubble floats before; the spectre stalks behind.”\(^{588}\) For Tim, who seems to ignore the implications of this analogy for himself as narrator, this makes the “fascinating transaction” of setting up the settlement—literally “fascinating” in its inveiglement of potential settlers—“unsound at the core” (VI). Unconsciously, the other settlers find it unsettling too; hence Tim describes the general “hubbub” of “enthusiasm” for the settlement of “Brindisi” at the auction as causing “such delightful confusion that most people lost their legs, and had as much as they could do to keep their legs”—never mind the fact that the settlement was literally “floated” on a tract of “waste land . . . mostly under water” (XI).

If all worldviews and “ethical” possibilities other than speculative capitalism are closed out in Marvellous Melbourne, where does sentimental domesticity fit in the picture? In *Siren*, we saw put in place a clear differentiation between the world of the settlement and its otherworld—the positive and negative of the settlement, as it were—and between who or what is inside and outside its “charmed circle” (SSS 108). Unsettled settlers like Raleigh and Muster who did not fall into line with the majority of settlers were excluded from the settlement. Here the other of the settlement has been internalised, as befits such a closed world: speculative capitalism imagines its own alternative inside the settlement in the form of sentimental domesticity, which it then neutralises by co-opting it to its own ends. It posits its own negative ethical pole


to create a seemingly closed or self-sustaining system: a capitalist machine. This gesture of reterritorialisation is—like the official historical narrative of the settlement—self-justificatory. Together these geopolitical moves comprise the double impetus of the settler imaginary in the colonial metropolis: to imagine a history and a market for the settlement that justify its existence, past and present. Speculative capitalists like Power create a market for their suburban developments by promoting the values of sentimental domesticity: of heart and home—what Graeme Davison in The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne calls “the sentimental cult of Home,” or rather, home with a small “h” to distinguish it from nostalgia for Britain as the colonial Home. To quote Franklin: “The worst excesses of the speculators involved suburban land. The Land Boomers cynically played on the ideology of ‘home’ and ‘family’ in particular to entrap buyers.”

Tim tarries with this negative at the risk of being co-opted by it. As Franklin puts it, “[i]n part, at least, Tim represents the official discourse of the times, on marriage, family, the cult of Home, which are his defence against his own compromised position, located as he is within that ideology.” To cope with the void that is the world of Marvellous Melbourne, “unsound at the core”—demoralised and deterritorialised—and altogether unsentimental, he takes up the sentimental persona of the womanly man, the man of feeling who adopts and advocates the so-called “feminine” virtues of heart and home (V). His “domestic bliss” keeps him grounded, providing him a refuge from the “slings and arrows” of fortune (XII). His home life conforms to the values of sentimental domesticity: he considers that in his wife he has met his “affinity,” with whom he has a “spiritual sympathy” that “grows stronger and purer and more engrossing with married life.” They go on to set up house and have four children: “Our home was of the happiest and without being luxurious, yet it afforded us every comfort. We were all blessed with health and good spirits, which made us look upon the word ‘home’ as the most blessed in the whole world” (XII). When he is retrenched on Black Wednesday, his consolation is at home: “All through this painful ordeal I found my wife my only hope and consolation” (XIV).

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590 Franklin 90.
591 Franklin 90.
Likewise, after he is retrenched yet again, Tim, “thrown once more entirely on [his] own resources,” falls back on his family:

A young family had grown up around me with loving ties and bright associations, that promised comfort and support for my old age, while my cherished wife, ever my devoted companion, was still at my side to cheer me by the way and share my anxieties. We were all blessed with health and content, and whatever the vicissitudes of the outside world, no shadow darkened the inward brightness of our home. (XXVI)

This coping strategy has allowed Tim to get by, “to scramble through,” as he says at the outset in a narratorial waiver:

I have managed to scramble through life, with the usual “ups and downs”; but not without interest and enjoyment to myself, and, I trust, some measure of comfort and happiness to those belonging to me. I am satisfied with my lot. It has not been an exalted one; but I fancy it is better than being rich and miserable—which so often go together. (II)

The home life of the unsentimental Power is very different, as Tim sympathetically suggests: “It was very different with Fred. Power. He had no home, and although that result was largely due to his own misconduct [his neglect of his wife], I could not help feeling sincere pity for his forlorn condition” (XII).

How might Tim respond to the charge that he has been co-opted into the capitalist machine by working for the speculative capitalist Power and by adopting and advocating the ethos of sentimental domesticity by which such capitalists inveigle their victims? He might answer that he was just being sympathetic: he began as Power’s friend and empathises with him in his marital troubles and ill health. But Power uses his sympathy against him. Franklin rightly suggests that Tim’s “interpellation” shows that “there is no outside position,” that is to say, “[t]he text invites, even compels, the reader to acknowledge the deeply ambivalent position of ‘good’ men” like Tim. She continues: “it is not possible to see him as [sentimental] hero to [Power’s] antihero, due to his often self-contradictory position . . . and his ambivalent even complicit role” in his schemes. I would agree with the latter half of this judgment: Tim’s position as narrator-protagonist and critic is ambiguous—“ambivalent[,] even complicit,” but if we posit a split narrator, rather than a unitary

593 Franklin 91.
594 Franklin 90.
but conflicted one, he is less “self-contradictory” than he seems. Tim as constructor-narrator can get distance on his own “complicit role” because he self-consciously constructs his narrative in hindsight. Accordingly, he has one up on Power: he is able to make sense of Power’s life—but also of his own, including his co-option. Power cannot do likewise; he has no distance on his own life. And Tim might add that he is happy to submit to his fate: it is his fate to be unsuccessful, to shadow the successful man, Power, and tell his story, noting the ironies of his success—and of the success of the settlement. He is the heroic antihero (or the unheroic hero) of The Story.

The contrasting positions and paths through life of Tim and Power inform the geography of the narrative. If the shape of the narrative as a whole, in following the logic of the “life,” in particular, the life of the “representative settler,” mirrors the official historical narrative of the settlement, the form of the narrative as narrated is chiastic: the twin narratives of Power and Tim, as protagonist and narrator-protagonist, balance each other out. That is to say, Tim is materially unsuccessful, but personally “successful” (happy); Power is materially successful, but personally not. But the relative trajectories of their paths through life illustrate contrasting styles of mobility. Whereas Power is in “perpetual motion”—and at speed, Tim “loiter[s] pleasantly” (XXV). Power’s motto is “I can’t stand crawling. Life’s short; I must travel”; Tim’s is always “to enjoy the present hour” (V, XXIX). Like the settlement of Marvellous Melbourne, Power boosts himself, boasting about his own “supremacy”: “He was the type of the . . . self-made, pushing, successful man. In a fast race, he was fastest; amidst the ’cute, he was the ’cutest [sic] . . . And it was his boast that he could maintain this supremacy at all points” (X). What Tim then adds is apposite: “but perhaps he did not reckon at what cost”—he implies that the price is Power’s happiness. For his own part, he is happy to “scramble” (II).

It is the day-to-day life of Power that drives the narrative; Tim “keep[s him]self becomingly in the background” and watches Power’s progress, though with a sense of progressive disillusionment. That is to say, Power is the “active man”; Tim is the “thinker”—and, as Tim puts it, not a little ironically, “a race of thinkers would never have made Australia” (XXII). This distinction captures their different styles, as Power says when Tim suggests he write to someone, rather than visit them in person: “‘Write?’ yelled Fred. Power. ‘Write and spoil everything! Lose my only chance! . . . It is just like you to talk of writing. Much I should have done in the world by
scribbling [and] asking questions. Whenever there is anything to be done, I am on the spot’” (XXIII).

The ruling metaphor of the narrative is that of the lifeline: whether it be “straight” like Power’s (and Marvellous Melbourne’s) or “wavering” like Tim’s. The image is Schopenhauer’s, as we know. Chamier uses as the epigraph of Successful Man his description from The World as Will and Representation of “acquired character,” that is, of how we acquire or build a character or self over time more or less in accord with our real self (our “empirical character”), how we come to be who we were meant to be: “For as our physical path upon earth is always merely a line, not an extended surface, so in life, if we desire to grasp and possess one thing, we must renounce and leave innumerable others on the right hand and the left.” For Schopenhauer, then, the ideal life would describe “a straight line,” not “a wavering and uneven one.” Power exemplifies the straight line life; as Tim puts it, “His purpose was simple and direct. He knew it well, and never deviated from the straight path to gain the object” (XI). Tim describes this as his “monomania” (XXIII). Power closes out all else but business, concerning himself only with the means to his ill-defined end of “success”: “he has but one set purpose, which is to get on in the world,” and “cannot pause by the way to enquire whither he is going, or to ponder over the advantages of the end in view” (XXII).

But the straight line life is not a recipe for happiness for Chamier. He is more like Tim, unsuccessful in business but relatively successful in life. If Power’s narrative follows a “straight” line, Tim’s is “wavering,” as he “scrambles” through his “ups and downs.” His is the “crooked path” of the epigraph to chapter VII from Fletcher that heads my introduction: “The world’s a labyrinth . . . / No sooner have we measured . . . / One crooked path, in hope to gain our freedom, / But it betrays us to a new affliction.” Nonetheless, his story centres on Power’s; Power seems to him to be “the arbiter of [his] fate” (XV). He moves away from and back to Power several times, as figure 35 outlines. They are initially friends, but Power emigrates without him; he follows later; when he is down and out, Power offers him a job, which he ends up leaving; later, when he is down and out again, Power offers him another job; after Power has retired, Tim’s thoughts are returned to him when he reads his obituary. Nonetheless, it is Tim who constructs the narrative as a whole in hindsight,

595 Schopenhauer, World as Will and Idea 391-92 (sec. 55 [World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 226]).
which includes constructing that day-to-day life as a “life,” a life story that, at least in its externals, obeys the conventions of the life of the representative settler (II). Power never looks back.

![Diagram of trajectories of Power and Tim](Fig. 35. The relative trajectories of Power and Tim in *Successful Man*.)

Power and Tim are no less opposites in their attitude to each other: Tim sympathises with Power’s personal unhappiness; Power is antipathetic to Tim because he sees him as an un-smart man—and too happy at home:

He is not a bad sort . . . but not *smart* . . . . The fellow is too conceited and self-sufficient for me; he takes a life a great deal too easy. I like a man with more “go” in him. But what I really dislike about him is his disgusting selfishness. He is a perfect egotist, always talking about his own prospects . . . or blabbing about his spooney [foolishly sentimental] wife, who idolises him (the fool!); or boasting about his brats of boys. . . . (XV)

He dislikes Tim’s self-sufficiency—his “egotism”—and his sentimental domesticity, what Tim elsewhere calls his “domestic bliss.” Tim suggests, in his own defence, that he “always made it a rule in life to study [his] own happiness rather than other people’s opinion of it” (XII). He implies that his self-sufficiency manifests good “conscience,” that is, self-reflexivity or a lack of self-deception, not egotism (XVII). Tim suggests that, unlike Fred, he does not “look upon himself as a being apart from the ordinary run of mankind,” however critical he might be of settler society. He implies that his criticism arises from “sympathy with the outside world,” of which Power has none—he is all “suspicion” of others and “live[s] absolutely for self” (XXII).

In fact, Power is jealous of Tim’s apparently relatively settled nature, of the fact that he seems better able to come to terms with his fate. He would rather see it as him “tak[ing] life a great deal too easy” (XV). But life is not easy for Tim, although he does have distance on his own experience, a distance that will inform the narrative.
that he writes in hindsight. He is just happy for his “lifeline” to take its own shape, whereas Power is “monomania[cally]” fixated on the straight line life (XXIII). Power has no distance on his own life: “He revile[s] Fortune even for her favours, and proclaim[s] himself the most unfortunate of men” (XXII). Chamier frames their opposition as a difference over fate then: Power fights his fate; Tim submits to it.

3 Tim as unsettled or “[un]representative settler”

3.1 To settle things with fate: the providential aesthetic

For my part I always try, “on principle,” to impress myself with the conviction that everything has been for the best. It is a comfortable belief.

Providence . . . dispenses and regulates the . . . elements that go to make up our humble destinies . . . on some principle of compensation; for to whom much is given on the one side, much will generally be taken away on the other. Thus, in a moral sense, we are all more or less lop-sided. . . . Well might philosophers of all ages rail at the irony of fate which mars every gift in the giving.

—Tim on his “providential aesthetic” (II, XII)

Chamier’s sympathies lie with Tim. He implies that, despite life on the ground for Tim always being something of a scramble, he can get settled, insofar as an unsettled settler can, by telling his own story (as he himself does in his trilogy). He has Tim construct his narrative in Successful Man as an aesthetic solution to the problem of his own unsettlement. According to what I would call his “providential aesthetic” (after Thomas Vargish), life can only be made sense of in hindsight and when aestheticised or transformed into an object of art. This act of self-fashioning is grounded in the fantasy that the self can be preserved, at least retrospectively, through narrative—in the terms of Successful Man, that you can settle things with fate if you get your story

straight. It follows that if “Fortune takes no heed of the past,” Tim tries to (XXVIII). There are two aspects to his “providential aesthetic”:

a. a Schopenhauerian “transcendent[al] fatalism”—the principle that the “ups and downs” of life can be seen as “for the best” in hindsight (II), and

b. the “principle of compensation”—the principle that imbalances balance out in the end, that, where the “human machine” is concerned, “to whom much is given on the one side, much will be found taken away on the other” (XII).\footnote{Schopenhauer, “Transcendent Speculation” 204.}

As he constructs his narrative in hindsight, Tim as constructor-narrator makes use of this aesthetic as the structural principle of his narrative, in both the overall shape and chiastic form of the narrative.

To begin with the second principle: for Tim, fate seems to be dispensed with “singular perverseness” on what he calls the “principle of compensation.” This “irony of fate” entails that “we are all more or less lopsided.” Nonetheless, the imbalance balances out overall, in a kind of karmic theodicy; as he puts it, “to whom much is given on the one side, much will be found taken away on the other”—witness the relative success in business and personal life of Power and Tim. He continues:

Fortune’s favors [sic], in order to be of any account, must partake of this twofold character: the prize, together with the capability of enjoying it. . . . Yet fortune, with singular perverseness, loves to disarrange things so that the two rarely fall to the same individual. To the one she gives the faculty of enjoyment without the means, to another the means without the faculty.

The former describes Tim, the latter Power. Though Power is born fortunate, he fights fate. In return, he “suffer[s] from . . . ‘the spleen,’” as Tim puts it. He particularly envies others their “domestic bliss”—especially Tim (XII). In contrast, Tim submits to his fate. He is happy to allow his life to follow what he calls “the inexorable logic of fact” (XV). For him, this logic follows from a demonstrable fatalism in the world: a sense that “we are all creatures of circumstance, and easily affected by small things” and that the most significant events in our lives “c[o]me about by . . . those unforeseen occurrences which baffle the best intentions of man, and rule his fate” (VII, I). Interestingly, several such significant events in the novel involve a woman:
among others, Power’s decision to emigrate, then to marry—and divorce, and Tim’s
decision to marry (I). Though Chamier would have known that Fortune was
conventionally represented as a woman, it seems he liked to think of women—and
presumably “womanly” men of feeling like Tim—as agents of fate or having some
kind of empathy with its workings.

Likewise, Tim suggests that his story is arranged in accordance with the
workings of fate, or with what for him is the same thing, namely “fact”: “as a matter
of fact, in real life, these things [significant events] come about by fate and frailty, and
are not regulated by any regard to opportunity, and this, my story, is a study from real
life.” To the reader who might be “scandalised” that his story thus has a “pessimistic”
cast, he pleads objectivity, which for him is a species of fatalism: “[I] am simply an
innocent chronicler of events that have come under my observation. I am not writing
for ‘a purpose,’ nor do I intend to ‘point a moral’; I shall merely give you the plain
facts, and you must do the moralising yourself.” Accordingly, his story is not
“delightful fiction,” in which “things are arranged quite differently,” that is,
conventionally and with “a halo of romance”; it is “hard, real, unromantic fact”
(XVI). For Tim, the story of Power’s success is just such a fiction—an Australian
Romance, indeed—though naturally most settlers see it as fact:

The world . . . made up a character for him in keeping with his
distinguished [“successful”] position. Quite a halo of romance was
thrown over his mysterious beginnings, and wonderful stories were
related about hi[m] . . . . Of course the whole of these interesting
reports were either grossly exaggerated, or, more commonly still, pure
fabrications, but that circumstance rendered them all the more
acceptable to the multitude. (XXII)

Tim says that he prefers to stick to the facts. For him, it is a lawyer’s maxim; he
declares, “I neither advise or approve, and I judge no one” (XIII). But he says he does
the same as narrator: “it is far from my intention to ‘run down’ anything. I am not
setting myself up either as a judge or as a critic; yet a man must speak of persons and
things as he finds them, otherwise his ‘impressions’ will not be worth the paper they
are written on” (V).

Needless to say, Tim is being disingenuous: his narrative is a fiction, arranged
according to his providential aesthetic. The “principle of compensation” makes itself
felt in the chiastic form of the narrative, whereby the twin narratives (and the fates) of
Tim and Power balance each other out. Tim’s “comedown,” “scramble through” life and “happily ever after” end mirror in inverted form—this is the chiasmus—Power’s material rise, outward success (but “inward” failure) and personal fall. Tim ends up materially unsuccessful, but personally “successful” (or happy), Power materially successful, but personally not.

Power: material rise outward success, inward failure personal fall

Tim: “comedown” “scamb[ing] through” “liv[ing] happily ever after”

Fig. 36. The chiastic form of the narrative of Successful Man.

This is a relatively unproblematic formal construct. The balancing out of the two narratives reveals Chamier’s predilection for the idea of equanimity in a writerly guise, but it can also be read as a characteristically fatalistic move on his part, in that it implies a moral equivalency between the positions of the hero (Power) and the antihero (Tim): whatever their relative status according to the value system of the settlement, neither is “better” in the scheme of things.

For Chamier, or rather, Tim, to arrange his narrative according to his first principle—that the “ups and downs” of life can be seen as “for the best” in hindsight—is more problematic. It smacks of the teleological or “just so” quality of the narrative of Power as the “example of a SUCCESSFUL MAN”—and that of Marvellous Melbourne with its self-justificatory presentism (XXX). To recall Tim’s waiver in chapter V: there he ironically alludes to the teleological historical narrative of the settlement to distance himself and his “progress[ive]” contemporaries from the “demoralised” times he describes. As he says, “all this refers to a remote past; for twenty-five years—why, as the world travels now, it’s ancient history!” so “we can
afford to forgive much, for the splendid results obtained—the end must be seen as having justified the means” (V). In this species of hindsight narrative, the status quo is read back to justify the past in the form of a linear narrative closing on the present. The problem is not just that this presentism might signal the co-option of Tim’s critique of settler society in Marvellous Melbourne, but that Tim’s own narrative might be self-justificatory, that it might itself be an enabling narrative of settlement.

Firstly, to examine the teleological logic of such narratives, if we assume, after Fredric Jameson, that “the production of aesthetic or narrative form” is “an ideological act,” though such settler narratives were then and are for us in hindsight socially descriptive, they are also socially constructive. They construct a fictional world that bears a certain ideological—I would say geopolitical—relation to the “real” world. Or rather, these narratives are socially performative. But I would add, as Bodenheimer argues in *The Politics of Story*, that “it is in the shape and movement of narrative rather than in its proclaimed social ideology that we may find the ‘politics’ of a novel in its deepest, most interesting, most problematical expression.” In other words, narrative can be socially performative through its form. Settler narratives can be seen to formally embody the process of settlement; in this way, they can solve the problem of the well-foundedness of the settlement by justifying it aesthetically—or to use the language of sentiment, they can make it feel right. The teleological logic of the “straight line” narrative of Marvellous Melbourne with its drive to closure embodies the closed world of the settlement, in which all worldviews and “ethical” possibilities other than speculative capitalism and its co-opted other, sentimental domesticity, are closed out. The form of the narrative embodies its geopolitical ends: it shams closure to justify the settlement aesthetically. But to straighten out the narrative in this way requires that the sort of epistemic “break” Stephen Turner sees as often characteristic of settler histories be written into the narrative. Here the narrator claims in a waiver that things have changed since the “demoralised” times he describes—though the events took place only twenty-five years before, they are “ancient history” (V).

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Chamier would have been sensitive to this kind of teleological rhetoric, if not from his reading of Hegel or Spencer and the Social Darwinists, then from Carlyle, who argues in his essay “On History” that though the action a historical narrative describes might be “solid” or three-dimensional, “[n]arrative is, by its nature, of only one dimension; only travels forward toward one, or toward successive points: Narrative is linear.” Carlyle goes on to argue that though this linearity might seem limiting, it serves a cognitive function: it enables the individual to “unite himself in clear conscious relation, as in dim unconscious relation he is already united, with the whole Future and the whole Past.” In the context of Chamier’s narrative (his trilogy), I would add the emphasis: “with [his] whole Future and . . . Past.” This idea that you might be able to fashion for yourself a personal history accords with Schopenhauer’s idea of “transcendent fatalism” that governs Chamier’s trilogy, that is, “the conviction that the course of an individual’s life, however confused it appears to be, is a complete whole, in harmony with itself and having a definite tendency and didactic meaning, as profoundly conceived as is the finest epic”—or sequence of novels, as in Chamier’s case.

What of Tim’s narrative then? Roland Barthes’s structural model of narrative can help explain the teleology of *The Story of the Successful Man*. The way Barthes puts it, “The ‘reality’ of a [narrative] lies not in the natural sequence of the actions composing it but in the logic there exposed, risked and satisfied,” that is to say, narrative is performative and emancipatory, not mimetic, and offers us in its logical openness “the model of a process of becoming.” To read off the logic of the narrative of *Successful Man*, though, we have to invert some of Barthes’s valuations, which is just to say settler narratives are less open and more “geopoliticised” than Barthes’s model suggests.

Tim as constructor-narrator presents us with the performance of a “life.” The arc of Power’s life rounds out in his unhappy death but is framed as rigorously rectilinear: a straight line life. It seems the very model of teleology. The question is: how is this narrative different from that of Marvellous Melbourne or the life of the representative settler that serves as an allegory for the “life” of the settlement of

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602 Schopenhauer, “Transcendent Speculation” 204.
Marvellous Melbourne? The narrative of Marvellous Melbourne is not emancipatory, at least not in quite the sense Barthes intends; it is itself “demoralised”: the geopolitical raison d’être of its aesthetic justification is to displace moral responsibility, to enable settlement (V). To adapt Barthes, it aims to “naturalize” or “disinaugurate” the narrative of the settlement in an effort—as befits the settlement of Melbourne, which arose “as if by magic”—“to conjure away the coding of the narrative situation” (II). Here morally ambiguous speculative practice, not to mention the question of the displacement of the first settlers of the place that goes unasked, is rewritten as settlement by manifest destiny. The narrative becomes an act of natural settlement—there is perhaps nothing more natural than a life, after all. Or to put it another way, the narrative offers us the settlement as a fait accompli: settler being, not “becoming,” as Barthes has it. The same is also true of the life of Power the representative settler as amoral speculative capitalist: it seems altogether natural, in the settlement of Marvellous Melbourne, that he would be a favoured “child of fate” (XIII). Presumably this is why Chamier considered the story “essentially Australian.”

Both these narratives seem all-too-settled: they enable the ends of the settlement to be seen to justify the means. The first ends up with Marvellous Melbourne having “recovered [its] equilibrium and settled down to deliberate business,” the second with the official obituary of Power as “a shining example of a SUCCESSFUL MAN,” his narrative “a worthy illustration of the reward attending on energy and enterprise” (II, XXX).

3.2 The story within The Story

What then of Tim’s own story, The Story of a Successful Man? Is it just another teleological narrative, an enabling narrative of settlement, all-too-settled like those other narratives? The answer turns on the novel’s psychodrama of positionality, the story within The Story. The range of possible positions in this psychodrama are schematised in table 2.

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604 Barthes 116.
605 Hardy 213.
606 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
### Table 2
The Psychodrama of Positionality in *Successful Man*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chamier: the implied author</th>
<th>Tim as constructor-narrator (outside)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>→ [4] the autoethnographic narrative of the unsettled settler</td>
<td>a successful narrator and “essentially Australian”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣</td>
<td>→ [3] an enabling narrative of aesthetic settlement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power: the Successful Man</th>
<th>Tim as narrator-protagonist (inside)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a representative man, stereotypically Australian</td>
<td>a typical Victorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethos: unsentimental meritocracy</td>
<td>ethos: sentimental domesticity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two positional possibilities depend on the *inside* narrative of Tim as narrator-protagonist. First of all, Tim’s critique of the speculative capitalist ethos of the settlement could be read as straightforward Victorian moralism. Such a narrative would evince the negative attitude of Christianity to wealth, taken to extremes in Carlyle’s “nexus” of “cash payment” and secularised by Marx: what Niall Ferguson has called the notions of “a fundamental conflict between morality and Mammon” and of capitalism as “a Faustian pact” that underlie the Victorian critique of capitalism.607 The story conventionally ends with a revolutionary “apocalypse.”608

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608 Niall Ferguson 1.
deserves and dying a broken man. It is a straightforwardly providential end. Likewise, Tim’s criticism of the “devilish” amorality of speculative capitalism—the fact that for Power the “moral, social, or political aspects” of settlement were beside the point—and of the magical or “bubbly” nature of suburban settlement fits with this narrative (XI). But however insightful and persuasive the critique, this is straightforward “bourgeois apocalypticism,” to use Eric Hobsbawm’s phrase. And, putting aside Tim’s co-option by Power, there is the problem of Tim’s historical sleight-of-hand. The question becomes: what are we to do with the constructor-narrator? A real “apocalypse” or authoritative moral judgement is forestalled by the break in history that enables Tim in hindsight to distance himself and his now seemingly more moral society from “the [amoral] good old times” of speculative capitalism (V).

No doubt, despite these ambiguities, there would have been much of contemporary polemical appeal in this narrative of moral judgement. An alternative would be to posit the novel as morally positivist or closed, like the world of Marvellous Melbourne perhaps. It is easy at our temporal remove to undervalue the totalising nature of the Victorian value system. Gertrude Himmelfarb argues in The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Morals that it could encompass both high capitalism—here amoral speculative capitalism—and sentimental moralism, thereby authorising critique without necessarily neutralising or “de-moralizing” it. It follows that, as J. Hillis Miller has suggested of narrative more generally, the social function of a narrative like Successful Man is to be “safely” experimental—to provide a place where ideology can be worked out, to both “reinforce the dominant culture and put it in question.” Tim’s story, despite its critique, proves to be an enabling narrative of meritocracy: Power gets what he deserves (according to Tim), but is nonetheless successful to the last, in business at least (according to the speculative capitalist ethos of Marvellous Melbourne). But this moral balance seems a sham of fate. Read thus, Successful Man exemplifies the way the settlement of Marvellous Melbourne deals with the problem of unsettling forces within, that is to say, it is both unsettling and settling: Tim critiques the enabling narrative of meritocracy, The Story of [the] Successful Man, as mere “romance,” yet

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because he and his narrative are co-opted—it is he who tells Power’s success story, after all—his narrative proves to be an enabling narrative of meritocracy. The critique is unsettling; the narrative is settling.

But if we do not want to read Successful Man as cosily Victorian in its moralism or morally positivist, that is, if we want to read Tim as having real critical distance on the world of Marvellous Melbourne and the narrative as being somehow “essentially Australian,” as Chamier suggests, we have to go beyond the narrative of Tim as narrator-protagonist and take account of the work of Tim as constructor-narrator. The third positional possibility, then, is that Tim as constructor-narrator justifies his narrative—and his own life—aesthetically. I have argued that Tim plays two narratorial roles in the story: as narrator-protagonist telling the story from the inside as it happens and as constructor-narrator telling the story from the outside in hindsight. In keeping with this outside-inside position, Chamier has Tim adapt himself to settler society in Marvellous Melbourne by means of a double strategy, in part “ethical” and in part aesthetic:

a. Tim’s ethos of sentimental domesticity enables him to get by in day-to-day life—and gives him critical distance on the life of Power, the unsentimental man, and the settlement of Marvellous Melbourne he represents; and

b. his self-reflexive construction of his own narrative in hindsight gives him “aesthetic distance” on his life.

Thus his narrative serves as an aesthetic solution to the problem of his own unsettlement—and it goes to show that for Chamier life can only be made sense of in hindsight—and, by implication, when aestheticised or transformed into an object of art.

But surely this is a problematic solution, exemplifying the self-justificatory quality of settler narrative? It implies that Chamier’s suggestion that Successful Man is “essentially Australian” is true not only of the narratives of Power and Marvellous Melbourne, but also of Tim’s narrative. Read this way, his story is an enabling narrative of aesthetic settlement—or to put it differently, it is itself an aesthetic solution to the problem of the well-foundedness of the settlement. And Tim is co-opted into the self-justificatory history of the settlement as constructor-narrator, just  

612 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
as he was co-opted into the capitalist machine as narrator-protagonist, hence his narratorial waiver: “As one of the ‘old hands,’ I can look back with complacency on the errors and follies—may I not include a few little vices—of our turbulent youth, and congratulate ourselves on the remarkable progress made since the early days. I am speaking as an Australian” (V). He would represent the settler as successful narrator.

But if the narrative is all-too-settled, “complacent” even, the ironic or self-reflexive nature of Tim’s narration saves it. Here, for example, the mocking tone (self-mocking perhaps), the hint of special pleading, the loaded words “complacency” and “congratulate ourselves,” and the characteristic use of scare-quotes in the phrase “old hands” imply an ironic distance on the part of the constructor-narrator on his narrative. Of course, the passage can be read straight; in that case, it can only be read as ironic if it is put into the context of the other novels of Chamier’s trilogy, that is, if we assume the irony is Chamier’s (or the implied author’s), rather than Tim’s. The tone does resemble that of Raleigh’s ironic criticism of Canterbury settlers’ manic self-congratulation in *Philosopher Dick*:

“Look at me,” is the everlasting refrain; “a few years ago I was a barren waste—now see!” And you are supposed to fall down and worship at the shrine of Modern Progress. The people live in state of mutual admiration at their own superhuman efforts. . . . [T]hey have done wonders, and, what is better still, they have made them pay. (*PD* 440)

The difference here is that Tim does not exclude himself from his critique. He is, as it were, not one of Raleigh’s “unconscious blind”; he is not blind to his own self-deception, as Raleigh once was (*SSS* 81). In keeping with the theme of resocialisation that drives the sentimental education of Chamier’s heroes, Tim has learnt to adapt himself to settler society, in part by means of the irony—what he calls his “conscience,” his eye for self-deception in others and himself—that allows him to keep his distance on goings-on there (XVII). If this instinct failed him at times in his own life as he lived it (as narrator-protagonist), it gives ironic force to the narrative he constructs in hindsight (as narrator-constructor). Whereas the retrospective narrative of Marvellous Melbourne disavows its gesture of aesthetic settlement, Tim does not deceive himself as to the nature of his story.

It could be said that the device of using a narrator-constructor to tell *The Story* puts paid to our natural desire to speculate about the position of the author or implied
author in the novel by repressing that position. The self-sufficient narratorial apparatus of the split narrative enables the author to “dematerialise,” to distance himself from the constructor-narrator’s position. This move would enable Chamier to displace his authorial responsibility—his “guilt” as a settler author, though you can hardly imagine Chamier as “Epicurean” being prey to such a thing—onto the constructor-narrator, to leave the author’s position unsettled or open and avoid the unsettling upshot of the all-too-settled narrative to which he put his name. Then again, the presence of irony in the constructor-narrator’s narrative, whether we take it to voice the position of the constructor-narrator or the implied author, leaves open the possibility—the fourth and likeliest positional possibility—that Chamier identifies himself with the constructor-narrator. Putting aside the fact that Tim could well be Chamier himself, the position of the constructor-narrator vis-à-vis his narrative, especially his own narrative, mirrors that of Chamier vis-à-vis his own life as represented in his trilogy. That is to say, in the autoethnographical trilogy that serves as a “back story” to Successful Man, Chamier plays constructor-narrator in the story of his life. We end up with a double split narrative. And like Tim, Chamier is not self-deceived as to the nature of his own narrative: it is a settler narrative, but it is the ironic narrative of an unsettled settler.

*Coda*

The novel ends with Tim revisiting the Lake of Geneva with his wife and family, “the space of half a lifetime” since visiting in his youth, and sitting down on the shore of the lake to reflect on the course of his life and his position. As Tim’s life has come full circle back to Europe, so Chamier’s life closed with a visit to Europe with his family in 1912 (without his wife, who had lately died), after which he stayed on in London. We can picture Chamier as he was writing the novel imagining what his own feelings might be on returning to Europe. As Tim sees it, the scenery has not changed, “for Nature does not change,” but he has: “The outward enchantment was still there; it was my own insignificant self, the centre of all these emotions, that had altered” (XXX). It is from this mature position that Chamier conceives Tim as having written his *Story*, contemplating his life and the alterations in “[his] own insignificant self” in hindsight. We can take Tim’s final reflection to mirror Chamier’s feeling of closure on having brought his own story full circle:
my life, notwithstanding my want of success, had not been an unhappy one, and looking back upon it was no melancholy retrospect. . . . I was, in many respects, a more contented being than I had been in my anxious and lonely youth; much happier in my loving surroundings, more trusting in faith, more resigned to the inevitable, and wiser in my views of life. So that the result of my meditations, in the light of that sublime panorama before my eyes, was one of serenity of mind and placid resignation. (XXX)

Like Chamier’s trilogy, this is “no melancholy retrospect”—it fits with the governing principle of the manifesto of the Unsuccessful Man: “I always try, ‘on principle,’ to impress myself with the conviction that everything has been for the best” (II).

In a sense, the rest of Chamier’s story—the time he spent in Sydney after completing the novels (1895-1908), the time he spent in China with his wife and after her death (1908-1912), and the time he spent in limbo in London until his death (1912-1915)—were footnotes to the life recorded in the trilogy. He filled the rest of his life with family, the occasional philosophical essay, and painting. Having brought his trilogy to a close, he was done with novels.
George’s had hardly been the “uneventful career” Tim describes in Successful Man (XII), but the next decade or so he would spend in Adelaide would be his most productive professionally as he secured his independence by establishing himself in private practice. According to Derek Whitelock, the eighteen-seventies was “one of [Adelaide’s] most prosperous decades,” an era of “expansionism,” and so, though it would have seemed a lot smaller and less Bohemian and cosmopolitan to George, it was a good time and place for him to strike out on his own.613 South Australia as a whole was only about a quarter as populous as Victoria (the population of Adelaide was only about 40,000), but it was growing fast.614 In some ways, it was more socially progressive or “reformist”: among other “firsts,” it was the first state in Australia to recognise trade unions (in 1876); its capital Adelaide was the first Australian city to have gas-lighting (from 1869) and a tram system (constructed in the eighteen-seventies and -eighties); and it was the first state to enforce compulsory school attendance (from 1878) and to have a water-borne sewerage system (from 1881).615 George would engineer many of Adelaide’s public works. Hand in hand with social reformism, though, went a moral tone of what Douglas Pike has called “nobly depressing rectitude,” characteristic of the British Dissenters who were its founding fathers.616 Derek Whitelock describes this civic ethos:

Implicit in this [amalgam] were temperance, a stress on outward pietism, a hostility to “immorality,” and a yearning for . . . respectability. The city was founded specifically to be different from other Australian cities. There were to be no convicts, no military, no paupers, no rum currency. . . . there was to be good planning, good government and, above all, religion.617

If this sounds like what George had left behind in Canterbury (and unlike the conventional wisdom about other Australian colonies), it is no accident, given that

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615 Whitelock 111, 113.
617 Whitelock 209.
both colonies were exercises in Wakefieldian “systematic colonisation” and thought of themselves as unique “model establishment[s] . . . for respectable labour,” as Chamier wrote of Canterbury (SSS GR 106).618 Anthony Trollope made this comparison in his Australia and New Zealand (1873): “South Australia has a peculiar history of its own, differing very much from the other Australian colonies, though similar in some degree to that of New Zealand, which was founded after South Australia, and with aspirations of the same nature.”619 Nonetheless, it suited George for now: he needed to get some engineering work under his belt and would have enjoyed casting a wry eye on the idiosyncrasies of what Derek Whitelock calls this “most Trollopean of cities.”620 Certainly this discourse of respectability and religiosity does not seem in keeping with his views, but it may well have suited his wife, who was of good Church of England stock and herself religious.

On 7 September 1878, George and Dolly were married in North Adelaide at Christ Church, on Montefiore Hill near Light’s Lookout overlooking the city, by Charles Marryat, nephew of the famous naval novelist Frederick Marryat (1792-1848), Archdeacon and later Dean of Adelaide.621 He was thirty-six and she was probably about thirty-seven.622 It seems George had put aside his earlier confirmed bachelorhood—the view of Emerson that “marriage [was] an open question” that Raleigh advocates and is quoted in Successful Man.623 It must be noted that, given that George and Dolly’s first child was born only six months later in March 1879, Dolly must have been about three months pregnant at the time of the marriage. Whether they had cleverly planned the pregnancy or married because she was pregnant, they had been waiting to get married for seven years and were to live together apparently devotedly for the rest of their lives. It says something about their “affinity” that, given the prejudices of the time, George was willing to marry an older woman deserted by her husband and take on her child by the previous marriage.

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618 Edward Gibbon Wakefield, A View of the Art of Colonization in Present Reference to the British Empire in Letters between a Statesman and a Colonist (London: John W. Parker, 1849) 7.
619 Trollope, Australia and New Zealand 153.
620 Whitelock 108; see Trollope, Australia and New Zealand 183.
622 Cobiac (116/927); their ages were given incorrectly on their marriage certificate as thirty-five and thirty-two respectively.
Whether or not George was just being pragmatic, prepared to have his choices conditioned by “fate” and make the best of things, he made sense of his choice in sentimental terms. For him, it seems, she confirmed (or would confirm) his sentimental faith in conjugality: that “[t]o love with a true unwavering faith is, I think, the greatest blessing that God can confer on any man,” as Tim suggests in *Successful Man* (XII). And she fulfilled the promise his stand-in Raleigh had made at the end of *Philosopher Dick* in answer to Alice Seymour’s verse from Cervantes:

> “True love can never change,
> And only he,
> Will prosperous be,
> Who firm and true remains,
> Nor ever seeks to range.”

> “The sentiment is most appropriate, and I will take it to heart,”
> remarked Raleigh. . . . (565)

For him, theirs would be a “marriage of true minds,” or two minds quite different but truly complementary, springing from what Tim calls a “spiritual sympathy” (*SSM* XII).

Dolly was George’s intellectual and “spiritual” lodestar: like him, she had a critical eye for the ironies of outward appearances—and was not afraid to speak her mind about his “philosophising” and grand schemes, but she also provided him a point of stability in life. The description of Alice in *Siren* fits Dolly: unlike her husband, she “was not by any means a versatile or erratic being. Her nature was rather one of gentle simplicity and engaging frankness,” in that she “showed considerable indifference to . . . prudish conventionalities, and . . . openly expressed her contempt for mere outward appearances” (*SSS* 236). And, as Alice does for Raleigh, she pushed his self-centred ideal of equanimity toward a more pragmatic species of sentimentality, in which an outwardly conventional domesticity, a veneration of heart and home—his version of what Graeme Davison in *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* calls “the sentimental cult of Home”—would provide his moral centre.624 Their relationship inspired and seems to have lived up to Chamier’s ideal of “woman” as sentimental educator—as confidante (as Alice Seymour is for Raleigh) and domestic helpmate (as Tim’s wife is for him)—and as the sentimental, even

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624 Davison, *Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* 137.
intellectual equal of her husband, rather than the conventional Victorian “angel in the house.”

Dolly was the sort of woman who might fit this bill: “a strong-minded woman, neither reserved nor reticent,” as Frances Warner has it. She was an educated woman (a teacher), strong-minded and by no means of a mind with him in everything. In a portrait of her a little later in life, we see an open face, a half smile and an apparent practicality, evident in a lack of make-up or fussiness in her hair and dress.

Fig. 37. Emily (Dolly) Chamier in middle age. Jenny Chamier Grove Collection, Kew, Surrey. (Reproduced by permission of Jenny Chamier Grove.)

Her demeanour mirrors that of George in the portrait of him before his departure from Melbourne, but without the wry twist of the mouth. Both look self-assured, but while George seems outwardly almost too confident, Dolly appears straightforwardly generous.

With George now more settled in heart and home, he got to work securing his financial independence. He set up a private practice in the city, with which he would persevere for the next seven years. He always worked on contract to private companies on public works, never directly for the government—though, that said,

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626 Frances Warner 2.
627 “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 695; “Public Works Inquiry Commission” 544.
virtually all the public works carried out in Australia at this time were built by private companies under contract to the state governments or city corporations. He would mostly avoid the obligations of a partnership and grandstanding projects, content to build up his practice steadily. Early on, he had rooms at Stow Manse Chambers in Flinders Street North, between King William and Freeman Streets.629

He called himself a “Consultant Engineer,” whose job, as he saw it, was to serve as a mediator between those who commissioned engineering works and those who carried them out.630 In 1897, he summarised his work in Adelaide, much of which was routine, though it ranged broadly:

I was the engineer in charge for the construction of the Torrens dam, the Port Adelaide dock, the Grange railway, and several lines of tramway. I also designed and carried out a number of smaller works (hydraulic and other works) in various parts of South Australia. I also

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acted as consulting engineer for several large firms of contractors who were carrying out big railway contracts.  

George worked tirelessly through the eighties, not without professional and personal misfortunes, the work punctuated by the births of his three children. No doubt he hoped to work himself into a position to write; for Chamier, the “Epicurean,” money was never an end in itself, as Tim suggests in Successful Man:

[M]oney possesses no intrinsic virtue of its own, . . . it is essentially ‘dross,’ and . . . its value can only be reckoned by the amount of enjoyment it is capable of affording its possessor. A truth so trite, so

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obvious, so commonplace as to be apparent to the meanest understanding, and yet a truth so subtle, so pregnant with wisdom, that to take it in, and inwardly digest it, is one of the highest attainments of true philosophy. (SSM XXII)

Over time, he came to the conclusion that you can have money or happiness, but not both, that good fortune in business and life are mutually exclusive, or rather, are dispensed by “Fate” in accordance with the “principle of compensation,” whereby “to whom much is given on the one side, much will be found taken away on the other” (SSM XII). He, like Tim, his narrator in Successful Man, was fortunate in life but not in business, but he managed to work himself into a comfortable enough position that he could devote time to completing the trilogy of novels that for him gave shape to and made sense of his life in the Australasian colonies (SSM XXVIII).

George’s work over his first couple of years of private practice was typical. In January 1879, George got his first job in Adelaide—as Consulting Engineer on construction of the new dock at Port Adelaide.632

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He also began work on the Port Augusta Jetty and Bridge. He had designed the “1500 ft long combined bridge and jetty . . . with a central opening iron-span supported on timber piles, with causeways at both ends which act as wharves” and got the job supervising its construction. Though these two substantial projects took up most of his time, that year he also consulted on two local sewerage schemes. He put forward a plan for drainage works at Glenelg, a seaside suburb of Adelaide, which he put to a public meeting early in 1881—it was the custom in smaller boroughs to decide on public works by vote, so engineers had to sell their projects face-to-face with ratepayers. George failed to convince the locals; it was not built until twenty-one years later.

In September, he sat on the first of his many government commissions of inquiry, as a member of the Commission on the Sewage Farm Site to investigate sites for the disposal on land of Adelaide’s sewage, a much bigger undertaking. As he later testified, “I was generally asked to give evidence when an inquiry was in progress.” The sewage farm opened in 1881 at Freshwater Springs (now Regency Park), under the management of an “intimate friend” of George’s, Oswald Brown. George had chosen the site “with a view to agricultural production,” in other words, with a view to restoring it to “a healthy condition” and turning it into a self-sufficient farm, recycling the sewage as fertiliser for its vegetables and pasture. This Brown did. Local farmers protested against the practice, according to George because they objected to the farm being “turned to account”—read: competing with them—and its produce causing disease (though this was disproved). The farm would run there until 1966. To cap a big year, on 2 December 1879 George was made an Associate

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634 _South Australian Register_ 23 June 1879: 4.
636 “Royal Commission on Sewage Farm Site; Report, together with Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence, and Appendix,” _PP SA_ 174 (1879): 6-29; “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 696.
637 “Public Works Inquiry Commission” 549.
638 “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 696.
639 “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 700; “Report of Commission on Sewage Farm Site” 28.
640 “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 698.
Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers in London.\textsuperscript{641} Early the next year, he won a competition for a design for watering the streets of Port Adelaide for which he received twenty pounds.\textsuperscript{642} Then on 15 April 1880, he gave evidence to the Public Works Commission on the bridge for the Port Dock and on the appropriate gauge for the Great Northern Railway, on both of which projects he had worked or would work.\textsuperscript{643}

Within a couple of years, then, he had built up a considerable practice. In the meantime, George’s personal life had been full of changes: his and Dolly’s first child, Emily (usually called Daisy to differentiate her from her mother and grandmother), was born on 8 March 1879 and his second, George junior, in July of the following year; he also suffered an accident that apparently incapacitated him for a significant period on 21 September 1880. Daisy Chamier (1879-1968) was born at North Adelaide, where George and Dolly had been living since their marriage.\textsuperscript{644} George was thirty-six and Dolly thirty-seven—old by the standards of the time to have their first child, but similar ages as George’s parents were at his birth. Most likely, they had tried to wait until they could legally get married to have children. They doted on Daisy—especially George. Like her father, she would be educated at home by governesses, a fact that she always resented, as her daughter Frances recounts: “It was always [Daisy’s] regret that she never went to school. She regarded this as the greatest deprivation a girl could possibly suffer and she had always admired learned women who had received what she called a ‘real’ education.”\textsuperscript{645} And hers would be quite a sheltered childhood; Frances again: “Life was very quiet for her. There were few distractions. A travelling circus once a year. . . . Home entertainments, with music and singing or reading aloud took the place of all the activities that children enjoy in our generation.”\textsuperscript{646}

That Daisy had a talent for music would be discovered at a young age when a piano teacher visiting to teach her stepbrother heard her playing and suggested she take lessons. Later “she was encouraged to give up more and more of her time to the

\textsuperscript{641} “Elections,” MPICE 59 (1879): 81; Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain), Charter, Supplemental Charters, By-Laws, and List of Members of the Institution of Civil Engineers (London: Institution of Civil Engineers, 1881) 2.
\textsuperscript{642} E. and R. Jensen 654.
\textsuperscript{643} “Progress Report of Commission [on] Public Works” (149-55), including Appendix YY (22 April 1880) xlvi; see “Public Works Inquiry Commission” 549.
\textsuperscript{644} Cobiac (215/324).
\textsuperscript{645} Frances Warner 6.
\textsuperscript{646} Frances Warner 7.
piano”—she never had to help the maids with housework and did not learn to cook.647 George may have been living vicariously in encouraging her to devote herself to music-making, as he would do with his son Charles. He thought, following Schopenhauer, that music was the highest artform, as he later suggested to his friend Grainger: “A man to be happy must have a hobby—Mine is painting, which is inferior to music, yet a blessing” (Letter to Grainger 3).648 But he had only ever been a proficient amateur, though he does suggest in Philosopher Dick that his alter-ego Raleigh “had once been offered the position of flutist in the orchestra of a perambulating theatrical company” (91). Daisy really wanted to study: in 1895, when she was sixteen, she would insist on taking the matriculation exam to go to the University of Sydney, learning enough Latin in six months to get in. But she kept up her music, winning a senior medal for keyboard performance from the Sydney College of Music, a private conservatory.649 In what must have indeed been “an agonizing decision” for George and Dolly, given the closeness of the family, it was decided that Daisy would be sent to further her musical education in Europe. At just eighteen, she was to be sent off—as her father had been—to the other end of the earth. For about five years, from 1897 to about 1901, she studied at Hoch’s Conservatorium in Frankfurt-am-Main with her tutor Lazzaro Uzielli, a pupil of Clara Schumann.650 The Conservatorium spawned the influential Frankfurt Group, which included among others Cyril Scott, Roger Quilter and Percy Grainger, son of George’s friend Jack Grainger.651 She stayed with George’s tutor from Paris, “Dr Fritz,” now doctor to the Rothschilds, and his wife and their housekeeper Babette. They were childless and “treated [Daisy] as an adopted daughter.”652 She attended the opera frequently, often sitting in Baron Rothschild’s box, and played for him and his wife frequently at their home; she holidayed in Switzerland and visited the Festspielhaus at Bayreuth to attend Wagner’s operas with them (later she would lecture on Wagner to audiences in

647 Frances Warner 8.
648 Schopenhauer, World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 257-66 (sec. 52).
649 Frances Warner 6.
650 Frances Warner 9; “Miss Daisy E. Chamier’s Concert,” review, Sydney Morning Herald 19 Oct. 1901: 12; Heinrich Hanau’s festshrift, Dr. Hoch’s Conservatorium zu Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt: Druck von Adelmann, 1903) 86.
651 Peter Cahn, Das Hoch-sche Konservatorium in Frankfurt am Main (1878-1978) (Frankfurt am Main: Kramer, 1979).
652 Frances Warner 20.
England). At her final examinations, she took first place among the piano students.

In 1901, Daisy returned to Australia to work as a concert pianist and composer. That year she played her own concert, including three of her own pieces, and was invited to play with the Sydney Symphony as a guest artist. In January of the following year, she organised a series of concerts for herself, billed as “Miss Daisy E. Chamier, the Australian Pianist and Composer,” and her brother Charles at Hobart. At these concerts, she met her future husband, Frank Grove (1864-c.1945), an Englishman born in Wales who had been working as Engineer-in-Charge on the Great Western Railway in Tasmania. He followed her back to Sydney, met Daisy’s parents and proposed to her straightaway. He was fifteen years older than Daisy and an experienced civil engineer who had begun in a workshop at fifteen and worked his way up, travelling widely on engineering projects—from England to Brazil, to India, Assam and Australia. Frances Warner suggests that Frank really took to the family, especially George:

He had not known their like before. George Chamier’s authorship, cultured background, his wide reading and his interest in painting and his work in water colour interested Frank enormously. He became attached to the whole family with a lasting affection. Frank’s upbringing had been very different from that of his father-in-law. He knew little of the continent of Europe and spoke no foreign language.

Frank was a straightforward practical man, almost military in appearance and a “sportsman,” but he was also “very easily moved and emotionally responsive” and a good singer, qualities which would have endeared him to Daisy and her parents.

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654 “Miss Daisy E. Chamier’s Concert.”
655 Chamier Grove, Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 2.
656 “Miss Daisy E. Chamier’s Concert”; Chamier Grove, Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 1. Chamier Grove suggests that the sheet music for two piano solos and three songs for piano and voice by Daisy Chamier was published in Australia (Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 2).
658 Frances Warner 26.
659 Frances Warner 28.
George and he had much in common as engineers and got on well. Frank and Daisy married in Sydney on 26 April 1902 and left as soon as Frank’s job in Tasmania was finished to stay with his family in Newport, South Wales. Their first child, David Chamier Grove, was born at Tenby in Wales early in 1903. Soon after, they moved to live at Kensington in London, where Daisy’s interest shifted to the study of theosophy. That she should take it up is not surprising given the education George had given her in Eastern religion, particularly through Schopenhauer’s syncretic philosophy, which she often quotes in her writing. She would study with Annie Besant, help found the London branch of the Christian Mystic Lodge of the Theosophical Society and give lectures and publish several books and many essays on theosophical subjects—none of which, alas, appeared before George’s death: no doubt he would have been proud that she had inherited his intellectual curiosity. She would also become a vegetarian, pacifist and campaigner for animal rights.

George Chamier II (1880-1908) was born at Parkside, Adelaide on 24 July 1880. He was unwell from childhood and turned out to have suffered from Bright’s Disease (chronic nephritis or kidney disease) that was probably hereditary and degenerative. If diagnosed, his attacks would have been treated with “local depletion” (warm baths, diuretics and laxatives), but long-term the only treatment was thought to be the right diet and environment. After the family moved to Sydney in 1890, George senior got him work on a nearby farm. He died at seventeen on 1 May 1908 at Shameen, while on a visit to his sister in China for “a beneficial change.” He never married or had children.

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660 The New South Wales Pioneers Index 1788-1918: An Index to Birth, Death and Marriage Records on CD-ROM (Melbourne: Informit, 1993); Registers of Baptisms, Burials and Marriages, microform, 2858/1902 (Sydney: Archives Authority of NSW, 1982).
661 David Chamier Grove had one daughter, Jennifer Georgina Frances Chamier Grove (b. 1940), who was the author of The Disappearance of Mr Seawright.
662 Frances Warner 29.
663 A selection of the mainly theosophical works of Daisy E. Grove (née Chamier) is included in the Bibliography.
664 Frances Warner 29.
665 Cobiac (224/218).
666 See the electoral rolls for Balmain (Dalley/White Horse/359) and Smithfield (Parramatta/Smithfield/71) (Index to New South Wales Electoral Rolls, 1903-1916 [Commonwealth Division] [Balgowlah, NSW: W. & F. Pascoe, 1986]; NSW Electoral Rolls, 1903 [Commonwealth Division] [Balgowlah, NSW: W. & F. Pascoe, 1984]).
Throughout the eighteen-eighties, the family lived on a large property in Young Street in the leafy suburb of Parkside on the southern outskirts of Adelaide proper. It was a street inhabited mainly by petits bourgeois professionals and rising tradesmen, with no less than three churches: a Primitive Methodist Church, a Baptist Church and a Wesleyan Church (a Catholic church, St Raphaels, was built on the site of the Chamier’s house in 1916). His granddaughter Frances Warner describes a watercolour George painted of the house:

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667 The 1885 land tax returns show that Chamier owned five blocks of land in Young Street, the value of the land and improvements being £2,000; only one block was built on (“George Chamier (New Zealand Novelist), List of Entries in the South Australian Directory under G Chamier,” typescript, Ms-Papers-0856, 1047/175, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington).
It was a low rambling one-storied house made of a dark wood with a roofed verandah running round the four sides. There were tall eucalyptus trees standing near and a bed of colourful flowers at the front. We had a little watercolour correctly and carefully painted in detail, as were all my grandfather’s sketches. Behind the house was an orange grove.

It was, as Tim suggests in Successful Man, a “home . . . of the happiest and without being luxurious, yet it afforded us every comfort” (SSM XII). They had two Irish maids, Bridget and Annie, devout Catholics who apparently did their best to remedy the godlessness of the children; given that George was very much against institutional religion, the family would probably not have gone to church together (though Dolly may have continued to go to church and did insist on the children being baptised), a lapse in rectitude that would not have escaped the notice of their fellow Adelaidians. Warner suggests that “[i]n the house in Adelaide where my grandfather lived with his wife Dolly and where their three children were born he seems to have been completely happy,” echoing Tim’s paean to his “very happy and united circle” of domesticity in Successful Man:

A young family had grown up around me with loving ties and bright associations, that promised comfort and support for my old age, while my cherished wife, ever my devoted companion, was still at my side to cheer me by the way and share my anxieties. We were all blessed with health and content, and whatever the vicissitudes of the outside world, no shadow darkened the inward brightness of our home. (SSM XXVI)

George also started making friends among his professional associates, most notably John Henry (or “Jack”) Grainger (1865-1917), a visionary architect and civil engineer. In the late eighteen-seventies and early -eighties, Grainger was Assistant Architect and Engineer to the South Australian Government and lived with his wife Rose (née Rosa) at “Stow Manse,” in the Chambers of which George practised. Like George, he was a fluent French speaker, having been educated in France. They shared a love of art and music—Grainger was a singer and an amateur conductor who

668 Frances Warner 4.
669 Frances Warner 5.
670 Frances Warner 5.
founded the Adelaide String Quartet Club in 1880—and of tall tales. The children of both men would be professional musicians; Grainger’s son, Percy, would go on to study with George’s daughter in Frankfurt-am-Main and achieve fame as a concert pianist and composer. Much of the past Grainger imagined for himself was sham, though the “facts” of his eccentric and troubled life were outlandish enough—he was a sporadic drunk, had syphilis, boasted of a predilection for prostitutes and was beaten by his wife. There was some doubt he had any professional qualification at all (a little like Chamier, perhaps), though he had received some engineering training. In 1882, he moved to Melbourne, where he executed his most well known design: for the Princes Bridge; it is not as well known that he co-designed the Auckland Art Gallery. He and George would be lifelong friends, through his estrangement from his family and his final decline into delirium tremens and syphilis. He is the “Grainger” of Chamier’s last letter, written from London in 1915.

All in all, it seemed that George and the family were settled in for good in Adelaide. But it was not only George’s domestic fortunes that had changed. On 21 September 1880, he had a serious accident on his way north to see how construction was going on the Kapunda to North-West Bend Railway, of which he was Managing Engineer. According to the evidence in his suit against the coach company, Hill & Company, he was riding outside on top of the coach on “a bush unmacadamized road” somewhere between Wonoka and Hallett, some one hundred miles north of Adelaide. The coach was overloaded and overturned on a curve; George was “thrown off . . . and had his arm dislocated and the socket fractured.” The coach company was found liable for the accident—and this judgement was upheld on

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George was awarded damages for his “pain and suffering” and his “pecuniary loss,” including “the cost of the cure or attempted cure” and “the probable prospective loss of income arising from the accident.” He won about £750 damages—a substantial amount at that time (something close to 100,000 Australian dollars in today’s money). Quite how seriously he was really injured is uncertain; it is suggested in the evidence of the case that “with regard to his profession,” which “requir[ed] a good deal of outside work, the use of the theodolite, continual travelling over rough roads, and the mounting and descending of ladders,” he was “rendered a cripple”:

According to the surgeons . . . he will not be able to use his arm above the shoulder for any practical purposes. Although the plaintiff may take an observation, he will be unable to do a day’s work with it. It is not likely he will be able to drive a buggy for himself. Therefore in a great many branches of his profession the plaintiff will be very seriously inconvenienced. It is further shown that the Government, from whom he was in the habit of obtaining employment, will not retain an engineer who is obliged to have the services of an assistant in taking observations.

Evidence was given that he had been forced to stop “outdoor work,” which it was thought “must produce a diminution in his income”—though he testified that “his income was not less than it had been.” Leaving aside the question as to the degree of physical and financial damages he really suffered in the short and long term, the effect of the ongoing physical “inconvenience” on his professional practice seems to have been that he spent less time on “outdoor work” like surveying and travelled less, at least temporarily, though having a young family may have contributed more to this change. He focussed instead on designing and supervising the construction of engineering projects—the work of the chief and construction engineers respectively (the other engineering roles were those of the managing, consulting and referring engineer, all of which roles he performed at various points). This was probably his aim anyway, though such work carried with it the burden of failure. More

importantly, the time spent incapacitated may have given him the opportunity to think about writing, which he had put off for so long. The shock to his health would certainly have brought home to him his mortality and caused him to look back at his life to date and what he had or had not done with it. Interestingly, his novels draw in the main on his life in the Australasian colonies up to this point—his formative years in Canterbury and Melbourne—which suggests that he may have conceived of the trilogy at about this time. At the whim of fate, the desire to write became unexpectedly more insistent.

After the accident, George’s professional work went on, despite the court case, which carried on through to August 1881, and what he said about being “rendered a cripple.” Between March and July 1881, he superintended reconstruction of the Torrens Lake Weir, “an ornamental dam,” for the City Council (he did not design it).682

![Fig. 42a. Stump & Co., Torrens Lake and Weir, 1890, B13288, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide. (Reproduced by permission of the State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.)](image1)

![Fig. 42b. L. Henn & Co., Torrens Lake, [c.1882], nla.pic-an7832044 (PIC S1220 LOC 1926), National Library of Australia, Canberra. (Reproduced by permission of National Library of Australia, Canberra.)](image2)

It was the only job he ever did for the City of Adelaide per se. The dam had been constructed to abate the flooding of the Torrens (Yatala) and create a recreational

lake. He later testified that it was “grossly scamped in the first instance” and “thoroughly defective” (the concrete for the foundations was substandard).683 Rather suspiciously, he was commissioned to superintend the repairs himself at a fee of 2½ per cent of the cost of the work. Despite someone mischievously leaving the sluices open on the eve of the official opening, the event went off in grand style on 21 July with a flotilla of civic dignitaries.684 It was George’s first public success as an engineer.

He continued to work on the Port Augusta Jetty and Bridge project throughout 1881, but apparently with reduced duties—and salary.685 The jetty would open in 1882, as would the Grange Railway, for which George was the Chief Engineer or “engineer of construction.”686 The Grange was what was called “a line of development,” in other words, the railway company was “also interested in the Grange township and . . . proprietors of some 50,000 feet of frontages, so that the construction of the line will induce settlement on the Company’s own land and likewise in the whole neighbourhood, and thus a means of creating traffic for itself.” Two ancillary “speculative” companies bought “allotments” and built “habitations” to onsell to settlers.687

This sort of arrangement was the rule in such construction work. Whether George was “interested” too is not recorded. The Grange would be his first public failure—though he deflected blame onto the Government: the line became unstable and the foundations of a timber bridge over the Torrens on the line apparently began to sink soon after it opened. In his defence, George suggested that the line had been constructed entirely in accord with the original contract, in which it was agreed secondhand materials from the defunct Brighton line and sand underballast could be used, and that when the Government had taken over the railway to cope with the traffic it had decided to use trains three times as heavy as had been allowed for in the original design and had neglected maintenance of the line. He also said that though maintenance on the line was supposed to be carried out by the Government engineers and charged back to the Company, they did not do it and let it run down.688 These

683 “Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 59; see E. and R. Jensen 769.
684 E. and R. Jensen 769.
687 “Opening of the Grange Railway” 8.
688 “Grange Railway” 30.
kinds of issues were common in colonial construction, where shortcuts were common with so much work being undertaken with limited funds and preparation and at speed, by often relatively inexperienced engineers and workers, usually for political or entrepreneurial ends. As here, the situation was often complicated by “public-private partnerships” and by engineers and politicians investing or having vested interests in the projects in which they were involved, a practice George had come to loathe in Victoria where it was endemic. 689 His work would be compromised several times by such problems—not to discount his own inexperience, especially in engineering design, and unrealistic ambitions or expectations about his projects. He never suffered the indignity of a parliamentary inquiry into his work, but he would testify on several such inquiries in Adelaide and Sydney, which suggests that such failures were not uncommon.

At some point during this busy year, George would shift his business premises to 53 New Exchange Chambers, Pirie Street, where he would stay until at least 1888 (later he moved to number 59).

Fig. 43. Samuel White Sweet, [The Exchange Chambers,] Pirie Street, [c.1880], Mortlock Pictorial Collection: Acre 169 Collection, B2897, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide. (Reproduced by permission of the State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.)

Josiah Boothby, publisher of Boothby's Directory, and Thomas Harry, later editor of The Country (Adelaide: Hussey & Gillingham, 1893-96) in which his third novel, Successful Man, was serialised, both had premises in the same building.690

1882 also saw George enter a new and potentially lucrative field of engineering: the construction of tramways, by which “Adelaide became connected with her suburbs, and tramlines after the manner of an octopus tentacles reached outward from the heart of the city in almost every direction.”691 Of the eleven horse tramways built in Adelaide from 1878 onwards, he was Engineer to at least four: Parkside (opened 1882), Hyde Park, Ovingham, and Glenelg, Brighton and Marino Tramways (all opened 1883).692 All the tramways were enacted and granted public land on peppercorn leases by the government, then built with private capital, owned and managed by private companies, each of which had its own Consulting and Managing (or Resident) Engineers. These arrangements were a little suspicious by contemporary standards: often those enacting the legislation enabling the construction of the tramways also part-owned the companies—often with the engineers, whether or not in George’s case is uncertain; most lines were not profitable and ended up being run with government subsidies or bought back by the government when they failed to make enough money. And these were not cheap projects: the Hyde Park line was the shortest tramway in Adelaide at only 2¼ miles but was built with private capital of £30,000 (not including the value of the public land on which it was built).

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George also continued his work on the construction of railways and waterworks. In November 1882, he proposed a rail link to Melbourne via Wellington—unsuccessfully. In 1883, he carried out another “ecological” experiment: designing a weir on a farm near Belvedere on the River Angas to “effect an overflow by artificial means” to mimic “winter flooding,” which had been observed to be beneficial to the land. Before the works were complete, the dam failed, proving inadequate to “a violent flood [which] overflowed the banks, causing a breach in the bank at one side of the dam” (UW 38). Despite this setback, it was successful in generating better returns from the flooded land. It is clear that George’s accident probably had not resulted in chronic injury; there was no sign of his slowing down and, against his own testimony after the accident, he kept up his “outdoor work.”

His first engineering monograph, *Utilisation of Water in South Australia* (1886), records that he carried on with his itinerant hydraulic engineering work: he took gaugings near Balaklava, some distance due north of Adelaide “at the Werocata Dam, in June 1884, during a flood in the River Wakefield” (UW 36).

On 5 February 1884, after five years of engineering work on his own account, he was voted a full Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and so entitled to use

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693 E. and R. Jensen 768.
the title “M.Inst.C.E.”695 About this time George was engaged on his two largest engineering projects (excepting railway works): the Patawalonga Ocean Dock at Glenelg (1882-86) and the Brighton Jetty (1885), both on the seacoast west of Adelaide. George had floated his ambitious scheme for an Ocean Dock at Glenelg to Parliament as early as 1882.696 His design for the Patawalonga Estuary (then usually known as “Salt Creek”), which drained the Sturt (or “Thames”) and the Torrens, used a barrage or artificial barrier to create a harbour; the aim was to secure the entrance from the sea, create a dock and a spot for recreation, and get rid of the smell of rotting vegetation, which “nuisance” was generally thought the most important issue.697

There was much lobbying for and against, but finally George’s plan (which was actually the only one put forward and never independently assessed) was enabled by legislation in 1884 and put to a ratepayers’ poll—with more lobbying and much spectacle:698

Great excitement was manifested in the usually quiet town on the day of the poll and circulars representing the views of opposing parties were circulated freely. . . . Placards canvassing for and against the proposal were well to the fore for several days preceding the poll and, on one occasion, there was the unwanted spectacle of grotesquely attired men parading the streets and of cabs scurrying to and fro.699

699 Manning, “Parnaroo-Pedler Creek: Patawalonga.”
The poll was favourable. Work began in June 1885 on what became known as the “Chamier Lock Gates Scheme”—unhappily for George, as it was to be his second significant failure.\(^{700}\)

Fig. 45. “The Patawalonga Lock,” *Colonial Architecture*, by E. and R. Jensen, 765.

Despite a successful test in April 1886, the project was ill-starred and did not seem to work: the gates jammed with weed and malfunctioned (though George argued it was because the workmen did not work them properly). George and his scheme came in for much criticism in letters and verse published in the papers and at public meetings: the scheme was extravagant and “the expectations entertained by sanguine councillors and the engineer, Mr Chamier, did not stand any chance of being realised.”\(^{701}\) To make things worse, James Penn Boucaut, a former Premier of the colony and sitting Supreme Court judge whose land bordered on the river, took up the case against George and scheme alike.\(^{702}\) He had initially refused to attend an official test; he then agreed to a test on 4 June, but the gates failed when a workman jammed the gates. It was too much for George: he resigned but continued to defend himself in a public letter to the *Register*—as does Raleigh when traduced in *Siren*, “g[iving] his version of the whole transaction, and hit[ting] out in right good style upon his


\(^{701}\) Manning, “Parnaroo-Pedler Creek: Patawalonga.”

\(^{702}\) For the voluminous correspondence and material relating to the case, see the Boucaut papers (PRG 1046/12 [101]); the course of the project from 25 July 1883 to 18 June 1866 is summarised in “Extracts re Patawalonga from Glenelg Corporation Minute Book” (Associate Partner of J. P. Boucaut, Boucaut Papers PRG 1046/12/54 [101/54]).
opponents and detractors” (SSS 303). He protested that the “remorseless criticisms” were premature: “It is soon enough to attack a man after he has failed, but not on the mere supposition that he may fail. The works were only completed and handed over by the contractor a fortnight ago.”

A squib entitled “The Damming of the Pattawalonga” appeared in a local magazine, The Lantern, apparently to be sung to the tune of “Poor old Robinson Crusoe” (more commonly known as “The Rogue’s March,” the regulation drumming-out tune from the British Army).

Oh! down at the Bay, one unfortunate day,
Came a toiling over the sand, oh!
A brave Engineer, who exclaimed with a tear,
It’s more than a man can stand, oh!

He came to a creek that was sickly and weak,
With seaweed and rubbish all crammed, oh!
And muttered—“Dear me, how fine it would be
If the whole thing were properly damm’d, oh!

“Sheet-piled at the south—lock gates at the mouth—
The bridge just a little bit stronger,
With esplanade level, ’twould puzzle the devil
To equal the Pattawalonga.

Permission was won, the work at last done—
The locking, and filling, and piling—
But tho’ roughly used, the lock-gates refused
To open for any beguiling.

In the low stagnant creek the seaweed did reek,
And the gates with the debris were jamm’d, oh!
And the engineer’s dream came true it would seem,
For the whole thing was properly damned, oh!  

George’s public mea non culpa roused Boucaut’s anger and he responded in kind—and, not unexpectedly, took a case against George to his own Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the “nuisance” grew ever worse. The whole matter was settled when the Thames came down in flood in June 1887 and the dam was swept away, “leaving nonetheless intact the Corporation’s large indebtedness for their construction.” As was his wont, George maintained his innocence to the end: “Mr. G. Chamier, C.E., said that he had given up the works about a year ago. They should have been watched night and day to open up the gates at the first signs of flood. He had warned the Council that if this was not done the work would give way, but his advice had not been followed.” He would return to the district in 1892 with a proposal for an ocean graving dock (dry dock) on Le Fevre Peninsula near where North Haven is now, north of Glenelg, unsuccessfully, perhaps due to the reputation of his previous work with the dock at Patawalonga.

Though Chamier was always well aware of the politics of the relation between engineer and contractor, here was a lesson for him in the whims of public opinion and the practical problems of seeing through a vision to completion. Similarly, his trilogy of novels was never quite completed, never being recognised as such and the final novel never being published in book form. But he did manage to execute his grand literary design. Likewise, as his engineering projects sometimes failed by being too “improvised” or visionary—underdesigned or unrealistic, to put it less charitably, though neither failure was unusual in colonial engineering, the novels have been branded loose (often) and unnaturalistic (sometimes). Both failures are instructive: they are lessons in the difficulties of translation or fitting old ways of doing things, be it engineering or literary practice, to the “new” place: in a new place there seems to be

708 “Patawalonga Story” 118; see E. and R. Jensen 766.
709 South Australian Register 25 June 1887: 7.
no precedent to draw on but a translated one—and while settler engineers and novelists for the most part stuck to what they knew, Chamier was perhaps a little too willing to improvise. In engineering he professed to favour innovation and risk over conservatism and playing it safe (he said this was why he preferred American engineers to the English); similarly, in his fiction he snuck new ways of doing things through under the guise of conventional genres and tropes—only for the novels to be read as failures by conventional standards. But while his engineering failures are simply failures to obviate failure, always thought to be the “first and foremost objective” of engineering design according to Henry Petroski, the “failure” of his fictional works is significant in that he builds the failure into his fictional project as part of an overarching narrative of sentimental education, which is also a movement toward formal closure. The failures of sympathy of his autoethnographical protagonists in settler society are stations en route to their, or rather, his mature position, likewise the “failures” to achieve conventional closure in the form and narratives of the novels make sense when read in the context of the trilogy, which moves from the heterogeneous or open form of *Philosopher Dick* to the relatively homogeneous or closed form of *Successful Man* and mirrors the grand narrative of settlement as a centripetal movement toward the city, that is to say, toward social cohesion—and in his trilogy, toward formal cohesion or closure.

Meanwhile, George had designed and supervised the construction of the Brighton Jetty. It was built in response to a call by residents to the Brighton Council for a promenade to compete with their northern neighbours at Glenelg and revitalise the resort. George proposed a location and prepared a preliminary design—at no cost, presumably to get the job, but also because, if he was indeed “owner of most of the land in Beach Road (Jetty Road)” in Brighton, as has been suggested, he would have assumed that the development would “enhance the value of the land.” He roped in W. C. Buik, who was Chairman of the Glenelg, Brighton and Marino Tramway Company, of which George was Engineer, to speak in favour of

712 Henry Petroski, *To Engineer is Human: The Role of Failure in Successful Design* (New York: St Martin’s, 1985) xii.
his proposal. Most jetties were built and paid for by the Government to encourage seaborne trade; Brighton’s was built and paid for by the Council—against George’s advice—because it was desperate to attract tourists. Work commenced on 1 October 1885 and was completed on 24 February 1886. Mayor Bickford described the finished structure: “It was not a pretentious erection by any means, but it nearly approaches the acme of strength and finish, and presents an appearance of both solidity and elegance which ought to ensure its success as a pleasure promenade, though its utility from the commercial point of view is regarded as rather doubtful.”

In the end, it cost fifty percent more than was originally budgeted, so “[a]s Bickford had foreseen[,] the jetty proved to be a luxury which the town could ill afford.” What is more, the jetty would be battered by storms and have to be rebuilt several times, firstly as early as 1890, by which time George was well gone. But it served its purpose: to improve the resort to attract visitors—and perhaps the value of

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716 “Jetty at Brighton” 34; see Tramways of Adelaide 6, 11.
717 “The Brighton Jetty.”
718 Holt 231.
George’s land (unlike his similar investment at Saltwater Creek in Canterbury). If so, it would have been his only plainly entrepreneurial project.

In Adelaide, George outwardly lived the life of the relatively well-off professional gentleman: the genteel suburban home, family and “servants,” the clubs and the occasional social occasions, though it is hard to know to what degree he would have kept up the show of religiosity that was expected in that “city of churches.” He was active in diverse social networks. From 1882, he was on the ex officio Committee of the Adelaide Chess Club, which met every Tuesday at 8pm at the Crown & Sceptre in King William Street. A record exists of George playing chess in 1885 in Melbourne against Joseph Henry Blackburne, the English champion; he lost. That year he won the Challenge Cup to be South Australian champion; he competed throughout the eighteen-eighties in various chess tournaments. He also had friends among the eccentric libertarian or “anti-Democratic” members of the Adelaide Democratic Club (founded 1887) like Thomas Harry (c.1848-1914) and Josiah Boothby (1837-1916). The Club held lectures on Sundays and social evenings monthly; its motto was “Morality, Equality, Liberty, Fraternity” and its arms bore the figure of Justice. Harry was a journalist who would have met George when reporting on committees in the South Australian Parliament; he also had an office in the Exchange Chambers where George practised. Harry would later found and edit the journal The Country (1893-96), the “Conservative organ” where Chamier’s novel Successful Man and essay “Pessimism” would be published in 1895. He put George in touch with the London libertarian activist, Frederick Millar (1864-1929), a journalist and literary critic with Watts & Co., a proponent of Herbert Spencer’s theory of social evolution with the agnostic Propagandist (later Rationalist) Press Committee, an offshoot of Watts & Co., and an inveterate propagandist against socialism and unionism and “one of the dogmatic defenders of laissez-faire” as

secretary of the Liberty and Property Defence League and editor of its journal, the *Liberty Review*. Millar was an admirer of Nietzsche and Max Stirner at a time when they were just becoming known in England. They would both remain George’s lifelong friends—later Millar would enthusiastically review his novels, put him up and act as his agent in London, negotiating the publication of his *War and Pessimism* (1911) with Watts & Co, and execute his will.

But though, as Harry has it, “his anti-Democratic bias [was] of a very pronounced character,” George’s species of laissez-faire differed from theirs, as Harry would later acknowledge in two puffs for the “Pessimism” essay in *The Country*: “we are by no means in entire accord with the writer in regard to some of the sentiments which he expresses,” that is to say, “Mr. Chamier [sees] our own views as being somewhat optimistic . . . but no matter.” From what we know of him from his later novels and essays, Chamier was only anti-democratic in that he resisted the tendency of risen meritocrats to assume the airs and graces of aristocracy and doubted that social interaction could be effectively regulated by the state. As is apparent in his essay “Pessimism,” he is a liberal, but rejects both the libertarians’ Spencerian faith, as Harry puts it, that a “cheerful and healthy optimism usually accompanies the desire for individual liberty”—that liberty and optimism go together—and the optimistic statist narrative he would have found espoused by the New Liberals in Australia, not to mention their jingoistic nationalism.

Chamier is best described as a hopeful classical liberal of a rather eccentric ilk: like Adam Smith, he advocates free markets and a laissez-faire state, but he has less faith in human nature or social evolution, as befits a thoroughgoing Schopenhauerian. The sympathy that Smith upheld (in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, at least) as a bulwark against Hobbes’s “meere warre of all against all” and that Schopenhauer took to be a means of transcendence of worldly suffering remained an ironic ideal for Chamier, limited in application and necessarily

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728 *ICE* letter; “Wills 1915: Chamier, George.”

compromised in practice.730 It might work in the home (as sentimental domesticity) or
in “philosophical” dialogue (as Humean “mitigated scepticism”), even between
friends (as the Epicurean idea of friendship), but not as a universal principle of social
relations: it is a recipe for a minimally effective society, but no general regime.731
Accordingly, the “democracy” he espoused was of an idiosyncratic species, akin to
the Christian democracy of Tolstoy, as he writes in “The Moral Aspect of War”: “It is
one of the redeeming features of democracy, with its many foibles and shortcomings,
that it is inclined to revolt against this wicked and outrageous imposition. The people
alone can throw it off. The pacification of the world can merge only out of the
sufferings of humanity” (WP 19).

As this passage suggests, Chamier was also a pessimist: he had no truck with
the idea of social evolution (people do not change), nor with fin de siècle
declosionism (neither are they getting any worse); he was a happy fatalist (they
pretty much remain the same), as he wrote in “The Moral Aspect of War”: “The world
is more than two thousand years older [than when classical Greece was at its height],
but there is really not much difference, at any rate in the motives that instigate the
actions of men, or the principles on which they act” (WP 5). As his “hero” Tim puts it
in Successful Man, such a happy fatalist “ma[kes] it a rule in life to study [his] own
happiness rather than other people’s opinion of it” (SSM 62). Thus, what Chamier in
his essay “Pessimism” calls “the pessimist philosopher” follows the “even way” of the
Epicurean:

he indulges in no sanguine illusions about the reformation of the
world, neither does he worry himself concerning posterity. He does not
aspire to be a hero, neither does he incline to become a martyr; but he
pursues his even way, keeping rather in the shade, endeavouring to do
what is right, and content to fulfil all manifold duties. (WP 38)

Both Harry and Millar must have thought him an odd bird; perhaps, as Millar
describes him in a letter to The Country, he was “an out-and-out Individualist” and

34 (Preface 14). For Adam Smith on sympathy or “fellow-feeling,” see “Of Sympathy” and “Of the
Pleasure of Mutual Sympathy” in the Theory of Moral Sentiments 11-19 (1.1.1-2); for Schopenhauer on
the metaphysical ground of sympathy, see World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, sec. 67 (375-78).
731 Epicurus 34; Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding 140 (12.3).
did not really fit in anywhere. Nonetheless, he would certainly have been able to express his love of argument in such company.

At home, at least as his granddaughter Frances saw him, George was a typical Victorian amateur—an intellectual and a hobbyist: “He was an intellectual . . . dedicated to his books, his games of chess, his sketching in water colour,” he loved his garden and his aviary on his little estate at Parkside, where he lived “happy in his marriage.” Inwardly, he must have longed to see some of his writing published—if he had any time to write with all his engineering work. He must have struggled to find other writers sympathetic to his writing, especially in Adelaide, which in the eighties did not really have much of a literary scene, despite an explosion from the sixties onward of newspapers and periodicals and of societies more or less “learned,” including several book clubs or “literary societies”—from the Adelaide Literary Society and Literary Societies Union down to Chamier’s local Parkside Literary Society with its journal Our Quarterly. The print media had by this time settled into a unanimous defensive conservatism, what Paul Depasquale calls a “passive nostalgia,” that idealised the pioneering past and predicted a glorious future for the city and colony and appeared to visitors like Trollope and Charles Dilke—and probably George too—to be quietly provincial. Arthur Jose saw Adelaide as “a dependency of Melbourne” (province might be the better word): as the city characteristically emulated Melbourne’s go-ahead spirit in a gently genteel way, its literary scene for the most part overlooked the more radical aspects of the Melbourne scene, like the work of Marcus Clarke and company, though aspiring local littérateurs like Catherine Spence (1825-1910) and Catherine Edith Macauley Mackay, née Martin (1847-1937), did contribute to respectable Melbourne reviews (Chamier apparently did not). It seemed—at least until the cult of the bush, usually thought to derive locally from the poetry of Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-70), gave impetus in the nineties to the utopian nationalism of Alfred Thomas Chandler (1852-1941), co-

733 Frances Warner 2, 3.
736 Arthur W. Jose, The Romantic Nineties (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1933) 51; Depasquale, Critical History 112.
editor of Quiz: A Satirical, Social, and Sporting Journal (1889ff.), and E. Parriss Nesbit (1852-1927), editor of the short-lived journal Morning (1900)—that this conservative status quo was able to neutralize literary radicals or dissenters by excluding all but the practical or “the useful,” given to include “the inculcation of sound morals and Christian beliefs,” as Depasquale has it.  

The nineteenth-century South Australian novelists generally most highly regarded now are of this ilk: the genteel moral reformists Catherine Spence, best known for her Clara Morrison (1854), and her friend Catherine Martin, author of An Australian Girl (1890) and The Silent Sea (1892). Depasquale sees the local novel as polarised by the nineties between gentility and the bush, the demands of which Chamier’s Canterbury novels would encompass without settling on either. The closest approach to the tone and shape of Chamier’s novels among his contemporaries in South Australia is probably Patrick Eiffe’s The Three L’s, or, Lawyers, Land-Jobbers, and Lovers (1882), largely unknown (though not as little known as Chamier’s novels), but described by Depasquale as “a minor comic masterpiece.”

The obvious similarities are the unsentimental descriptions of local life, what Jones calls the “gladstone bag” style and heterogenous structure that includes large passages of “philosophical” discussion and de-emphasises plot, but also what Depasquale describes as Eiffe’s “cynical and disrespectful attitude towards the Establishment” and his independent and exemplary female characters.

If Chamier’s granddaughter Frances Warner thought him out-of-place in Australia “so far away from the culture that he loved,” the fact that his literary life was always lived at a distance—from both Europe and local literary circles—and seemingly in a vacuum, albeit one always pressed upon by the material exigencies of settler life, must have given his writing something of its uniqueness. The way he made do with literary and philosophical models that do not seem to fit with the task of representing settler life in Canterbury and Melbourne—and the eighteenth-century

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737 Depasquale, Critical History 14, 15; for Chandler and Nesbit, see Depasquale, Critical History 104, 106.
738 Depasquale, Critical History 117; see Catherine Helen Spence [Catherine Martin], Clara Morison: a Tale of South Australia During the Gold Fever (1854; South Australia: Wakefield Press, 1986); Anonymous [Catherine Martin], An Australian Girl (London: Bentley & Sons, 1890) and Mrs Alick Macleod [Catherine Martin], The Silent Sea (London: Bentley, 1892).
739 Depasquale, Critical History 162; see Paul Depasquale, Patrick Eiffe, Author of “The Three L’s”: A Memoir, ms. ([Warradale]: Paul Depasquale, 1970), Patrick Eiffe, South Australia Writers and Their Work Ser. 1 (Warradale: Pioneer, 1980), and Critical History 162-66.
740 Lawrence Jones, “The ‘Strangely Curious Career’ of Philiberta”; Depasquale, Critical History 164.
741 Frances Warner 3.
discourse of sentiment and Schopenhauer’s Idealist philosophy—but came up with something oddly fitting owes a lot to but belies that sense of psychogeographical isolation. How it is that the isolated fictional experiments of eccentrics like Chamier, Eiffe and later Furphy (though he did become part of the Bulletin circle) avoid what Depasquale calls the “aspect of bizarre irrelevancy . . . sensed repeatedly . . . as what were essentially genteel English provincial writers (‘gentlemen of literary habits’) tried to keep the literary fires burning in their new environment” is a vexed question.742

Such writers give the lie to Henry James’s oft-quoted assertion in Hawthorne (1879) that it is “the accumulation of history and of custom”—acculturation—that produces literature, that “the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep, that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion.”743 But neither do they fit with the contrary argument fashionable in colonial Australia: that, to use Chamier’s ironic phrase, the “new settlement” offers literature “a fair and fresh field to thrive upon” (SSS 197), or as Frederick Sinnett rather optimistically asserts in The Fiction Fields of Australia (1856):

Human nature being the same, the true requisites of the novelist are to be found in one place as well as in another. Australia offers fresh scenery, fresh costumes, and fresh machinery . . . great advantages to those that know how to use them—and, for the rest, presents a field neither better nor worse than most others.744

Marcus Clarke’s argument in “Adam Lindsay Gordon” takes the opposite line: “the dominant note of Australian scenery,” “Weird Melancholy,” embodies a “history [that] looms vague and gigantic” and demands a certain sort of fictional treatment.745

None of these models of the literary field—the acculturation model (that literature requires a deep soil of history), the natural settlement model (that literature thrives when transplanted into fresh soil) and the “unnatural” settlement model (that a certain species of literature is produced by the local soil of history)—work for Chamier and other eccentrics of his ilk. Their isolated improvisation of naïve,

742 Depasquale, Critical History 16.
745 Marcus Clarke, “Adam Lindsay Gordon,” Marcus Clarke, ed. Michael Wilding (St Lucia, Qld: UQP, 1976) 645, 646.
apparently native solutions to fictional problems, a penchant for rough-and-ready formal constructs and adaptation of metropolitan models and genres for use in the New World, generated a stylistic mobility that produced texts that had (and have) both descriptive and critical purchase on settler society—and marks them out from the provincials. Though he was published in the metropolis and adapted metropolitan models and genres, Chamier “did not write to and for the centre,” as Simon During argues of Frederick Maning, author of *Old New Zealand* (1863). 746 But neither did he fit with the local nationalist (or anticolonial) *Bulletin* circle in Sydney with its hallmark “bush realism,” despite his attention to what Alcock calls “colonial actuality.” 747 He must have envied the up-and-coming writers of the circle; little did he know that he would not fit in there either.

In the meantime, another son, Charles Chamier VI (1883-1975), had been born on 17 August 1883 at Parkside. 748 Not much is known about his youth, except that he was musical like his sister. Both made a living as professional musicians: Daisy in “classical” music, Charles in “popular” music, one high culture, one low. It seems George did not push his children into practical careers, but both ended up as practitioners of the art he most envied. Charles became a singer and actor in musical theatre: in January 1902, he sang a series of concerts organised by his sister at Hobart; his first appearance as an actor was in an amateur production of *The Belle of New York* in Sydney in 1905. 749 By 1908, he was living in London working as an actor in music hall. 750 The following year, he met his future wife Muriel “Mim” Varna (1888-1989) on the set of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Arcadians*. 751 They married in December 1911, but never had children. 752

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748 Cobiac (310/46).
752 Chamier Grove, *Disappearance of Mr. Seawright* 2.
Charles kept working on the stage in London until the Great War broke out. As soon as he could, he enlisted against Mim’s will, joining the British Army as a private numbered among one of Lord Kitchener’s New Army, “the First Hundred Thousand,” serving in the Bedfordshire Regiment on the Western Front in France and Flanders and being mentioned in dispatches several times. By the end of 1917, he had left the Front to join the Supply Corps, the Royal Army Service Corps (“Ally Sloper’s Cavalry”), and by the time he left the military had risen to the rank of

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Like many other soldiers who survived the Front, he succumbed to influenza in what became known as the Spanish Flu Epidemic, the couple moving in with his sister Daisy and her family in Manchester while he recuperated. He feared for his voice, but eventually recovered at least his speaking voice. He tried acting in a couple more productions in England, Scotland and abroad, but then gave up the stage to organise theatrical tours throughout the Empire as producer for various revues—often Mim would act in the productions. When the theatrical tours ceased to be profitable the couple sold everything to send the cast home but stayed on themselves as waitress and barman at a country club, which they eventually managed. When the Second World War broke out, they returned to England to run the first company bussing tourists from London to Stratford-on-Avon on day-trips to see the Shakespearean landmarks. Eventually they retired to Brighton and “Uncle Charlie,” as he was always known to Daisy’s children, died at Hove in 1975.

1886 saw a minor economic depression hit Adelaide. For the next few years, George put aside private practice and the smallish suburban projects for which there was now less demand in favour of two large-scale government-sponsored railway projects, the Great Southern and Great Northern Railways. Perhaps the fall-out over the failure of the “Chamier Lock Gates Scheme” at Patawalonga had also damaged his reputation, though he would later testify that nothing in his previous work had ever been seriously disputed: “There were frequent cases during the carrying out of large contracts where the work was questioned and enquired into, but I am not aware of any serious matter having arisen.” Nonetheless, he had learnt a lot about the ins and outs of entrepreneurial settlements from his private practice in Adelaide, especially from the ancillary works on the outlier coastal settlements—the trams, the ocean dock and the jetty, among others. He had learnt about the topology

755 Frances Warner 46; Chamier Grove, Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 2; “Obituary.”
756 Frances Warner 46; Chamier Grove, Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 2.
758 Chamier Grove, Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 3.
759 “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 695; “Public Works Inquiry Commission” 544.
760 “Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 58.
and ideology of such settlements, especially about the relation of the settlement and the settlers to the place and the discourse of settler capitalism—of boosterism and suburbanism; and he had learnt about the politics of government and how to work with it, and about the interwoven nature of governmental and commercial interests in the colonies. In particular, such reflections informed *Successful Man*, his third novel about entrepreneurial settlement or “land booming” in Melbourne. And the work would have tempered the illusion that he might be able to keep separate his professional and personal life—he had more than once had to deal with very public failures, whether or not these were at the whim of fate or down to human error, sometimes his own. Perhaps too he may have put aside his misgivings about entrepreneurial engineers in trying to make his own way in the world professionally: though no evidence exists as to whether he invested in, or around, or just worked on the projects he undertook, it seems he benefited enough by 1890 from the works on which he had been engaged in Adelaide and the railway work that was to come that he would effectively be able to “retire” to Sydney to write.

From 1887 to 1890, George worked as “chief engineer for C. & E. [Charles and Edwin] Millar, the large contractors,” usually known as “Millar Brothers,” on the Albany and Beverley or “Great Southern Railway” and the Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway (later called the “North Australia Railway”). George joined Millar Brothers just after the completion of the Adelaide-Melbourne line (later the “Overland Railway”), which opened on 20 January 1887, and straight away began work as Chief Engineer on both railways. The Great Southern Railway was intended to improve communications between Perth (or the end of the government railway at Beverley) and the closest existing port at Albany, five days away by coach. It was built on the land grant principle, whereby the works would be undertaken in return for grants of land that could be onsold to settlers. State governments used such schemes to attract immigrants with the promise of being able to settle on their own land or in the new urban settlements along the line. Work commenced at both ends of the line simultaneously on 20 October 1886, the first sods being turned by the Governor of Western Australia, Sir Frederick Broome, and his wife Lady Broome, whom George

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761 “Public Works Inquiry Commission” 543, 549; “Obituary.”
would have known from Canterbury and who wrote as “Lady Barker.” The 243-mile (391 km.) line was constructed through very easy country that required no major engineering works; it was completed without major hold-ups on 14 February 1889. The only problem was at the outset when some three hundred navvies who had been brought into the colony from England to work on the line absconded to the Eastern States, leaving the contractors to find alternative labour. The construction of the line relied on local jarrah wood and resulted in the development of a significant timber industry in which the Millars were substantial investors. For his part, Chamier was always concerned about the sustainability of local timber, as he wrote in his pamphlet *Australian Timber* (1887), because of its scarcity and the lack of “a government system of direction,” though he acknowledged its ubiquity as a construction material due to its “strength and durability” and relative cheapness (*AT* 5, 3). The first trial passenger run took place from Albany to Mt. Barker on 13 April 1889 and Governor Broome opened the line on 1 June with a ceremonial coupling of trains from both ends of the line and a lavish banquet at York.

The Palmerston (called Darwin from 1911) and Pine Creek Railway in the far north of what became the Northern Territory was a much more substantial undertaking. It was aimed to improve communication with the gold and iron mines about Pine Creek. A contract was let to Millar Brothers in 1886. The route of roughly three hundred miles (480 km) required a total of 310 bridges and flood openings, most of which were prefabricated rather than purpose-built but still required much laborious groundwork. Apparently for this reason, but also because of the trouble with their English workers on the last project, the Millars took the contract on the proviso that they could use immigrant “coolie labour”: Tamil “Indian” gangs did the grubbing and earthwork and Chinese labourers—more than four thousand mainly Cantonese workers at one point—laid about a mile of track per thirteen-hour working day (including a three-hour rest at the height of the day). Apparently there were only “minor acts of sabotage” by labourers unhappy with the conditions of work under

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763 “The Great Southern Railway of Western Australia.”
their European overseers; what Chamier thought of such practices is not recorded.\textsuperscript{766} By the end of 1886 only one mile had been built; by the end of the next year the line had reached Stapleton near the Adelaide River—about halfway to Pine Creek. The line reached Pine Creek station on 13 June 1889, several months ahead of schedule, and was opened by the Governor of South Australia, Lord Kintore, on 30 September 1889. As was customary, a banquet followed the official opening.\textsuperscript{767} The whole project was built at a cost of just over a million pounds (a third over budget), the biggest railway project George had yet undertaken and his last major one.\textsuperscript{768}

![Image of the Palmerston-Pine Creek Railway opening](image)

**Fig. 48.** Paul Foelsche, *Railway [Opening of the Palmerston-Pine Creek Railway]*, Sep. 1888, Roger Nott’s Collection, 00/00131 (PH0002/0090), Northern Territory Library and Information Service, Darwin. (Reproduced by permission of Northern Territory Library and Information Service, Darwin.)

George would have had to have lived in the Far North for long periods during the construction, probably leaving the family in Adelaide to make do. This forced absence, and the death of his beloved mother in Paris on 8 October 1889—just after


\textsuperscript{768} Stevenson 60; Adams, “The Palmerston (Darwin) to Pine Creek Railway in the Northern Territory Was Opened,” *Auschron* 8890930.
he finished work on the massive undertaking of the Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway—must have turned his thoughts to family. He decided to move closer to his brother Anthony, who had been living and working as a surveyor and engineer in Sydney since the eighteen-seventies. He knew he could probably rely on his own engineering connections to get work, and if not, he could try his brother’s; his brother also had connections in the world of journalism, having helped found the *Daily Telegraph* in Sydney in 1879. But the impact of his mother’s death was more crucial. He idolised her, memorialising her as an angelic “apparition” in *Philosopher Dick*, published the following year. For him, she was “a benign embodiment of tenderness and departed joy” with whom he communed in memory (108; see 203-04). Her death was to be the first of several among those closest to him in which the tyranny of distance so typical of colonial experience deprived him of the chance to be with them at their passing. It brought home to him the need to be near to those dearest to him. But she had also died with a substantial estate of more than £12,600, which would have been divided among her five living sons (George’s eldest brother William had died in 1885 in France and his remaining elder brother, Edward, was in ill health and would die in 1892, leaving George the eldest).

That inheritance would have bought George time to write—and her death would have reminded him yet again of his own mortality and that he needed to make more time for writing and set about getting his work published. He would have tried George Robertson, who had published his pamphlet *The Utilisation of Water* a few years earlier, but at that time they were not interested in local, or rather, locally written novels, especially ones set in New Zealand. He decided to try T. Fisher

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769 “Wills 1889: Chamier, Emily,” *National Probate Calendars* (1889) 107 (fiche 33/17).
770 There were several other Chamiers living in Sydney, all descendants of the “illegitimate” line from John Ezechiel Deschamps Chamier, though it is unlikely Chamier knew of their existence:
   a. Harold Adolphus Chamier (b. Madras 1828), the third son of John Chamier III (c.1799-1835, the eldest child of John E. D. Chamier and Sophia Cookson), who emigrated to Australia from Madras with his cousin William in 1854 on board the *Palmyra*.
   b. William Clementson Chamier (1836-1919), the fourth child of Thomas Arthur Chamier (1805-65, the third child of John E. D. Chamier and Sophia Cookson), who arrived in Sydney on the *Palmyra* with Harold Chamier in 1854 and lived in Darlinhurst (*New South Wales Electoral Rolls, 1903*: roll no. 980; division East Sydney, subdivision Bligh);
   c. Alfred Chamier (b. 1838), the sixth child of Thomas Arthur Chamier (the brother of William above), may also have emigrated to Australia.
Unwin in London instead, probably on the advice of Dr John Chapman, the freethinking editor and sometime proprietor of the *Westminster Review* from 1851 until his death in 1894, and the friend and advocate, as F. N. L. Poynter puts it, of a string of “the most outstanding figures in Victorian thought and literature,” both British and American: Carlyle, Spencer, Emerson, Mary Ann Evans (“George Eliot”), Lewes and Browning, among many others.773 Chapman would have suggested that the often radical publishing house of Fisher Unwin, or at least its influential reader and editor, Edward Garnett (1868-1937), might be open to work like his. How the Chapman connection came about is not entirely clear. Chapman spent the last twenty years of his life practising medicine in Paris among the expatriate colony—he may well have known George’s mother and brother Edward, who lived there until they died, in 1889 and 1892 respectively. Edward had some connection with the *Westminster Review*: he is sometimes referred to as “Chamier of the Westminster Review,” which suggests he may have worked for the *Review* (we know he wrote for it).774 Whatever the case, he would have had plenty of opportunity to meet Chapman in Paris, where Chapman “kept open house for the radicals of the day,” as Anna Kichtel puts it.775 It was probably Edward who put George and Chapman in touch.

Whatever the case, Chapman became George’s advocate in publishing circles until his untimely death in 1894. Unwin, best known for publishing Ibsen, Nietzsche, Conrad and Yeats, would later publish other “colonial” writers like Louis Becke (1855-1913), Olive Schreiner (1855-1920), Rosa Praed (1851-1935) and Arthur Adams (1872-1936), Adams being the only “New Zealander” (and later the editor of the *Bulletin* in Sydney), but George was the first.

In the meantime, George thought he should look into what was apparently a flourishing literary scene in Sydney (he and Emily may also have felt that there were better musical opportunities for Daisy there). His personal and artistic aspirations were pointing him east: the plan was to do the occasional consulting job and write as

much as possible. In 1890, after about twelve years in Adelaide, he and the family headed east.\textsuperscript{776}

\textit{Australia 4: Sydney}

\textbf{1890-1908}

By about the middle of 1890, Chamier had set up again in private practice as a consulting engineer with an office in the Queensland Offices in Bridge Street, Sydney, the first of three offices in the central business district.\textsuperscript{777} The job of a consulting engineer was much less onerous than that of the chief or general engineer, as Chamier testified: they examined and gave advice on the design of the project, for which they were usually paid $2.5\%$ of the cost of construction.\textsuperscript{778} It seems he was trying to do as little engineering work as possible, as he later suggested when asked about his work by a Select Committee: “[Committee:] What work have you done in this colony? [Chamier:] I have simply acted as consulting engineer for firms of contractors. I have not carried out any works. . . . You have not carried out any actual work here? No. You have acted here as consulting engineer? Yes.”\textsuperscript{779} It seems he was avoiding sole charge (chief engineer) work to spend more time writing.\textsuperscript{780}

Chamier’s engineering work in Sydney—mainly “hydraulic and railway work,” as he later put it—can be briefly summarised.\textsuperscript{781} He was “consulting engineer in Sydney for a firm of railway contractors,” name unknown.\textsuperscript{782} A visit to Cootamundra in south-east New South Wales in January 1897 to investigate the

\textsuperscript{776}“Public Works Inquiry Commission” 549.

\textsuperscript{777}“Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 696; see Sydney and Suburban Directory for 1891 (J. Sands, Sands’ Sydney and Suburban Directory for 1892 [and issues to 1895]: Containing Street, Alphabetical, Trade and Professional Directory, Together With a Miscellaneous Directory of Useful Information (Sydney: J. Sands, 1892[-95]) 524. From the end of 1893 to 1896 his office would be at 60 Elizabeth Street and from 1897 to 1905 (and 1909 to 1913) at 62 Margaret Street (NSW Post Office Directory for 1904 64, 781, 1507; Herbert Harry Bassett, Men of Note in Finance and Commerce, with Which Is Incorporated Men of Office: A Biographical Business Directory [London: Effingham Wilson, 1901] 342). While he was away in Europe in 1895, his address for communication was given by the ICE as his cousin Daniel’s address at Wimbledon in London (where Chamier was staying while there); immediately after he returned it was given as what was probably his home address: 283 Glebe Road, Glebe Point, Sydney (ICE letter). He then returned his practice to the city. From 1905 until about 1909 he gave his business (and residential) address as “Wyong” at Fairfield (Sands’ 1905[-1909] 549)—or neighbouring Smithfield (ICE letter).


\textsuperscript{779}“Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 58.

\textsuperscript{780}“Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 51.

\textsuperscript{781}“Public Works Inquiry Commission” 543; “Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 58.

\textsuperscript{782}“Public Works Inquiry Commission” 543; “Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 58.
sufficiency of the waterways on the Cootamundra-Gundagai railway for the
Government seems to have set him thinking again about hydrological and hydraulic
matters. He produced a method and formula for calculating surface discharges of
rainfall (“run-off”) to construct waterways of sufficient capacity “to carry without
undue strain the greatest discharge to be anticipated from floods,” which he wrote up
as *Capacities Required for Culverts and Flood Openings* (1897; Capacities 313). In
“Paradise or Slaughterhouse,” Patrick Evans laments—incorrectly in hindsight—that
Chamier apparently chose to write such “a treatise on drains” rather than complete his
trilogy of novels, but though it is prosaic, it ended up being his most influential
engineering paper; in fact, it was his most influential piece of writing, inaugurating
discussion in hydrology of “a rainfall-run-off flood routing model” in what has been
called the “high Australian tradition dating back to the paper by Chamier in 1898.”783
His visit to the water-poor back country also got him thinking about property rights in
water, which would become the subject of his later paper to the *Royal Society,
Property in Water* (1903).

The papers show that Chamier had worked out piecemeal a fairly systematic
position on the practice of settlement. Sometimes it sneaks through, as in *Capacities*,
where he suggests that his method for calculating run-off is especially relevant to
engineering in “new settlements”—such a method is not necessary in old countries,
that is, in “cultivated lands or well-known localities” where there are “ancient . . .
marks or . . . existing . . . ways.” This historical topography generates a precedent for
the engineer but “this is by no means the case in new settlements and over tracts of
unoccupied lands,” where they are “compelled to resort to some means for estimating
[because] many of the empirical rules . . . are not generally applicable” (*Capacities*
313). The old rules, even the empirical ones, simply do not apply in such places.
*Property in Water* is more systematic. Though ostensibly it concerns property rights
in water, a real issue in Australia where water has always been a contested resource, it
is really about what a properly utilitarian view of settlement might look like, one that
is pragmatic and relativist. Such a view is not original—after all, it has often been
argued that “British settlement [in Australia] coincided with the utilitarian turn in
liberalism,” as Marian Sawyer suggests in *The Ethical State: Social Liberalism in
Australia*—but the way it informs his fiction is. The ground of his critique of settler

783 Patrick Evans, “Paradise or Slaughterhouse” 74; R. B. Bulman et al, “Application of a Rainfall-
society is the problematic way such a utilitarian view plays out on the ground, how such utopian acts of settlement seem fated to fail to live up to their promise, in accordance with the law of unintended consequences that seems to operate in new settlements. The “new” place cannot simply be made over in the image of the old.

To sum up the argument of Property in Water, though “exclusive possession” (rights established by possession) is “enough for all practical purposes,” and “value for settlement,” that is, ownership, preservation and utilisation, has always been thought necessary to civilisation, the laws of settlement must be practical and adaptable (PW xv, xxii, xiv). In brief, they must be

a. based on “common sense and practical requirements,” not “legal definitions that define nothing” or “abstract rights,” and

b. conditioned by their “past” and cognisant of “vested interests” (xv, xxi).

After Locke and Bentham,

c. “‘reasonable’ use” is the practical criteria—“a ‘surplus’ . . . may legitimately be drawn upon for purposes of general utility. There is no recognised vested interest in . . . waste land” (xvi, xvii);

And, against Hobbes, as a check on rights established by possession,

d. “the right of the strongest” is illegitimate (xxii).

All things considered, the utilitarian end must rule:

e. “the greatest good of the greatest number must eventually prevail”;

f. “accommodating all differences” is the best method to achieve it, though “[c]ompromise should never be allowed to over-ride the natural and inalienable rights of a community” (xxii, xxiii).

Needless to say, his theory is not without its blind spots: Chamier did not have regard to the “natural and inalienable rights” of the local indigenous people in New Zealand or Australia, despite his disavowal of the “right of the strongest” (xxii).

Characteristically, his is a laissez-faire theory, concerned with how settlers “adapt” or “accommodate [them]selves to circumstances,” as he puts it in Philosopher Dick, rather than the rights and wrongs of colonialism (163, 58).

All the rest of Chamier’s work was “connected with various commissions and enquiries,” mainly offering reports and expert testimony.785 In 1893, he was on “an

785 “Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 58.
expert board of three engineers” that reported on the proposals for the Parramatta Sewage Scheme, visiting the location and related works, and advising that sewage-farming (“sewage irrigation”) was the best method of treatment.\textsuperscript{786} He gave evidence before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to that effect the following year.\textsuperscript{787} In 1896, he gave evidence at the Public Works Inquiry Commission into “the rigging of schedules by contractors,” then the next year he reported to and gave evidence at the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Construction of Telephone Tunnels on his series of inspection of openings above the tunnels in the central city.\textsuperscript{788}

That was the sum total of Chamier’s professional work. Meanwhile, family life went on as usual. From 1891 to 1892, he and the family lived at “Pendarves” in Thornton Street, Darling Point; then from 1892 to 1895 they lived at “Terara” in Gladstone Avenue, Hunters Hill.\textsuperscript{789} It was a stone house built about 1885 and one of the first in Hunters Hill, then quite an upmarket “garden suburb.”\textsuperscript{790}


\textsuperscript{787} “Parliamentary Standing Committee on . . . Sewerage Works for Parramatta” 695-700 (17-22 of the Report proper).


\textsuperscript{789} \textit{Sands’ Sydney and Suburban Directory for 1895} 255.

\textsuperscript{790} Graham Spindler, \textit{A Harbour Circle Walk: Notes on Loop and Alternate Walks} (Sydney: NSW Planning Department, 2005) 12.
At the end of 1895, the family moved to a terrace house at 283 Glebe Road, Glebe Point, Sydney. In the middle of the following year, they moved again—to “Albury,” a terrace house in the Elkington Park Terrace building at 50 Glassop Street in Balmain, Sydney. They would stay there until at least 1904, though they had also bought a property at Smithfield outside the city.

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791 Sydney and Suburban Directory for 1896 (and issues to 1904) 179.
792 In the Federal Electoral Roll for 1903, Chamier is named as resident with his wife “Emily” and son “George, Junior” (occupation “farmer”) at Balmain (NSW Electoral Roll [1903] roll numbers 358, 357 and 359 respectively; division Dalley, subdivision White Horse), and at Smithfield (roll numbers 70, 69 and 71 respectively; division Parramatta, subdivision Smithfield).
All the children were at home until Daisy left to study music in Europe in 1897. They were probably still being educated at home by tutors, at least until Daisy enrolled at the University of Sydney in 1895. Daisy and Charles were coming into their own: both were spending more and more time with their music, Daisy favouring the classical, Charles the popular. Charles and Daisy embodied the light and dark of their father. She took after her father in her intellectual interests and he would have enjoyed discussing literature and philosophy with her (later on, she too would reveal herself in her writing to be profoundly influenced by Schopenhauer). For this reason, she would always be his favourite, though she was always more earnest than him. Charles, on the other hand, inherited his father’s talents as a wit and a “shammer”; he became something of a “raconteur” and lover of “a ‘tall’ story,” as Warner puts it, which would serve him well later in show business. The youngest child, George, was the odd one out. Because he was always in poor health, he was encouraged into the outdoors and took up farming after leaving school. The family

793 For example, see Daisy Chamier, “The Esoteric in Art,” *Beacon* 1 Apr. 1935: 19.
794 Frances Warner 14.
would also have spent time with Chamier’s brother Anthony’s family, who lived not too far away in the inner western suburbs, especially after Anthony’s wife Annie died in 1896. They were a more practical family, but the children Frederick, Leo and Florence were about the same age as Chamier’s children and would have made good playmates.

As for Chamier himself, to the rest of the family back in Europe, who apart from his more or less eccentric brothers all moved for the most part on imperial vectors, he would have seemed only moderately successful on the face of it—not unlike his father William. Nonetheless, he would have seemed comfortably settled wherever he happened to be, a gentleman-settler (if they could imagine such a person) and -amateur, “prospering” and “much liked” in the colonies, as his brother once described him. But he must have felt the lack of a literary community in Sydney, having apparently found only about as much literary life there as he had in Adelaide, despite there having being what in hindsight seems like a thriving scene there, especially in the Bulletin circle. What literary connections are recorded are with his friends from The Country in Adelaide, but there is a suggestion there that he was involved with “a literary circle in Sydney”: his essay “Pessimism” was apparently “in the first place, delivered before a literary circle in Sydney,” though which one is uncertain (this may just have been a puff). He was also a member of the German (Deustcher) or Concordia Club, which met in George Street next to the General Post Office in the city. He met the French Symbolist Marcel Schwob (1867-1905) there in late 1901 or early 1902. Schwob, later friend of Paul Valéry, Alfred Jarry and André Gidé, R. L. Stevenson and Aleister Crowley, and editor and translator of Oscar Wilde’s Salomé, recalls meeting Chamier in his journal Le Voyage à Samoa and notes with interest discovering that he was the nephew of Frederick Chamier (he also reports being on board a coastal ship with the Reverend Marryat who had married Chamier and Dolly, and was likewise the nephew of a naval novelist). They would have talked about Chamier’s early life in Revolutionary Paris and contemporary
events and the literary scene there, though, as Chamier suggests in his essay “Ibsen’s ‘Hadda Gabbler [sic],’” he was singularly lukewarm about what he saw as the obfuscatory style and mystification of “decadent” literature. Chamier was a Humean, an analyst of habits, rational and irrational, rather than an “occultist.” Like Schopenhauer, he preferred to pass over that of which one cannot speak, that is to say, what he calls in that essay the “mysterious depths . . . in human nature” (WP 85). And he professed his love of the surface—in literature and elsewhere: “I rarely find the time or the inclination to grope around in the dark after an author’s meaning” (WP 80).

Given that one of the reasons Chamier moved to Sydney was probably to further his literary career, the question arises whether a “literary career, upon which he had set his heart, [was] the distinction which he most coveted,” as Raleigh suggests in Siren (314). Had he been able to pursue a paying literary career, would he ever have become a consulting engineer? It was and remained his only way of earning a living, though as soon as he was in a position financially, probably in the eighteen-eighties, he began devoting as much time as he could to writing. Unless you count his professional papers and reports and possibly some journalism, of which there is no evidence, despite Stevens’s suggestion that the “semi-journalistic evocations [in Siren] may well have achieved separate newspaper publication at or near the time,” Chamier published nothing until 1890.800 But perhaps, as Lawrence Jones has suggested, “his novels of New Zealand may have been merely a brief interlude in a busy professional life in Australia,” in other words, he was a typical colonial amateur as a writer.801 The colonial amateur, whether “genteel” or “common,” like Chamier and Furphy respectively, perhaps, was a combined improvisateur and extemporist: making do with what was at hand in themselves and their material in the face of the unforeseen (L improveus), which made their stylistic choices appear anachronistic or untimely (L ex tempore), that is to say, belated, in the language of local literary history, not to mention unaesthetic.

Chamier’s literary career was certainly somewhat limited—he confined himself to two genres in his literary works: novels, however idiosyncratic in their shape, and essays; no short stories and no longer non-fiction works, and by a benign conspiracy of circumstances his three novels were all published (if not written) within

800 Joan Stevens, Introduction xvii-xviii.
801 Jones, “Chamier, George 1842-1915.”
a short five-year period from 1890 to 1895. To recall, *Philosopher Dick* was published in London by T. Fisher Unwin in December 1890; *Story of a Successful Man* was written in about 1893 or 1894 and serialised weekly in Adelaide by *The Country* between May and November 1895; *Siren* was published in London by T. Fisher Unwin in December 1895. They never attracted much interest in Australia, though not for want of trying. Unwin was a well-known and respected publisher and the novels were well reviewed in reputable periodicals that would have made their way to Australia (like the *Academy*, *Spectator*, *Westminster Review* and so on) and ones destined for the colonial market (like the *Home News*); Chamier also sent copies to local reviewers—without much luck, though he was able to pull some strings to get a couple of reviews published (in the *Advertiser* and *Register*, among others) and to have the novels puffed in *The Country*.

By 1895, frustrated that he had not been able to get anything published since *Philosopher Dick*, he had decided to go to England to move things along. On 3 July 1895, Chamier (perhaps with his family) left on the steamer *Le Polynésien* for Europe, announcing his departure in *The Country*, which was at that time serialising *Successful Man*. He had been hoping to get that novel and “a new one” (presumably *Siren*) published in book form; *The Country* announced just after he had left that “satisfactory arrangements” had been made for both to be published (*Successful Man* was not, as we know). If that were true, he would have arrived in high spirits in London. It is recorded in *The Country* that he travelled via Marseilles and Paris, and that he went on to Ireland and then the Continent for a long stay—probably in France. He did get *Siren* published in England but would spend the next three years wrangling with Unwin in London, personally and through his “[a]gent in London” (probably Frederick Millar), and Angus & Robertson in Sydney to get *Siren* and *Successful Man* published in Australia—unsuccessfully, though copies of *Siren* did come to be distributed later through Angus & Robertson’s own bookstore in Castlereagh Street in Sydney. Depasquale notes a similar situation with the local publication of the novels of fellow Adelaidean Catherine Spence: like

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802 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, *Letters to Angus & Robertson, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence*.
806 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 9[?] Sep. 1898, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*. 

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Chamier’s, they were published in London and “not much read in South Australia in their own day—because they weren’t available there or were, but only at a high price, so “the circulation [was] confined to the élite.”

As time went on, it must have rankled Chamier that his work was largely ignored by the local colonial and nationalist (or anticolonial) literary establishment, where he might have expected to have an audience, if not a large market. The Canterbury novels, on which Chamier’s reputation rests, do sit uneasily alongside other “Australian” fiction: they were written in Australia about New Zealand, published and for the most part reviewed in England, and ignored in Australia but taken up with “slowly growing interest” from the mid-twentieth century in New Zealand—probably because of their New Zealand subject matter—as precursors of a “native” or national literature. An excerpt from Philosopher Dick was taken by William Pember Reeves to warrant inclusion in his New Zealand School Reader (1895), but that “canonisation” proved untimely. E. H. McCormick’s ground-breaking reading of Philosopher Dick in his Letters and Art in New Zealand in 1940, from which most local readings stem, did not bear fruit until Joan Stevens’s second edition of Siren in 1970 brought the New Zealand novels into the New Zealand literary-historical canon. It was not until Carol Franklin’s unearthing of Successful Man in the nineteen-nineties, and her paper at the ASAL Conference in 1994, “A Lost Novel by George Chamier,” that Chamier’s work came to light in Australia. Chamier remained best known in Australia as an engineer, and only in Adelaide.

The novels end up sitting somewhere between the “literature” of the Old World and the “national literature” of the New one in a space that is somewhere between colonial and unsettled: in provenance and production, and in the interpretation of most critics of the time and more recently, they are colonial; in their perspective on life in the colonies and their fictional treatment of that material they are unsettled—not to mention unsettling. That is their point of difference from most other colonial novels, but it made them difficult to position in the local market. To put

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810 McCormick, Letters and Art 72-75.
it more charitably, he did not benefit—as perhaps the writers of the more obviously transtasman *Bulletin* school did—from intracolonial networks in what was then effectively one market in the Australasian colonies. His trilogy recognises systematic continuities between species of settlement in the Australasian colonies and adapts the grand narrative of settlement as a movement toward the city, requiring as its endpoint a colonial metropolis like Melbourne or Sydney (the New Zealand capital, Wellington, is best described as a provincial metropolis at that time). It can only be seen as a trilogy—a transtasman trilogy, in effect—“by refusing (in advance) the pre-eminence and inevitability of the nation as a discursive unit,” as Alex Calder has suggested. Once the market split along national lines after New Zealand refused to join the new Federation of Australia, his transtasman trilogy was fated to fade from view—given that his Australian novel languished unpublished in book form and his best advocates, McCormick, McEldowney and Stevens, were all New Zealanders, he became by default a “New Zealand novelist.”

Chamier might well have taken consolation in the idea that “the non-success of an author” ought not necessarily be laid at their own door, as an anonymous letter to *The Country* suggests (it sounds a lot like Chamier):

“Dear ‘Theta’—You are, I see, very fond of the optimist theory that the public readily recognises good literary work, and that if a writer fails to achieve fame and reputation it is merely because his work is not good enough. Let me call your attention to an old number of [Dickens’] *All the Year Round*. . . . You will find there an able article on “Unsuccessful Men,” which takes the opposite view.”

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The article referred to contains the following marked passage:—

“Nothing is so common as to attribute the non-success of an author to his lack of talent, energy, or application, rather than to an overwhelming competition, the lack of capital wherewith to publish his works, and other extrinsic circumstances over which he cannot possibly have any control. In this matter-of-fact age men are not

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812 Alex Calder, e-mail to the author (27 Dec. 2007).
measured by the abilities that they possess, but by the money which they can command. Success makes success no doubt, but money must lay the foundation.”

Chamier was not hampered by a “lack of capital” or “competition,” but there were certainly “extrinsic circumstances” in his case that contributed to his “non-success”: in particular, the lack of a market for local literature, especially unsettled settler novels like his that lie between camps, neither wholeheartedly behind the enterprise of settling the “new place” and successful in the terms of the New World, nor opting out of the enterprise or successful on the terms of the Old. As usual, these circumstances seem to have been borne with equanimity by him.

813 “Theta,” “My Note-Book,” Country 27 Apr. 1895: 5. For the article “Unsuccessful Men” see All the Year Round: A Weekly Journal, Conducted by Charles Dickens 24 July 1886: 539–41 (the passage excerpted in the Country appears on page 540).
IV

*China and England*

1908-15
Chamier’s life from the turn of the century was one of gradual retirement from work, both professional and literary. His daughter Daisy was away studying in Europe from 1897 until early 1901, when she would return to Australia to give some concerts and meet and marry Frank Grove. She and Frank lived in England and Wales, and then in 1904 they and their son David moved to China, where Frank was Chief Engineer on the Shanghai-Nanking Railway (the Huning Line).\textsuperscript{814} They lived at Shameen (Shamian) Island, a colony-island off Canton, where their daughter, Marion, was born in 1905.


From 1905 to 1906, Chamier and his family—he, Dolly and George (Charles too had left home)—moved out of Sydney to live at “Wyong” in Smithfield, eighteen miles west of the city, then from 1906 until about 1908, at the new “Wyong” at 17 Station Street, Prospect, both semi-rural settlements amid orchards and small farms.\(^{816}\) In 1906, Chamier spent time in England, arriving back in Australia in September—he may well have accompanied Charles to get him set up in London.\(^{817}\)

In May 1908, a perhaps not unexpected tragedy struck the family: having suffered for many years from Bright’s Disease, George junior died at Shameen on a visit to stay with his sister for what was intended to be “a beneficial change,” as Frances Warner puts it. She writes that “[h]e passed away so gently and quietly that Daisy could not believe that he was dead. She even begged the doctor to confirm death by cutting the wrist, because the heat of Canton meant internment had to follow without delay. Poor Daisy was distracted by shock and grief.”\(^{818}\) Chamier’s reaction is not recorded. Frank, Daisy and the two children visited Sydney to console Chamier and Dolly and persuade them to join them in China. They agreed to go. Warner suggests that they “had no wish to remain [in Australia] since none of their children would return to be with them there”: Daisy was in China with her family; Charles was in England working on the stage.\(^{819}\) By this time, Frank was working as Chief Engineer on the Canton-Kowloon Railway and he facilitated their emigration by getting Chamier an administrative position with a firm importing Australian sleepers for the Railway.\(^{820}\) They arrived in October.\(^{821}\) As Anne Fearn relates it in her memoir of life as an itinerant doctor, *My Days of Strength*, the bringing of the “fire-wheel carriage” to China was not without its difficulties, with “bad roads or no roads at all, and a superstitious and hostile people to deal with.”\(^{822}\) Chamier had worked closely with the Canton Chinese on the Great Northern Railway in Australia—he

\(^{816}\) Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain), letter to the author, 15 June 2005 (in the *Sydney and Suburban Directory for 1906*, the location is given as Fairfield [549]); *Sydney and Suburban Directory for 1907* 548.
\(^{818}\) Frances Warner 35.
\(^{819}\) Frances Warner 35.
\(^{820}\) Grove and Boothby 239; Grove and Boothby 174.
\(^{821}\) ICE letter.
probably still remembered a smattering of Cantonese from those days—and he had an uncommon respect for Chinese engineers and workers (see *Hanyang*).

![Railway at Canton](image)

Fig. 52. *Railway at Canton* (detail), [c.1910] (Hong Kong: Grace & Co., [c.1910]).

Though the living and working conditions must have been hard going for a man in his late sixties, the place and peoples would have been exotic to a newcomer.

Not so Shameen perhaps: it was a colony-island on a reclaimed sandbank in the Pearl (Chu Kiang) River off the shore of the treaty port of Canton, a way upriver from the thirteen original foreign “factories.” It was about half a mile long by 200 yards wide (800 by 180 metres)—or twenty minutes walk around on the embankment or “Bund”—and divided between the British and French Concessions. It was home to about eight or nine hundred foreign nationals. Cars and Chinese (bar day-servants) were banned from the island. The banks and shipping offices faced the central avenue; on the open side, the houses gave onto a “communal lawn” with a playground and sports grounds.\(^{823}\) In 1879, Isabella Bird wrote that life in the enclave, “insular and exclusive” as it was, “reproduce[d] English life as far as possible, and add[ed] a boundless hospitality of its own.”\(^{824}\) By 1908, it was assuming a *fin d’empire* decadent ambiance in the context of the troubles ashore in the wake of the failed Boxer Rebellion of 1901, which led to the Russo-Japanese War over Manchuria in


1904, and ultimately to the dissolution of the Qing Dynasty and the institution of the Republic in 1911. In hindsight, the centre of power in East Asia was shifting further East—not that the English colonists cared to notice. Chamier the Anglophobe would have agreed with Nora Waln that society in Shameen was all-too-formal and cliquish with its “hatted and white-kid-gloved” hierarchy and suffered for its lack of contact with the locals ashore.  

Fig. 53. Shameen, Canton, 1913 (Hong Kong: M. Sternberg, 1913).  

For Frank and Daisy, who by now were “old China hands,” there was nothing to do but make do—as did Chamier, whatever his misgivings about life in the enclave. Warner describes life there as hospitable:  

[L]ife . . . was full and demanding. There was much social activity. . . . The days were long and hot. They rode in the early mornings, rested during the heat of the afternoon, played the piano, sang and entertained friends in the evening. . . . There were days and nights on the houseboat and visits to Hong Kong.  

Frank was often off working—as was Daisy with trips to give concerts in Hong Kong and Singapore. Chamier and Dolly seemed to fit in easily enough: he filled his time reading and painting, while Dolly helped with the grandchildren. They probably

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825 Waln 200.  
827 Frances Warner 36, 38.
returned briefly to London for the marriage of their son Charles to Muriel Varna at St Giles in London in December of 1909. For a year from about September 1909, Chamier paid a series of visits to Hankow (Yueh’Han) about 800 miles (1300 km) north of Canton on what he had decided would be “[h]is last professional work,” as “Inspector of steel rail manufactures at the Hanyang works on behalf of several of the leading railways in China”—including Frank Grove’s Canton-Kowloon Railway.828 The Hanyang Iron and Steel Works became known as the first industrial enterprise in China.

But the Chamiers did not get to enjoy their retirement together. At the end of September 1910, Chamier was back in England again to supervise the publication of his collection of essays, *War and Pessimism, and Other Studies* (1911), and to read a paper, “Hanyang Iron and Steel Works” (1910), before an Iron and Steel Institute meeting at Buxton in Derbyshire. While he was away, Dolly died of dysentry back in China (her death was registered on 30 September 1910).829 Warner suggests that Dolly’s death “was an overwhelmingly tragic blow for Daisy. The heart-rending consequence of their readiness to benefit their parents’ altered lives was an altogether bitter tragedy for Frank and Daisy.”830 Presumably it was for Chamier too: China had claimed both his son’s and his wife’s lives—as it was to claim his own a few years later. The tyranny of distance so typical of colonial experience had deprived him of the chance to be with them at their passing, as it had done earlier with his mother, but not, by some cruel paradox, in the case of his father, whose death sent him off to the colonies in the first place. It is uncertain whether he decided to stay on in London with his friend Frederick Millar, rather than face Shameen straight away, or to return to China straightaway to sort out Dolly’s estate; you would assume he would have wanted to see his new and long-awaited granddaughter, Frances, who was born in November 1910 and provided the family some consolation for the loss of Dolly.831

**Detour 3: Chamier the Epicurean 2—a Final Philosophy**

In this maze of conflicting lights, this whirl of discordant emotions, the

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828 “Obituary” 286; see *Hanyang* 372 and Grove and Boothby 174, 214; *ICE letter*.
829 *GRO Consular Death Indices* (1906-10) 7 (12: 409).
830 Frances Warner 35.
831 Chamier gave Millar’s West Brompton address to the ICE as his address for communication in 1911, so he either did not return to China or intended to stay in London in the interim (*ICE letter*).
pessimist philosopher treads his cautious way, never much elated or unduly depressed, moderating his passions, controlling ambition, avoiding all excesses, seeking to discriminate the good from the bad, the grain from the chaff, the truth from the false, and to regulate his conduct accordingly. He expects but little from human nature, and is therefore rarely disappointed. As he realises that love is the mainspring of happiness in this life, he cultivates the warm affections of the heart, notwithstanding the sore rebuffs and bereavements that so frequently attend upon them.

—George Chamier, “Pessimism” (WP 38)

Chamier was in London in 1911 to oversee the publication of his collection of essays, to which he bequeathed the title *War and Pessimism, and Other Studies* (1911), fittingly lugubrious given recent events in his life. In his semi-retirement, he had set about collecting his essays—to complete, or perhaps to serve as an appendix to his œuvre. Millar, his eternal advocate, helped him to get the collection published by Watts & Co. The essays fall into two groups: the majority are more or less straightforward reviews of literary and philosophical works by Carlyle, Emerson, More, Ruskin, Ibsen, Marcus Aurelius and Shakespeare; the two opening essays, “The Moral Aspect of War” (1911?) and “Pessimism” (1895), are stand-alone philosophical meditations, which are somewhat more expository and systematic than the “contemplations” of *Philosopher Dick* or the “palavers” of *Siren*. The latter essay, “Pessimism,” was written in 1895 when Chamier was bringing his trilogy of novels to close and serves as a kind of *summa philosophica*, offering, as Joan Stevens puts it, his “final philosophy.” It is a literally a mature philosophy: bar some engineering submissions and papers, all of Chamier’s published works were brought out, if not written, after 1890 when he was forty-eight. It is from this perspective that the novels were written—significantly, Tim, his stand-in in *Successful Man*, is roughly the same age when his story ends and he decides to tell *The Story* in hindsight. For both Chamier and Tim, their fiction answers to a need to reconstruct their lives retrospectively to make sense of and justify them. For Tim, this is a matter of figuring out how to tell the story right; for Chamier, it is also a philosophical problem—hence,

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832 Unless otherwise noted, all references in this section are to *War and Pessimism*.
833 Joan Stevens, *Introduction* xi.
he reconstructs his life as a trilogy of sentimental education or a “Philosopher’s Progress.”

Chamier’s final philosophy—or rather, that of his stand-in the “pessimist philosopher”—seems not a little gloomy (38). Optimism has had its day; pessimism is more realistic: nature is “an armed camp, intent on internal warfare” and thus for “the great mass of humanity . . . suffering predominates”—in fact, it could be said, to quote Schopenhauer, that this world is “the worst of all possible worlds” (27, 25-26, 26).⁸³⁴ Among the human evils of his day are numbered meritocracy, scientism, “Mammon[ism],” “the religion of ‘healthy-mindedness,’” Social Darwinism and majoritarianism (31, 32). They are summed up in the creed of our so-called “advanced age”: “the rule of violence, the greed of competition, the worship of Mammon, and . . . ‘hustling’” (33). Despite this litany, he does not see himself as some sort of “Doctor Tant Piss” (naysayer; Fr. too bad) or wholly disillusioned outsider (21).⁸³⁵ Like Raleigh in Siren, Chamier does not reject our everyday “illusions”: “The greatest charm of life lies in its happy illusions, and these should not be roughly dispelled,” but argues that we should not rest with “misrepresent[ation]” either (25). He rewrites Pope’s optimistic credo from the “Essay on Man” (1.3), “Man never is, but always to be, [sic] blessed,” as “Man is never blessed, but always expects to be so” (23, 25).

Chamier rejects absolute outsideness in War and Pessimism, then, as he had Raleigh do despite himself in Philosopher Dick. It is not his fate to be some sort of bush prophet. He argues in “Emerson on Self-Reliance” that Emerson and the Transcendentalists—excepting “[p]oor Thoreau [who] made an experiment of himself in the noble cause of . . . self-reliance” and failed—represent such an outside position, where “[t]he glorious ego . . . [is] magnif[ied] into a self-sufficient entity” (55, 53). For him, their “self-reliance” comes down to a rejection of history for a “sublime self-sufficiency,” in which “[t]he present, or rather their present, is all that concerns them” (57). This parallels his criticism in “Ruskin’s ‘Sesame and Lilies’” of Ruskin’s sublime ideals: “the ideal should always be in touch with the real, otherwise it becomes purely visionary and Utopian; even if it soar to high heaven it must start from the lowly earth, and have a useful purpose in view” (111). But Chamier does not advocate a straightforward utilitarianism; he wants a more practical wisdom, like that

⁸³⁴ Schopenhauer, World as Will and Representation, vol. 2, 583 (sec. 46).
of Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Stoic, who found the “supreme good” to be virtue “not in doctrines and fine phrases . . . but in action” (94).

As we know from the novels, Chamier replaced this sublime self-sufficiency—whether egotistical or idealistic—with a species of Hume’s “social sympathy,” but one that allows the individual to keep a modicum of distance on society: an outside inside position. It is not easy to define this sentiment and how it might be put into practice—it seems like an out-clause in what he presents in the novels as the broken social contract of the settler colonies and is hard to credit given his individualism and fatalism. And we know that sympathy or sentiment is something of an idée fixe for Chamier: if the discourse of sentiment serves as a structural element in his trilogy of novels, in the essays he applies the idea of sentiment even more broadly. He argues in “Ruskin’s ‘Frondes Agrestes’” that “art appeals mostly to . . . sentiment, to “certain conditions of human nature” rather than “fixed principles,” and in “Carlyle and Hero-Worship” that “[s]entiment . . . is the heart of the world; from it emanate all the kindly passions and benevolences of human nature. Love is the great bond of humanity, the mainspring of noble and unselfish action” (71, 49). Hence, his main problem with Emerson’s worldview is “the absence of disinterested sympathy, fellowship, or brotherly love, or even public spirit,” which makes his ideas “not at all human, for they are utterly lacking in heart” (58).

Chamier’s alternative to Emerson’s sublime self-sufficiency in War and Pessimism seems rather idealistic—and altogether an inside position: “It is not by isolated independence of spirit that the world will ever be rendered any better or happier, but rather by mutual dependence on one another and mutual concessions toward one another, which may stifle the innate selfishness of man” (59). He grounds this call to sympathy in the transcendental idealism of Schopenhauer, in particular, in his idea of sympathy as a transcendental affect that enables us to transcend worldly suffering: “either in imagination we put ourselves vividly in the sufferer’s place, or we see in his fate the lot of the whole of humanity, and consequently above all our own fate. Thus, in a roundabout way, we always weep about ourselves; we feel sympathy with ourselves.” As I have noted, this intuition reads like a metaphysical version of Adam Smith’s idea of sympathy or “fellow-feeling” as an exercise in positionalinity, in which we put ourselves in another’s place, an act of imaginary

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836 Hume, Enquiry Concerning . . . Morals 41 (5.2).
837 Schopenhauer, World as Will and Representation, vol. 1, 377 (sec. 67)
“changing places.” But though this gesture underlies Chamier’s laissez-faire attitude to other individuals, it remains an ironic ideal for him, limited in application and necessarily compromised in practice—not that this is a bad thing, as he suggests in “Pessimism”: as a “pessimist philosopher,” “[h]e expects but little from human nature, and is therefore rarely disappointed” (38). Sympathy might work in the home (as sentimental domesticity) or in “philosophical” dialogue (as “mitigated scepticism”), but it is not a universal principle of social interaction. Nonetheless, these possibilities represent the outcome of his retrospective working through of his life in the novels and capture his day-to-day sense of life as an outside insider: in Siren, he has Raleigh settle on a Humean ironic sentimentality, a “mitigated scepticism” or middle path between dogmatism and “excessive scepticism” and he points him toward the kind of sentimental domesticity, the ethos of heart and home, that enables Tim to get by in day-to-day life in the unsentimental Marvellous Melbourne of Successful Man.

The limitation Chamier places on sympathy is in keeping with the philosophy of “Pessimism”: he argues that although “[p]essimism realises the brotherhood of man in our common sufferings and our common end,” its “point of view . . . regards the individual rather than the community. [It] deals mostly with our personal existence, because every man is a world unto himself—has to work out his own salvation and to suffer in his own person” (36, 35-36). In any case, he was able to translate his laissez-faire attitude to others into a laissez-faire attitude to his own life—in hindsight at least. He puts it very simply: “A pessimist, although tinged with gentle melancholy, may be a happy man—in the best sense of happiness”; what is more, “it is not necessary for the pessimist to withdraw entirely from society. . . . He has to live in the world” (36, 37). The essay ends with a thinly veiled defence of his own unsuccessful life:

Suffering he [“the pessimist philosopher”] must endure, for suffering is intimately woven into the texture of our existence, but he bears such inevitable trials with fortitude and resignation. . . . [H]e finds compensations for most of his afflictions, for such is a dispensation of nature. There is . . . a wide open field for innocent and elevating enjoyment in the study of nature, science, and literature, or the practice

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838 Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* 12 (1.1.1).
839 Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* 140 (12.3).
of music and art, and he gleans there all he can, according to his tastes and accomplishments. Thus he avoids idleness and escapes ennui.

No rapture fires his soul, no bright star above guides his course; he indulges in no sanguine illusions about the reformation of the world, neither does he worry himself concerning posterity. He does not aspire to be a hero, neither does he incline to become a martyr; but he pursues his even way, keeping rather in the shade, endeavouring to do what is right, and content to fulfil all manifold duties. . . . Death has no terrors for him; he will live and die with equanimity. (38-39)

The passage echoes the “Epicurean philosophy” of his final letter to Grainger—and Tim’s retrospective apologia in Successful Man: “I have managed to scramble through life, with the usual ‘ups and downs’; but not without interest and enjoyment to myself, and, I trust, some measure of comfort and happiness to those belonging to me. I am satisfied with my lot [though it] has not been an exalted one. . . .” In short, Chamier tried to look back on his life “with the conviction that everything has been for the best” (SSM II).

To understand better how Chamier might have arrived at this conviction, we need to return him to the colonies where he was most at home. The problem he has his “heroes” Raleigh and Tim confront in the Australasian colonies is the problem of how they as unsettled settlers can preserve their equanimity—or ataraxia, to use the Epicurean term—in the brave new world of the colony. Theirs is a limit case of what Joan Stevens among others has called the “colonial dilemma” of “find[ing] oneself divided between two worlds.”840 The dilemma is normally conceived as a push-pull between Home and here—not so much between being “an Englishman” or “a New Zealander,” which is what Stevens means by it, or being colonial or not, as living with what Sylvia Lawson calls “the paradox of being colonial,” being caught in the bind between internationalism and nationalism.841 It is a space inhabited virtuously, if not altogether happily, by someone like Marcus Clarke who, as Robert Dixon puts it,

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840 Joan Stevens, ed., Introduction, Check to Your King, by Robin Hyde (Wellington: Reed, 1960) vi.
“adopts the mobility of a cosmopolitan identity while maintaining the difference of being colonial.”

Something similar could be said of Chamier. Like Clarke, he was indebted to his cosmopolitan, or rather, metropolitan legacy—the discourse of sentiment, Continental philosophy, a German scientific education, and so on—for the wherewithal in life and art to come to terms with the new world of the colony. But despite the always sceptical view of the place voiced by his autoethnographical protagonists, he was happier in the colony than Clarke was, to put it somewhat bathetically. It was not that he found a happier fit between what he brought from the Old World and the New one than Clarke, because “the difference of being colonial” is still a foremost concern of Chamier’s fiction, not just the lack of fit between the Old and the New, but also the way the Old in being fitted to the New became radicalised in the debased space of the colony. We see it in his criticism of Canterbury society as being more English than the English—radically English—and out-and-out capitalist—radically Victorian, perhaps. But in keeping with his laissez-faireism, he was happier to work with or within the constraints of the colony—less “dislocated” or alienated from the world of the colony, as McCann puts it—than Clarke was. This is another way of saying that he, as During says of Maning, “did not write to and for the centre.”

Like Maning, the autoethnographer par excellence of *Old New Zealand*, he was instead “driven back onto himself—into self-reflexivity,” but whereas, as a “Pakeha Maori,” Maning dwelt on the “difference” between first and second settlers embodied in his own position, Chamier lived out the position of the unsettled settler.

This eccentricity implies an acknowledgment on Chamier’s part that unlimited mobility or “nomadism” is not an option, even for an unsettled settler, because geopolitical forces, both imperial and local, always act upon the individual in the space of the colony. He has his stand-ins learn this the hard way in the novels. One lesson they learn straight away:

a. that, though the colony promises “freedom and the bush,” all they get is Home reproduced here in a debased form—in New Zealand, as petty aristocracy become squattocracy served by bureaucratic government; in

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844 During, “What Was the West?” 772.
The other two lessons are more problematic and drawn-out:

b. that forced or unforced retreat into solitude is pathological and the individual must adapt themselves somehow to settler society—this is the lesson of the Canterbury diptych;

c. that no-one can resist being co-opted by settler society—this is the lesson of Successful Man.

This is to say, Chamier takes lines of movement to be always somewhat constrained within the colony; there is no empty territory. This determinism sets up a push-pull dynamic within the colony that replicates in microcosm the push-pull that exists in colonial life between Home and here.

We have seen this dynamic at work in the double push-pull in the Canterbury novels between the healthy middle ground of ironic sentimentality and its two extremes: pathological isolation or forced socialisation. The middle ground of ironic sentimentality represents a via media between two extremes: the all-too-open or atomised world of the frontier and the all-too-closed penal world of the settlement with its rigorous positivism. Chamier’s settler must avoid both

a. being overwhelmed in solitude by the sublime power of nature, like Raleigh in Philosopher Dick—this is his reading of the problem of what Fairburn calls atomism confronted by the Men Alone or bushmen and the “roving population” of the frontier of settlement (PD 43), and

b. being “overdetermined” by settler society, like Raleigh in Siren—this is his reading of the problem of settler positivism: “the subjugation of all to a collective end” that for Pawson is characteristic of the Canterbury settlement in particular.845

How Raleigh might put this ironic sentimentality into practice is deferred at the end of Siren because he heads off to the metropolis and life as a writer.

Chamier refigures this polarity in Successful Man in the polar opposites of sentimental domesticity and unsentimental meritocracy, between which there seems to be no middle ground. But he offers us a way out of this dilemma in the person of his narrator Tim, who as a split narrator is both narrator-protagonist and constructor-

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845 Fairburn, The Ideal Society 191; Pawson 316.
narrator in *The Story*. Despite his co-option by the unsentimental Power, Tim sees the ironies of their respective stories as he reconstructs them in hindsight. As we saw, he learns to adapt himself to settler society in Marvellous Melbourne in part by means of the irony—what he calls his “conscience,” his eye for self-deception in others and himself—that allows him to keep his distance on goings-on there (XVII). If this instinct fails him at times in his own life as he lives it (as narrator-protagonist), it gives ironic force to the narrative he constructs in hindsight (as narrator-constructor).

The same is true of Chamier in his own narrative, the trilogy. While, like any other settler, he could not escape the lines of force in the colony, to play constructor-narrator in his own life enabled him to create a space of relative freedom for himself—in the spaces between or what the Epicureans called the *metakosmia* (Gk interstices), as it were. In Epicurean cosmology, the *metakosmia* are “the place where new worlds may come into being” under the influence of stray atoms, as De Vogel evocatively puts it.846 Chamier’s ambitions were hardly so lofty, but his gesture of self-fashioning through fiction did enable him to see “[his] own insignificant self” as an alternative “centre,” to rephrase Tim’s final reflection in *Successful Man*, or “a world unto himself” (XXX; 35). He had set out in his autoethnographical trilogy to find a place for himself as an unsettled settler in the Australasian colonies. As he saw it, that required that he fashion an outward self that was both well-imagined, that is, that took an artful shape, and adaptive, that recapitulated the history of its evolution. This is what he did in constructing a story of himself as successful author—of his own life, at least—as an aesthetic solution to the problem of his unsettlement. Furthermore, like Tim, Chamier is not deceived as to the nature of his story: it is an ironic gesture of aesthetic settlement.

But irony is not the only virtue of this gesture. In comparison with the teleological historical narrative of Marvellous Melbourne, the effect of which is to distance settlers of the present day from their “demoralized” forbears—and no doubt prophesy a grand future after the example of the present, Chamier’s narrative of sentimental education is historically “virtuous,” an attempt to see his life on an eccentric—ex-centric and apparently erratic—orbit as a meaningful whole. If the colony looks back to move forward, he looks back to better know where he has been and who he has become. His story performs a perhaps more virtuous settler narrative

that has become the status quo of historical revisionism: that to understand our present we must understand our past—and each of us must start with ourselves. 847 It is not unlike a historical version of autoethnography: to adapt Deborah Reed-Danahay’s definition, “autoethnohistory” as “self (auto) ethn[history]” that is also “the ethn[history] of one’s own group,” one’s own ethnos. 848

It was Chamier’s writing that centred him, then, enabling him to see his life as a work of art—as transcendentally fated, in accordance with Schopenhauer’s recipe for aesthetic distance in the “Transcendent Speculation on the Apparent Deliberateness in the Fate of the Individual” (SSM XXX). “Transcendental fatalism” is “the conviction that the course of an individual’s life, however confused [or erratic] it appears to be, is a complete whole, in harmony with itself and having a definite tendency and didactic meaning, as profoundly conceived as the finest epic,” or indeed, as the translator E. F. J. Payne adds in a footnote: “If we carefully turn over in our minds many of the scenes of the past, everything therein appears to be as well mapped out as in a really systematically planned novel”—or sequence of novels. 849 In hindsight, Chamier’s own story mirrors Tim’s split narrative in Successful Man: it exhibits both

a. a “demonstrable fatalism,” whereby Chamier saw his life as it unfolded in a series of modest failures in life (in his work life, rather than his home life) and art—as demonstrably fated; and

b. a “transcendental fatalism,” whereby he was able to see his life in hindsight as a work of art—as transcendentally fated.

How so? Through his narrative, he was able to see his life as demonstrating a “definite tendency”: as a circle through the colonies and back again, but lived in the main out on an eccentric orbit “off the beaten track” at the periphery of the colonies—and happily so (SSS GR 107). He was also able to see it as expressing a certain “didactic meaning”: as a sentimental education whereby he as unsettled settler learns to get settled—insofar as an unsettled settler can—in the face of the demonstrable “fatal” inadequacy of settler society and its (and his own) responses to the place to be settled and its peoples.

848 Reed–Danahay 2.
849 Schopenhauer, “Transcendent Speculation” 204 and 204n.
To see his life in hindsight as “systematic” or “mapped out,” as Tim had done as the successful narrator of *Successful Man*, offered Chamier the vaunted “equanimity” he seemed able to achieve only fleetingly in the “scramble” of life in the settler colonies. According to Schopenhauer in a famous passage elsewhere, this is that “painless state, prized by Epicurus as the highest good and as the state of the gods; for [a] . . . moment we are delivered from the miserable pressure of the will. We celebrate the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still.”850 It is of course an aesthetic distance, whereby Chamier becomes the successful narrator of his own life. But for Schopenhauer, it also enables the individual to understand their character, that is, to use a metaphor Chamier would have liked, the “fundamental tone” that enables one to perceive that “the manifold events and scenes [of their life] are at bottom like variations on one and the same theme.”851 For the young Georgy who found himself holed up in a hut in the back country of Canterbury, life seemed something of a “dreary pilgrimage,” melancholic and marked by “shattered illusions”:

> The memory of past events now appeared to him like a vast panorama, full of light and shade, but in which a melancholy tint prevailed. And here he could trace the lengthy course he had followed since he left the shores of the Old World; crossing boundless oceans and desert plains; the trials he had undergone; his years of solitude, and the many shattered illusions that stood like landmarks along the track of life’s dreary pilgrimage. *(PD 162)*

The Tim who sits down on the shore of Lake Geneva in the final chapter of *Successful Man* and contemplates the “change” in “[his] own insignificant self” comes to a conclusion altogether different in tone:

> my life, notwithstanding my want of success, had not been an unhappy one, and looking back upon it was no melancholy hindsight. . . . Although many illusions had vanished and the warmth of passion abated, yet my sensations had not grown duller, my aspirations had not lost their spring, nor my heart its sympathies. I was, in many respects, a more contented being than I had been in my anxious and lonely youth; much happier in my loving surroundings, more trusting in faith.

850 Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, 196 (sec. 38).
851 Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, 35 (sec. 4).
more resigned to the inevitable, and wiser in my views of life. So that
the result of my meditations, in the light of that sublime panorama
before my eyes, was one of serenity of mind and placid resignation.

(SSM XXX)

It is “no melancholy hindsight”: he is able to see his life as a sentimental education by
which he has come to view with equanimity his position as an unsettled settler on an
eccentric orbit—and thereby to look back on his life “with the conviction that
everything has been for the best” (SSM II).

**England: Full Circle to the Centre**

1912-15

By 1912, Chamier had come full circle to England, where he was born but had
spent only about the first two years of his life. He took bachelor rooms in a terrace
house in Westminster near Hyde Park, made his will, and set about brushing up his
skills in “figure drawing,” read: nude portraiture (*Letter to Grainger* 3).852

Fig. 54. 62 Queensborough Terrace, Westminster, personal photograph by author, 11

852 Chamier’s will is given in full in the Appendices, along with a chronology of the events relating to
his death and the administration of his estate (Letters Testimonial from the High Court of Justice of
Great Britain and Ireland [25 July 1915], FO917/1703 (C207263), National Archives [Great Britain],
Kew).
Later that year, when Frank’s work ended on the Canton-Kowloon Railway and before he started work on the Nanking-Hunan Railway, Chamier, Frank, Daisy, the three children and the amah (Cantonese “nurse”) went on an extended six-month tour of Europe “in leisurely fashion, stopping to admire the magnificent scenery, to walk and to sketch,” as Tim does in Successful Man—without the sketching (XXX). Tim had mocked the “de rigueur” return Home, “the ‘home’ trip” as “the crowning of [the] prosperous career” of the successful gentleman-settler, which neither he nor Chamier were (SSM XXV). But the feelings he records on returning to Lake Geneva probably square with Chamier’s own, remembering that, like Tim, Georgy had spent time in Switzerland as a “delicate and emotional youth” with his maternal grandmother (SSM XXX). The visit would have recalled Chamier to that final chapter of Successful Man. There Tim notes that the scenery has not changed, “for Nature does not change,” but “[his] own insignificant self, the centre of all these emotions,” has:

The outward enchantment was still there; it was my own insignificant self, the centre of all these emotions, that had altered; and it was not without a pang that I contemplated all the ravages of that change.

Around me all was bright and fair, ever fresh and young, and clad in surpassing loveliness; but when I turned an inward eye upon myself I realised with a sigh that the slim, the delicate and emotional youth, who had once gazed with rapture on that well-remembered scene, had now turned into a portly, sedate, and middle-aged man, whose air [sic] was tinged with grey, whose forehead was lined with wrinkles, and from whom the spirit of fancy and enthusiasm had fled, to make place for vulgar cares and sordid considerations.

Tim’s description of himself squares with the portrait of Chamier in later life with which we began.

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853 Frances Warner 40.
Chamier protests overmuch the passage of time and his submersion in “vulgar cares and sordid considerations”—he had always taken a perverse, even decadent pleasure in submitting to his fate. In the evening of life, he would have seen the dramatic irony in his life lived on an eccentric orbit “off the beaten track” having brought him full circle back to Europe, as is foreshadowed in *Successful Man* (SSS GR 107). Though he remained to some extent unsettled through the ups and downs of his life, his sense of “[his] own insignificant self” as an alternative “centre” that his writing gave him allowed him to preserve that *ataraxia* or equanimity that for the Epicureans characterized a life well lived. Over time, he realized the kind of happy fatalism that Raleigh aims at in the novels: “We shall all reach the final goal soon enough, in any case; why not take it easy, and enjoy ourselves by the way?” (SSS 114). It enabled him to look back on his life, as does Tim in *Successful Man*, with “serenity of mind and placid resignation”:

I was reminded that the bright morning of my life had long since gone by, and that the sun of my humble destiny had passed its meridian—passed, and never to return! . . . I sat down . . . to ponder once again over the great problem of our fleeting existence; but I did not grieve
over it. I consoled myself, as most sensible men do console themselves under the circumstances, and I decided in my own mind that I had no wish for the return of my youth—for who would live his youth over again? (SSM XXX)

After the trip, the two older grandchildren, David and Marion, stayed on in England at St George’s, a pioneer co-educational boarding school in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, and Frank, Daisy and Frances relocated north to Nanking, another treaty port on the Yangtze inland from Shanghai. Nanking was very different to Shameen, being “without a European quarter . . . so that it was difficult to find any sort of decent habitation there,” as Chamier put it.854 As for Chamier, to fend off “Malades imaginaires” (hypochondriases), he settled into a routine of going to art school, visiting the galleries and weekending with Millar at his country house in Norfolk (Letter to Grainger 3). But by 1914 Daisy was troubled by rumours of war in Europe and “felt an absolute compulsion to be with her children again and to see her father.”855 She and Frances visited that summer, taking houses at Harpenden near the school and then during the school holidays at Eastbourne, where Chamier visited them. Their respite was short-lived: in September, she received news that Frank was seriously ill with peritonitis, so she and Frances left immediately for China, camping out on the deck of a cargo boat and just managing to dodge the infamous German light cruiser the *Emden* en route. Frank recovered and they resolved to persuade Chamier to return to live with them.856 Initially, Daisy had suggested he delay returning for a year until they had made room for him in their new place, but she, like Chamier stranded in London, “could not stand the separation” and suggested that he join them for the summer at the resort of Tsingtao on the Shandong Peninsula in north-eastern China, about five hundred kilometres north of Shanghai (Letter to Grainger 2).857

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854 Frances Warner 40-42.
855 Frances Warner 43.
856 Frances Warner 45.
857 The place of residence noted on the title page of the probate of Chamier’s estate is London (granted 12 June 1915; see “Wills 1915: Chamier, George”), in accordance with the petition to the probate and the Letter to Grainger, which gives his address as 62 Queensborough Terrace, Hyde Park. However, elsewhere the facts seem to differ: on 14 April 1914, his address for communication is given as “c/o Frank Grove, Engineer-in-Chief, Nanking-Hunan Railway, Nanking, China via Siberia,” possibly because he assumed that any correspondence sent to him would probably relate to his work in China and could be dealt with by his son-in-law (ICE letter); his “fixed place of abode” is described elsewhere in the probate as Shanghai, probably because that was where he intended to live and where his death was registered (“Wills 1915: Chamier, George”).
Chamier did not hesitate to embark on the journey, despite the dangers of travel in wartime, which was entirely in keeping with his “Epicurean Philosophy”: “I mean to be young & lively till I send in my checks. And I don’t mind when that happens—This, I consider, the true Epicurean Philosophy to which I belong.” His grandfather had written something very similar at seventy-five not long before he died: “how[ever] uncertain is the duration of my Life’s remaining[,] I am quite prepared for the Change & and shall quit the Scene without regrets.”858 In March 1915, Chamier “quit the scene,” leaving for China on the *Fushimi Maru*. He would not make it alive.

Appendices

1. George Chamier, “Report on the Roads of the South Sefton” (25 May 1864)
2. George Chamier, “Report on the Main North Roads Kowai District” (15 Apr. 1865)
3. The disappearance of Searight: the true story
4. An accident on the road from Wonoka to Hallett (1881)
5. George Chamier, “A South-Sea Siren” (1895)
6. A bibliographical note: the after-lives of *Philosopher Dick* (c.1963ff.) and *A South-Sea Siren* (1895-98, 1967ff.)
7. George Chamier, letters to Angus & Robertson (1896, 1898)
8. Will of George Chamier (27 Dec. 1912)
9. George Chamier, letter to Grainger (2 Feb. 1915)

1. *George Chamier, “Report on the Roads of the South Sefton” (25 May 1864)*

Sir

In accordance with the request of the Board I have the honor to present the following general report on the roads of the district.

The principal part of the South Sefton District under cultivation is comprised in a strip of land nearly 15 miles in length and varying in width from one to four miles, running along the foot and sides of the Mount Grey Downs, and bounded mostly on the lower side by several swamps, that extend in branches in a Northerly and Southwesterly direction between the high lands, the Ashley banks, and the Sea beach.

The agricultural District is traversed by two Main roads, “the Rangiora Ford Road” which starts from the North bank of the Ashley and runs in a straight line to Brown’s Bridge, a distance of 7 miles, and the “Railway Reserve,” which in

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859 George Chamier, letter to the Department of Public Works of the Provincial Government of Canterbury, 25 May 1864 (marked as received 7 June 1864), letter 227 (1), Kowai Road Board 1866, Inwards Letters/Public Works 1864-77, agency CAAR, series 19946, accession CH287, boxes/items CP204, Archives New Zealand, Christchurch, being a report addressed to F. A. Weld, Chairman of the South Sefton Roads Board, titled “Report on the Roads of the South Sefton.” Chamier’s orthography has been reproduced as given.
conjunction with part of the Mount Grey Road will form a main and direct line, 9 miles in length, extending from the North Kowai to the Saltwater Creek.

It is upon these roads that the greater part of the traffic [sic] of a large district will entirely depend, as they form the only direct communication with the market for the produce of the farms; Rangiora and the Saltwater Creek, and it is from them that most of the secondary and by roads branch off.

Very little has been done as yet towards the formation of either. On the “Rangiora Ford Road” most of the necessary culverts have been built and the road was formed by Government last year, for two miles at each extremity, leaving the intermediate span, which is considerably the worst part, untouched.

At 3 miles 64 chains from its commencement the road passes over the upper end of a deep swamp, which is quite impassable in Winter. By a slight detour the road would have followed the present track, which is now on private property, and on hard gravely land.

A similar case occurs about a mile lower down, where the road reserve is carried over a steep bank and gully, requiring a deep cutting at a proportional expense, while a good temporary track has been formed through the side of Sect: (2589) making a bend of a couple of chains in length. So much for the advantages of a Straight [sic] line.

One mile of this road has been metalled by the board, the remaining 3 miles already formed urgently require the same process. The entire cost of forming and metalling this road, including culverts, cuttings and 10 chains through the swamp, I estimate at £1550.

The Railway Reserve during a great part of its length runs over flat and stony land, and can be formed into a good but narrow road at a very small expense. Between the branches of the Kowai the ground is more uneven and requires 8 culverts, a small bridge over the creek through Sect (3197), and many slight cuttings. These works included, the road can be formed from its junction with the Mt Grey Road to the banks of the North Kowai (7 miles) for £1770.

The Mount Grey Road is laid off strait [sic] across the Sefton Swamp, which as yet has formed an unsurmountable barrier to the use of the road, or any direct communication between the Mount Grey Downs and the Saltwater Creek. This swamp extends in long and narrow branches for several miles between the Downs and the Banks of the Ashley and finds its only outlet in the Saltwater Creek. Where the Mt
Grey Road crosses it, the swamp is a quater [sic] of a mile in width, with a soft springy surface. It is in some places very deep and so low as to be almost on a level with the high water mark in the Creek during high tides.

All effective drainage is therefore impossible and the road must be carried through on an embankment. Besides all the water that drains off the neighbouring high land and several minor streams, the swamp in this place receives the floods of Foxe’s Creek, which in the heavy rains are very considerable, and the lowest parts are often covered with a sheet of water. In the face of these facts it is singular that the two Townships, comprising a thousand acres, have been laid off in the swamp. The whole cost of constructing andmetalling this road for the first two miles, I estimate at £2000.

The Road board have voted £500 for the commencement of this important work, which sum will be sufficient to construct an embankment over the deepest part of the Swamp and trafic [sic] will be practicable in the course of a few months. The repairs on the “Great North Road” are almost completed; about half a mile of the road through sand banks in different places has been formed, and thickly clayed and metalled, and from the Ashley to the Saltwater Creek the road has also been metalled.

Among the other roads of the District which although secondary to the forgoing, may be considered main lines; one of the principal is the Amesbury Road which in connection with the road by Section (4798) will run nearly strait [sic] across the Southern half of the District in a Northwesterly direction. The road is reserved through the Township of Amesbury [a planned town near Saltwater Creek] for sixty chains and is mostly on swampy ground. A deep drain has been cut on the Western side, but another one will be required to make the ground firm. The surface will have to be raised in some places three feet above the swamp and metalled. The “Creek” will also require to be bridged. I estimate the whole cost from the “Creek” to the “Rangiora Ford Road” at £1100. But exclusive of this, the road will have to be connected with the Great North Road, probably through private property as no land at all fit for the purpose has been reserved by Government and all communication is at present stopped by Sections (974) and (454). The road reserved along the North Bank of the Ashley at the West end of the District has been reduced by frequent slips in the river Banks to a narrow strip of land impassable for drays and in places rapidly giving way. The Sections therefore taking frontage on this road are entirely cut off from communication with the main roads.
As this end of the District is becoming rapidly populated and all available land purchased and many parts in active cultivation, it is of urgent necessity that some steps be taken towards forming a road in this direction which must run through private property.

The expenditure of the Road Board for work already done or in progress, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and metalling on Great North Road</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangiora Ford Road</td>
<td>242</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Grey Road</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Reserve Road</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West end of District</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road by Section (3167)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among various other works are included 19 culverts and over 190 chains of road metalling.

I am
Sir
Your obedient Servant
George CHAMIER
To F A WELD Esq
Chairman

2 George Chamier, “Report on the Main North Roads Kowai District” (1 Apr. 1865)\(^860\)

Road Board Office

\(^860\) George Chamier, letter to the Department of Public Works of the Provincial Government of Canterbury, 1 Apr. 1865 (marked as received 15 Apr. 1865), letter 533 (1), Kowai Road Board 1866, Inwards Letters/Public Works 1864-77, agency CAAR, series 19946, accession CH287, boxes/items CP204, Archives New Zealand, Christchurch, addressed to the Kowai Roads Board and titled “Report on the Main North Roads Kowai District.” Chamier’s orthography has been reproduced as given.
Gentlemen,

In accordance with your instructions I have the honor to report upon the Main North Roads of the District, their separate advantages and separate cost of construction.

The Present Road would appear to have been laid out with a view of obtaining an immediate accessible way to the Northern end, with few natural obstructions, and therefore adopted for the first requirements of that line of road.

It has the advantage of many improvements, and some considerable sums have been already expended in forming, and metalling some of the worst places, but the road in its present state is totally unfit for the heavy and continual traffic that it has now to bear, especially since the rush to the Gold fields has made it the main line to the West Coast.

The road after leaving the Saltwater Creek, for a distance of nearly 5 miles, runs over a sandy block; separated from the Mount Grey downs, to the westward, and from the sea beach to the East road, by long strips of swamp.

It then approaches the Downs skirts a line of terraces, and crosses the Kowai to Leithfield, a mile from the sea.

About 1½ miles of this piece of the Road, between Saltwater Creek and the Kowai, has already been formed, and metalled. The remaining four miles are in a very bad state and form decidedly the worst piece of road between Christchurch and the Weka Pass. The ground was formerly covered with a cemented crust, formed of sand, and clay almost perfectly level, and sufficiently level to bear light traffic; but this crust has since been broken through in innumerable places, and the road is now a succession of sand holes, almost impassable by day, and dangerous by night.

The cost of forming and metalling a good road, half a chain wide, over the sandy surface will be very considerable on account of the distance road materials have to be carted. I estimate the average cost at £1200 per mile.

The road from the Kowai to the Waipara, a distance of 9 miles runs over arable land, and forms a level way, but in the event of this line becoming the trunk road to the North, it would require forming, and metalling.
2[nd]. The New Road. The second road to the North starts from near Saltwater Creek, and for a distance of two miles follows the Mount Grey road, in a North westerly direction, and crosses the Sefton Swamp: The former great obstacle to any direct communication between the Mount Grey downs, and Saltwater Creek. This road has already been constructed and carried through the swamp on an Embankment.

From the junction of the Mount Grey Road, with the Railway Reserve Road the proposed line will follow the Reserve to the Weka Pass.

The road from the junction the South Branch of the Kowai is formed over flat stony land; between the two branches of the Kowai it runs over undulating ground, which will render the construction of a perfectly level road impossible but by a moderate expenditure the incline might be rendered sufficiently slight to offer no inconvenience to heavy traffic. From the North Branch of the Kowai to the Waipara and from thence to near the Weka Pass the road lies over stony flats, these offer every advantage for the formation of a good road at a low cost.

This new road possesses many important advantages over the present main line. Viz:

1st It is the most direct the distance from Saltwater Creek to the Waipara is shortened by ½ a mile; and when taken on to the Weka Pass, it will shorten the distance by about 1½ miles more.

2nd It lies over better ground, running mostly on high flat land through the heart of an agricultural district, whereas the old road runs partly through sandhills.

3rd The cost of construction is diminished less than one half, and the expense of keeping the road in repair would be greatly lessened.

On the other hand the Present road possesses the advantage of being more level; the undulating downs between the Branches of the Kowai having been avoided.

I estimate the cost of forming and metalling a good road, half a chain wide, from the Saltwater Creek to the Waipara including Drains, culverts, & cuttings, as follows—

For the Present road by Leithfield and Brownsbridge, at £7500—
For the new road, along the Railway reserve, at £3500—

In conclusion I would urge upon you the necessity of some immediate steps being taken towards rendering a main road to the North adequate to its increasing requirements—
I have the honor to be Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant

George CHAMIER

3 The disappearance of Searight: the true story

The story of the first marriage of Chamier’s wife, Emily (or Dolly) Searight, née Gardner, provides an interesting sideline to Chamier’s story. James Searight, her first husband, deserted her in March 1870, two months after their marriage, leaving her pregnant with a son. He headed to Sydney on the Hero, probably unbeknownst to her or her family. She appears to have maintained that Searight deserted her and/or died, describing herself as a widow on her certificate of marriage to George. But there is a family story that her brothers killed Searight for deserting her. In her memoir, Daisy Chamier: My Mother’s Story, Frances Warner relates the story that “[Emily’s] brothers swore vengeance on Searight. The sequel to this story is speculative, and almost legendary, but such evidence points to a killing.” She recounts a story told to her by her uncle Charles Chamier that he met an ex-miner from Victoria in Monte Carlo who said he had helped bury Searight after his murder. Jenny Chamier Grove, her niece, considers the story of Searight’s murder factual, having heard the story first-hand from her great-uncle Charles Chamier and Frances Warner. She quotes Charles Chamier:

My mother had been deserted by her husband and her brothers were enraged. . . . Whether Seawright intended to abandon her or simply to set off to make his fortune, we shall never know, but finally one of her brothers tracked Seawright down, challenged him to a fight and whatever it was that happened the outcome was that Seawright died.

861 After Jenny Chamier Grove, The Disappearance of Mr Seawright [sic]: A True Story.
862 Cobiac (1361/845).
864 Cobiac (116/927).
865 Frances Warner 13.
Either justice was seen to have been done, or it was not seen at all. Either way, if it was a murder, it was never investigated.\(^{867}\)

Jonathan Warner, a family historian, dismisses the story about “the punishment of Seawright” as “rather imitative of an American Western” but “incorrect”: “Colin [Chamier, another family historian] tells the story that Seawright was horse whipped by Wellington Wright Gardner but this is incorrect as Wellington Wright was one of the two of Dolly’s brothers who died in infancy.” He found no evidence in his researches of a divorce or of Seawright’s death (neither have I) and he is sceptical of Charles Chamier’s murder story.\(^{868}\)

Chamier may have met Dolly as early as 1871.\(^{869}\) She was apparently a widow with a young child. As Jenny Chamier Grove puts it,

> When Mrs Dolly Seawright met . . . George Chamier she was a widow with a young son—or so everyone assumed. The truth was that Dolly had a secret. She was not really a widow. Her husband had simply disappeared into the Australian outback. As there was no death certificate to prove that Seawright had died, Dolly and George had to wait seven years before he could legally be presumed dead and they were able to marry.\(^{870}\)

If indeed the interval required to obtain a divorce on the grounds of desertion was seven years, given that they married in September 1878, Chamier and Emily could have met no later than September 1871.\(^{871}\) Jonathan Warner suggests that the required interval was four years, which suggests that they could have met as late as September 1874.\(^{872}\) Whether either of them knew the fate of her husband, by law they would have to wait to marry.

Seawright may well have lived the rest of his life in New South Wales, though it is difficult to sort out whether records refer to him or his son, as they share similar names, or he may have left Australia via Sydney. Their son, Fitzjames Seawright Junior, was brought up by Dolly and George Chamier with their own children and


\(^{869}\) Frances Warner 13; Chamier Grove, Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 1.

\(^{870}\) Chamier Grove, Disappearance of Mr. Seawright 1.

\(^{871}\) Frances Warner 13.

\(^{872}\) Jonathan Warner, letter to the author.
remained close to the family. From the mid-nineties, he owned his own stock and station (and later, real estate) agencies: in Cooma, New South Wales, then in Sydney; he lived at Mosman. He married Jessie Margaret Veitch in 1897. Interestingly, the son of Chamier’s brother Anthony, Leopold Augustus Chamier (“Leo”), purchased a half interest in Fitzjames Searight Junior’s stock and station agency Hain and Searight about 1920. 

Jonathan Warner relates a lawsuit about 1925 (actually 1920) in Melbourne between Chamier’s son-in-law Frank Grove and his brother Daniel over the will of his mother Emily (d. 1889) after a further share of her estate fell in for division. Under the will, a legacy allegedly passed either to his wife Dolly (unlikely given that she died before George, who was the direct descendant and thus legatee) or to his daughter Daisy and son Charles (more likely given that they outlived both their parents), rather than George’s brother Daniel. Warner suggests that “Uncle Daniel did have some sort of title if Dolly’s marriage to George Chamier had not been lawful,” that is, if her first marriage to Searight was never annulled, making Daisy’s birth illegitimate. Frances Chamier records that Frank Grove was “incensed at the ‘slur on the little mother’s name’” rather than concerned about the money. Daniel lost—so the marriage and Daisy’s birth must have been adjudged legitimate.

4 An accident on the road from Wonoka to Hallett (1881)

On 2 July 1881, the Adelaide Observer reported an action in the Supreme Court, “Chamier v. Hill & Co.”: “There was an action in the Supreme Court to recover £1500 for injuries sustained on September 21, 1880, when the plaintiff [Chamier] was injured in the shoulder through the overturning of the defendants’ [Hill & Co.’s]

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873 Frances Warner 18.
875 Cobiac (1018).
876 “Obituary: Mr. F. J. Searight.” Interestingly, Anthony Chamier drew a plan for the auction of a subdivision at Mosman Bay, where Searight lived (“Local Sketch,” inset in Batt, Rodd & Purves, Harbor View Estate, Mosmans Bay: 3rd Subdivision for Auction Sale on the Ground Sat. Sept. 24 1892, at 3 o’clock. [Sydney: J. Miller & Co., 1892]).
877 Atkinson, Saunders & Co. of Manchester (lawyers for Daisy and Charles), letter to Edward Chamier, 5 Aug 1930.
878 Jonathan Warner, letter to the author.
879 Frances Warner 13.
880 Jonathan Warner, letter to the author.
coach when travelling between Wonoka and Hallett.” Wonoka is in the Flinders Ranges near Lake Torrens (near the present town of Hawker); Hallett is two hundred kilometres north of Adelaide at the base of Mount Bryan on what is now the “Barrier Highway” to Broken Hill. The North-South Railway (or Kapunda to North-West Bend Railway), on the construction of which Chamier was Managing Engineer, went through the area in 1880.881 He was riding outside on top of the coach on “a bush unmacadamized road” somewhere between Wonoka and Hallett, some one hundred miles north of Adelaide.882 The coach was overloaded and overturned on a curve; Chamier was “thrown off . . . and had his arm dislocated and the socket fractured.”883

Chamier took Hill & Co. to court. Whether or not there was an earlier hearing in a lower court and though the date of the original Supreme Court is unknown, the appeal in the Supreme Court was heard on 27 and 29 July 1881 before Chief Justice Way, and Justices Boucaut and Andrews (Boucaut and Chamier would later clash over Chamier’s work on the Ocean Dock at Patawalonga). The judgment was delivered in favour of Chamier on 17 August 1881.884

The abstract of the judgment reads:

NEGLIGENCE—Coach—Overloading—Damages.

Plaintiff was passenger by defendants’ coach which overturned and caused injuries to the plaintiff.

The coach was constructed to carry eight passengers inside and eight outside. At the time of the overturning there were eight passengers inside and ten outside.

The judge accepted Chamier’s account; according to the defendant, there were nine inside and nine outside.885 The *Law Report* continues: “According to the driver’s evidence one of the passengers had moved from the inside to the outside of the coach without his knowledge or consent. Immediately after the accident, the driver drew up a memorandum, which he induced the passengers to sign, whereby the overturning was attributed to overloading.” This document decided the case in favour of the plaintiff:

The evidence showed that the coach could not travel safely with ten passengers outside and eight inside, and at the trial the Chief Justice, who was sitting without a jury, found that the accident was due to the overloading; and held that it was immaterial whether the passenger who has moved from the inside to the outside of the coach had done so with or without the driver’s knowledge or consent.

*Held*—on appeal—that there was no ground to disturb the verdict. Question of damages discussed.886

Damages were awarded in the amount of £752 10s., £52 10s. for “the cost of the cure” and a sum of £700 “in addition,” being damages for his “pecuniary loss” and “pain and suffering” (this is probably more than AUD100,000 in today’s terms).887 Chamier’s injuries appear to have been relatively severe. The evidence as to his injuries reads as follows:

the plaintiff is an engineer, having a considerable practice, seemingly an extending one, and he has made a specialty of a class of business requiring a good deal of outside work, the use of the theodolite, continual travelling over rough roads, and the mounting and descending of ladders. The plaintiff is in early middle-aged life, and with regard to his profession he is rendered a cripple. According to the surgeons, who say they hoped the plaintiff would be better than he was at the time of the trial, he will not be able to use his arm above the shoulder for any practical purposes. Although the plaintiff may take an observation, he will be unable to do a day’s work with it. It is not likely he will be able to drive a buggy for himself. Therefore in a great many branches of his profession the plaintiff will be very seriously inconvenienced. It is further shown that the Government, from whom he was in the habit of obtaining employment, will not retain an engineer who is obliged to have the services of an assistant in taking observations. . . . At the same time he [Chamier] candidly admitted that his income was not less than it had been, but he said with equal

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confidence that the result of the accident must produce a diminution in his income arising from the disqualification for outdoor work. 888

Leaving aside the question as to the degree of physical and financial damages he really suffered in the short and long term, given that he testified that “his income was not less than it had been,” the effect of the ongoing physical “inconvenience” on his professional practice seems to have been that he spent less time on “outdoor work” like surveying and travelled less, at least temporarily.

5 George Chamier, “A South-Sea Siren” 889

Between thirty and forty years ago New Zealand offered a favourite field for emigration to many of those enterprising spirits, whose ardent longing for freedom, novelty, and adventure was tempered with an earnest desire to carve out for themselves a useful and interesting career; those young bloods who, while giving way to a passionate impulse to kick over the traces of conventionality, to plunge off the beaten track, and escape from the restraints and restrictions of a plodding existence, yet, in all their vagaries, kept a keen eye on “the main chance.” The settlement of the Southern Island [106] had only just been formed, and some, at least, of the young communities had been founded on highly approved and benevolent principles, and designed on quite aristocratic lines. They were represented as affording a glorious opening for honest work, where energy was bound to succeed and thrift to be properly rewarded—quite a model establishment, in fact, for respectable labour. Many people of the well-educated class flocked there. Retired army and navy officers came in shoals, the Universities were well represented; there was a goodly sprinkling of lawyers’ clerks, without law; medical students, without practice; and gentlemen farmers, without agricultural experience; there was also a noticeable proportion of very highly-connected “ne’er-do-wells.”

I saw a good deal of this enterprising movement, indeed, I participated in it. I heard a great deal [107] about the “dignity of labour” in those dear old days, and I even tried my hand at it, but without any perceptible accession of personal dignity, that I am aware of, or of any tangible profits either.

889 SSS GR 104-12.
But it struck me, in after years, that this phase of existence might be interesting, and even amusing, to describe, in the shape of a novel, and so I set about patching together a few stray notes, and working in some old sketches, to depict the sort of roving life we led in those days; the “roughing it” we endured in the noble attempt to live “according to nature,” the glowing aspirations we indulged in so heartily, and some of the miserable disenchantments we suffered in consequence. ’Tis but a page of life, and life of no very exciting or attractive kind either, but it is somewhat off the beaten track; it is heartfelt and it is true. “Philosopher Dick” was by no means an uncommon type to be met with in those times, and under the circumstances depicted. A kindly, well-intentioned young fellow, intelligent accomplished, but unpractical; a man with poetical ideas, all sorts of logical theories, and artistic tastes, who loved to moralise about things in general as he went his solitary way, who tried hard to peer into his own heart and into the hidden secrets of nature, but without ever getting to be any the wiser, who talked too much and did too little.

The “philosopher” cannot by any stretch of imagination be elevated into a hero of romance, yet he seems with his bonhomie to have made a good few friends among a discriminating public. A popular hero, in the ordinary sense, he can never be—he hasn’t even got the biceps to act the part properly. Nor can his adventures by the utmost elasticity of language be termed “sensational.” Indeed, I feel called upon by a sense of duty to warn the unwary novel reader in search for “gushing” or “thrilling” incident that there is not a single murder in the whole book. No bloodshed to speak of beyond that of a wild pig, and not even a marriage to end up with. If, after this candid notice and honest warning, any sensation-loving consumer of modern fiction chooses to risk his six shillings on the book he does so on his own responsibility, nor do I see how the much-abused author or the much-to-be-pitied publisher can be fairly called to account on the matter.

My first literary effort was highly appreciated in some quarters and grossly depreciated in others. I am not going to fight it out with my hostile critics. This is a free country, and they are surely entitled to a free expression of their opinions. As for Mrs. Grundy, her day is passed, and she is welcome to rail at me till further orders.
All that I could have wished and modestly asked for would have been for these slashing people, before tearing the book into shreds, to have taken the trouble to have read it through; but this, I am told, would have been expecting a great deal too much. However, I feel that I have been to blame in one respect—for the fairer half of humanity has been but poorly, I might say shabbily, represented in the story. My only excuse is to be found in the distressing fact that the choice elements out of which to manufacture a captivating heroine were altogether wanting in the wild and desolate regions inhabited by the hero, and I have been a hard-and-fast stickler to truth. But I have tried to make amends in the present book,

“A South-Sea Siren,”

I have transplanted him for the occasion into brighter and happier regions. Here the ladies have their innings. The philosopher falls very much in love—*malgré lui* perhaps—he becomes very much distracted from his contemplations, and falls a prey to conflicting affinities.

His temptations are hard to bear, especially when beset by the Siren; one of those malignant yet fascinating creatures that prey on weak-heartedness, and are to be found in all parts of the world, even to the South Seas, and who delight in bringing trouble and scandal into the best-regulated little communities.

But let there be no mistake about it. The Siren is no myth, she is real flesh and blood, and may be met with any day in your travels. How far her numerous victims succumbed to her evil attractions is a matter for the reader to judge. Nay, it is quite possible that a male and a female jury may take quite opposite views on this delicate question.

“Was she guilty?” wrote Thackeray, with reference to the notorious Becky Sharp, but he did not answer the query. And with his great authority before me, I shall likewise decline to answer any similar question with regard to the “South Sea Siren.”

GEORGE CHAMIER.

6 *A bibliographical note: the after-lives of Philosopher Dick (c. 1963ff.) and A South-Sea Siren (1895-98, 1967ff.)*
6.1  *Siren: the first edition*

The book has never had a chance. . . .

—George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson (1898)890

In mid-1896, after *A South-Sea Siren* had been out for a year and a half, Chamier reflected on where things were at with the novel. It had made almost no local impact, because the focus of his publisher T. Fisher Unwin remained the British market, and only secondarily the colonies, mainly through cheap colonial editions of bestsellers. He suggested in a letter to Angus & Robertson of Sydney that Unwins had not adequately publicised the novel (perhaps even in the English market), writing that “[t]he London Publisher has done nothing whatever towards pushing the sale of the work.”891 He decided to approach local publishers to republish or distribute it, hence his letter to Angus & Robertson (prior to approaching them about *Siren*, he had tried unsuccessfully to get them to publish *Successful Man*).892 He revealed what had perhaps been his aim all along: “My main object is to get the book known in Australia & New Zealand.”893

So on 7 July 1896, he wrote to the largest local publisher, Angus & Robertson, publishers in their Literary Series of works mainly by *Bulletin* writers like Banjo Paterson’s first work, *The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses* (1895), and Henry Lawson’s *In the Days When the World Was Wide and Other Verses* and *While the Billy Boils* (1896).894 He explained the situation with *Siren*:

Dear Sirs

I wrote to my publisher Mr. Fisher Unwin some time ago, informing him that no copies of my book “A South Sea Siren” were available in Australia, although I know for a fact that several enquiries had been made for the work. He replies that he will send me 150 copies—all he

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890 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 Sep. 1898, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.
891 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 July 1896, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.
892 George Chamier, letter to Angus and Robertson, 11 June 1896, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.
893 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 July 1896, *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*.
can spare—to be disposed of through the local booksellers in any way I like. . . .

My main object is to get the book known in Australia & New Zealand. The London Publisher has done nothing whatever towards pushing the sale of the work, or making it known in the Colonies, & the reason he assigns is that he has no connection out here. All he does is to offer the work to the London buyers. No copies have yet been forwarded to the Australian Press. . . .

He had declined to promote it himself for this reason, as he wrote: “Hitherto I have abstained from advertising it for the simple reason that the book was not obtainable in Australia.”

Chamier proposed that Angus & Robertson “take charge of their consignment [the “150 copies”], to sell on commission, & distribute them in these Colonies as you think fit, so as to obtain a circulation for the book & to bring it before the Australian public.” He offered to supply them with review copies and print slips “giving extracts from the best press notices, of which there are many,” at no cost to them, and enclosed copies of a few notices. Naturally, he hoped that they would garner further attention for the novel, as he stipulated: “Of course I should expect you to do your best to advertise the book & to have it noticed, by the methods you have so successfully adopted in your late publications.” He also suggested that they lower the price, as “Colonials can hardly be induced to give 6/- for a novel.” His ultimate aim was to generate demand for “a cheap Colonial Edition,” which he would “place in their hands.”

Angus & Robertson apparently replied the same day, proposing that they distribute the novel at a royalty of one shilling ninepence per copy sold; the title page would need to be altered and an additional flyleaf with selections from the English notices added. In this letter or soon after, they told Chamier that they “thought [the notices] very good” (but returned them to him). He wrote on 9 July 1896 to accept their terms, though he added that the price they expected to charge was “much less

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895 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
896 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 9 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
897 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 Sep. 1898, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
than what I expected” and that the royalty they were offering would hardly cover his costs; as all the copies were bound, there would be “no means of altering the Title page,” but a flyleaf could be added. He reiterated that “[his] principal object [was] to bring the work before the Australian public” and “to bring out a Colonial Edition which could be disposed of at a moderate price without loss.”

Nothing eventuated immediately. It seems Unwins had either not actually printed all of Chamier’s original order or had otherwise disposed of copies, unbound or otherwise, in excess of the initial sales. Two years later on 9 September 1898 Chamier followed up his letter to Angus & Robertson. In the interim, Unwins had sent them the 150 copies they had left (of which a few were supplied to Chamier), but Angus & Robertson had done nothing, perhaps waiting for Chamier to sort his affairs with Unwins or source more copies. According to this latest letter, he must have sued Unwins, as he later suggested: “My Agent in London [probably his friend Frederick Millar] has effected a compromise with Mr. Fisher Unwin, accepting a sum in cash & the law costs for the 600 copies of the ‘South Sea Siren’ which he had failed to deliver. All that remains now therefore, are the 150 bound copies in your charge. . . .” (This would explain why they published nothing further of Chamier’s.) He then suggested that the “best thing” to do would be to dispose of the 150 copies remaining on the terms Angus & Robertson had offered initially—with the sole aim, he repeated, of generating demand for a colonial edition: “I don’t look to a profit out of the stock in hand, but don’t want to incur any additional expense.” They did on-sell copies of the novel but did no more, it seems.

He aptly summed up the history of the book—then and later: “The book has never had a chance, & has really never been brought under the notice of the reading public, although there were some splendid notices published.” So, who did read the novel? As Chamier put it, “[s]everal well known [Australian] Colonists” and some literary critics, the responses of both of which were favourable, but the novel did not take off at Home or here. Very few copies of the first edition are now in circulation; most are in special collections in libraries in Britain, Australia and New

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898 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 9 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
899 My copy of A South-Sea Siren has a sticker inside the front cover indicating that it was sold through Angus & Robertson’s Castlereagh Street premises, which served as the University of Sydney bookshop.
900 Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
Zealand. Though it is an Australian novel, in provenance if nothing else, there was no interest in it there, probably because it is about New Zealand and has always been seen as firmly placed in Canterbury and Canterbury life in the 1860s. It was not until 1970, when it was republished as *A South-Sea Siren* jointly by the Auckland and Oxford University Presses in a new edition by Joan Stevens, that it became more widely circulated—and probably the most widely circulated of Chamier’s works, other than his essays on engineering matters.

6.2 *Philosopher Dick: the ill-fated second edition*

The republication of *Philosopher Dick* was first mooted in the early eighteen-sixties. According to Jim Traue, the Board of Managers of the University of New Zealand Press intended to include *Philosopher Dick* in a series of “New Zealand classics” with introductions and notes, the series was also to include Gorst’s *Maori King*, George Grey’s *Polynesian Mythology*, Frederick Maning’s *Old New Zealand*, Augustus Earle’s *Nine Months in New Zealand* and a collection of Lady Barker’s writings. The series was never published, but all the texts aside from *Philosopher Dick* were.

Its republication was again mooted later in the ’sixties. According to his draft programme for the New Zealand Series, in which *Siren* was eventually included, Eric McCormick had expected a new edition of *Philosopher Dick* to be commissioned in 1967 and published in 1969. All the texts in the programme bar *Philosopher Dick* would end up being published in the ensuing decade, the majority by Capper Press in Christchurch. According to McEldowney, the inclusion of Chamier in the more narrowly conceived New Zealand *Fiction* series was a gesture towards McCormick, but both John Reid [the General Editor] and I had doubts about *Philosopher Dick*. It has some inspired passages, but it is also very long and disorganized and marred by a tiresome facetiousness. *A South-Sea Siren* is shorter, better organized, more even—and possibly duller. We played safe by choosing *A South-Sea Siren*.903

He reiterates this argument in “Reprinting New Zealand Fiction” a few years later, after the publication of *Siren*:

Critical comment on his [Chamier’s] work usually concentrates on *Philosopher Dick*, rather than on its sequel, *A South-Sea Siren*, which we finally chose. . . . *Philosopher Dick* . . . reaches heights not reached in *A South-Sea Siren*, but in a very long book these emerge rarely from a mass of typical high-country reminiscence. . . . *A South-Sea Siren* is not quite so long and better controlled, though it also has its passages of tedium. We included it with some little apprehension but are glad to find that most readers enjoyed it, if they read beyond the introduction, which some of them did not.904

Chamier had expressed this same concern himself.905 John Reid’s “Publisher’s Note” to the second edition of *Siren* echoes these sentiments:

*Philosopher Dick*, while in several ways an interesting work for the literary historian, is a very lengthy novel, heavily laden with philosophical disquisitions and digressions, and much more clumsily constructed than the later work. *A South-Sea Siren*, also, can be read as an independent and self-contained novel. It is because of these considerations that the University of Auckland has decided to reprint *A South-Sea Siren* in preference to *Philosopher Dick*, believing it to be a better novel and much more likely to be in tune with contemporary taste.906

*Siren* it was.

6.3 *Siren: the second edition*

Dennis McEldowney’s history of the Auckland University Press, *A Press Achieved* (2001), details the publication history of the second edition—and its place as the first number of the historically significant New Zealand Fiction series that ran until 1981. McEldowney wrote about the availability of local novels in 1967 that “[a]part from John Mulgan’s *Man Alone* . . . and John A. Lee’s novels . . . hardly any New Zealand

905 Chamier, “South-Sea Siren” 110.
906 J. S. Reid, “Publisher’s Note,” *A South-Sea Siren* viii.
novel more than five years old was available, and the early ones were poorlyrepresented in libraries” (A Press Achieved 65). This situation was partially remedied
by the New Zealand Fiction series, the opening number of which was A South-Sea
Siren. The novels of the series were to be “modelled on the Oxford English Novels,
with a text carefully established and with introduction and notes identifying
quotations and sources, and clarifying obscure references.”907 “G. J. G.,” in “A New
Series Launched For New Zealand Fiction,” suggests that “[t]he purpose of the
venture is not primarily commercial” or “dictated . . . by the literary or historical value
of the books,” rather, to make such “landmarks in our literary development” available
again—and known—to cater to “the increasing interest in, and the study of New
Zealand literature.”908 A South-Sea Siren exemplifies this strategy.

Two thousand copies were printed, 1000 of which were bound in hardback;
500 more copies were bound in October 1970, after initial sales figures were positive;
500 of the previously unbound copies were bound in paperback and issued with a new
cover in 1981. Apparently, the Committee for New Works of the Press thought the
retail price of $4.00 “horrifyingly expensive”; they had earlier unsuccessfully applied
for a grant ($673) to the New Zealand Literary Fund administered by the Department
of Internal Affairs to enable them to reduce the price of the volume to $3.50.909
According to price calculations tabled at the 16 April 1969 meeting of the University
of Auckland Publications Committee, the costs of printing, editing, transportation and
contingencies were expected to amount to just under $4000, so the edition would have
recouped the costs of production and distribution with sales of about 1000 copies at
the retail price of $4. The publication was therefore uneconomical by the usual
standards of the Press: production costs normally amounted to no more than 25% of
the retail price.

According to McEldowney, Chamier was chosen to open the series as “a
gesture towards [Eric] McCormick,” Director of the Publications Committee of the

907 McEldowney, A Press Achieved 74; see “Old Novels Reissued,” rev. of A South-Sea Siren by
George Chamier and The Godwits Fly by Robin Hyde, New Zealand Listener 6 July 1970: 16. This
review repeats much of McEldowney’s letter to them requesting that they write a feature article on the
new New Zealand Fiction series and on Chamier in particular (18 Feb. 1970, AUP Correspondence), as
908 “G. J. G.” 11.
909 McEldowney, A Press Achieved 75; “Extracts of Minutes of Publications Committee Meetings,” 10
Sep 1969, AUP Correspondence. For the declension letter, see NZLF to AUP, 5 Sep. 1969, AUP
Correspondence.
University that spawned the Press, who in August 1964 listed *Philosopher Dick* in his “publishing programme” “to publish works of special New Zealand . . . interest and to re-edit established local classics.”910 However, the General Editor of the New Zealand Series, John (J. C.) Reid, suggested in his “Publisher’s Note” to the second edition of *Siren* that it was chosen over *Philosopher Dick* in the end by the Press because it was shorter, less “philosophical” and digressive, less “clumsily constructed,” and could be read as “an independent and self-contained novel,” in other words, without it having to be read together with *Philosopher Dick*. It was considered to be “a better novel and much more likely to be in tune with contemporary taste.”911 Or as McEldowney puts it, “both John Reid and I had doubts about *Philosopher Dick*. . . . *A South-Sea Siren* is shorter, better organized, more even—and possibly duller. We [the Committee for new works of the Press] played safe by choosing *A South-Sea Siren*.”912

Joan Stevens was asked to edit the new edition “in acknowledgement of her work in popularizing the study of New Zealand novels.”913 She began background biographical work as early as March 1967—with the assistance of McEldowney and later Reid in following up clues here and overseas.914 She spent about three years researching Chamier’s life and producing the edition in between teaching at Victoria University. A series of letters recounting the evolution of their research and the completion of the edition is archived in the Press’s correspondence file.915 As Dennis McEldowney writes in *A Press Achieved: The Emergence of Auckland University Press*, “[s]carcely anything was known about Chamier’s career, and Stevens’s introduction is a lesson in how much can be learnt about obscure people by doggedly

911 J. S. Reid, Publisher’s Note, *A South-Sea Siren* viii.
914 Stevens, letter to McEldowney, 9 Mar. 1967, *AUP Correspondence*.
915 In July 1968, Stevens was supplied with a “Xerox cop[y]” of the first edition—the Auckland Public Library copy, according to the “Note on the Text” (*A South-Sea Siren* ix; see “Minutes,” 3 July 1968, *AUP Correspondence*); editing of the body text was complete by February 1968 (“Minutes,” 14 Feb. 1969, *AUP Correspondence*) and the introduction by mid-1969, after several revisions; the printer (Wright & Carman of Wellington, New Zealand) was decided upon after quotes were requested from two local printers (“Minutes,” 16 Apr. 1969, *AUP Correspondence*); by mid-September 1969, the redaction with titles and editorial apparatus was ready for printing, setting underway by November 1969 and printing complete in April 1970; the novel was released in June 1970 (“Minutes,” 3 June 1970, *AUP Correspondence*), advertisements being placed in *Comment* (July 1970: 2) and the *New Zealand Listener* (27 July 1970: 17), and 27 review copies being sent out to local regional periodicals and journals—from the *Northern Advocate* to the *Southland News*. 366
following up the slightest of clues.”916 In part, Reid and McEldowney were committed and contributed to the biographical research partly because they thought Chamier an “elusive” and thus intriguing subject, and partly because they wanted their New Zealand Series to be successful—as Reid put it, “it will all help to enhance our first novel.”917

The facts of Stevens’s biographical account in the introduction to Siren came principally from the Canterbury Public Library, the Institution of Civil Engineers records, the (British) Dictionary of National Biography, the Biographical Register of the Dictionary of Australian Biography, and Courthope’s Memoir of Daniel Chamier . . . with Notices of his Descendants (1852).918 Her edition predates three of the most informative sources about the history of the extended family: Courthope’s Memoir, P. J. Van Der Voort’s literary biography of Chamier’s uncle Frederick Chamier, The Pen and the Quarter-deck (1972), and an article by Lewis Thorpe about the Chamier archives at the University of Nottingham called “The Chamier Manuscripts” (1971).919 A further monograph, Janssens-Knorsch’s edition of the memoirs of Chamier’s great-grandfather, Jean Deschamps, the Life and “Mémoires Secrets” of Jean Des Champs, 1707-1767 (1990), has some history of the Deschamps family, which took over the Chamier name by Royal Licence in 1780.920

Luck played a large part in the rescue from obscurity of this “most elusive” entity, as Reid described Chamier.921 As a contemporary review suggests,

When A South Sea Siren was chosen for reissue, little was known about Chamier. Only two [minor] mentions of him could be found in New Zealand. . . . Joan Stevens . . . tried Sydney for information. . . . Finally a clue turned up. The letters ICE connected with his name suggested the records of the Institution of Civil Engineers in London might help. They did.922

Reid wrote to McEldowney:

916 McEldowney, A Press Achieved 74.
917 Reid to Smithyman, 12 May 1969, AUP Correspondence; Reid to McEldowney, 10 May 1969, AUP Correspondence.
918 Dictionary of National Biography; Gibbney and Smith 118 (much of the same information appears in Statton 256); Institution of Civil Engineers, Candidate’s Circulars 1879: 4 and 1884: 6; Courthope.
920 Deschamps, Life and “Mémoires Secrets.”
921 J. S. Reid, letter to Kendrick Smithyman, 12 May 1969, AUP Correspondence.
As Joan Stevens has perhaps by now told you, your Inst. C.E. clue proved extremely profitable. A day at the Institute [sic] of Civil Engineers yielded me a virtually complete Chamier biography, plus a couple of interesting technical papers to boot [probably Chamier’s contributions to the *Proceedings* of the Institution]. . . . I was delighted to—as you can imagine—to [sic] be able to fill in the missing details of Chamier’s career that have so far eluded searchers. It was fortunate I was in London at this time, fortunate, too, that you supplied the missing link. I know Joan will be pleased—and it will all help to enhance our first novel.\textsuperscript{923}

The information was sent to Stevens on 23 April 1969; she wrote to McEldowney: “John Reid struck oil for me at the Civil Engineers in London.”\textsuperscript{924} McEldowney answered Reid a week later (30 May 1969): as for “the Institute [sic] of Civil Engineers clue,” he says,

I can’t claim too much credit: it was a succession of clues found by myself, Bob Lamb of the Public Library in Christchurch, Douglas Pike, editor of the Dictionary of Australian Biography, and Joan Stevens herself, who got a xerox copy of the pamphlet [\textit{UW}] when I had told her of its existence, and found the initials under the name.”\textsuperscript{925}

Stevens’ introduction, which remains “the only extended comment on Chamier’s fiction” and the only entrée into Chamier’s life and works up to this point,\textsuperscript{926} assembled the canonical facts of Chamier’s biography (several errors of fact included) and sounded the keynote of future criticism of \textit{A South-Sea Siren}, but also of Chamier’s fiction in general—that it was “unusual” in its “construction and . . . moral preoccupation,” but that historical description was its chief and redeeming virtue:

\textit{A South-Sea Siren} would not, however, be worthy of resuscitation in the context of today’s fiction, were it not for its evidence about New Zealand in the 1860s. Here George Chamier has a subject enhanced, not diminished, by the passage of time. Both in its study of the

\textsuperscript{923} Reid, letter to McEldowney, 10 May 1969, \textit{AUP Correspondence}.

\textsuperscript{924} Stevens, letter to McEldowney, 30 Apr. 1969, \textit{AUP Correspondence}.

\textsuperscript{925} \textit{Subject Index to the Catalogue of the Library of the Institution of Civil Engineers} (London: The Institute, 1904) 238.

\textsuperscript{926} Wattie, “A South-Sea Siren” 504.
problems then confronting a thoughtful young man, and in its picture of the minutiae of colonial society, there is much of intrinsic and historical value.

For Canterbury in these years we have the accounts of Samuel Butler, Lady Barker, and others, but nothing comparable to Chamier’s picture of the little Sunnydowns world, its personages, its customs, its physical setting, its preoccupations.927 This evaluation only hints at the merits of the novel, but it certainly gets the tenor of most of the criticism of Siren (and Philosopher Dick) up to that point and since.

The production of the copy text is detailed exhaustively in the Press’s correspondence file. In July 1968, Stevens was supplied with a “Xerox cop[y]” of the first edition—the Auckland Public Library copy.928 Editing of the body text was complete by February 1969 and the introduction by mid-1969, after several revisions.929 The printer (Wright & Carman of Wellington) was decided upon after quotes were requested from two local printers.930 By mid-September 1969, the redaction with titles and editorial apparatus was ready for printing; setting was underway by November 1969 and printing complete in April 1970. The novel was released in June 1970.931 Advertisements were placed in a number of local periodicals and twenty-seven review copies were sent out to local regional periodicals and journals—from the Northern Advocate to the Southland News.932

The new edition was noted and reviewed severally—though still not in Australia. The paperback edition arrived in 1981 without fanfare or notice. The novel was excerpted by Kevin Ireland in The New Zealand Collection: A Celebration of the New Zealand Novel (1989)—illustrated by Chamier’s own watercolour of Leithfield (1865?). According to McEldowney, the novel was taught in universities “from time to time,” though there was not the interest as existed in the other novel published together with it in the New Zealand Fiction series, Robin Hyde’s The Godwits Fly, which was reprinted almost immediately and again in the nineteen-eighties.933

927 Stevens, Introduction, A South-Sea Siren xvii.
928 Joan Stevens, “Note on the Text,” A South-Sea Siren xix; see “Minutes,” 3 July 1968, AUP Correspondence.
930 “Minutes,” 16 Apr. 1969, AUP Correspondence.
931 “Minutes,” 3 June 1970, AUP Correspondence.
933 McEldowney, A Press Achieved 75.
setting, characters and themes of *A South-Sea Siren*—along with Sarah Amelia Courage’s *Lights and Shadows of Colonial Life* (1895)—were adapted in Stevan Eldred-Grigg’s “postmodern reworking” *The Siren Celia*, published in 1989 by Penguin.934

7    **George Chamier, Letters to Angus & Robertson (1896, 1898)**935

7.1    **Chamier to Angus & Robertson (11 June 1896)**

> “Albury”
> Elkington Park Terrace
> Balmain. 11 June 96.

Memo for Messr. [sic] Angus & Robertson
Sydney.

The accompanying book—The Story of a Successful Man—was written a couple of years ago & the M.S. was sent to England to the care of the late Dr. Chapman—the Editor of the Westminster Review.

Dr. Chapman was much pleased with the book & proposed having it published in England, when he met with an accident in Paris & died suddenly. The M.S. disappeared at the time & has never been recovered. Fortunately I had a press copy with me, & my friend Mr. Harry, Editor of the “Country” paper in S.A. offered to publish the story in his journal, so that I might get a printed copy of it.

“The Country” has a very respectable connection in S.A., but only a small circulation, & the story appeared in its columns while I was away in England. Mr. Harry informs me that it was very well received & that wherever he went he heard it very highly spoken of. The general opinion expressed was that if the story was published in book form it would sell well & become very popular. I should like it brought out in these Colonies if you are prepared to take it up. Of course, the book is wanting in sensational incident, but surely all novels need not be of the “Love &

935 George Chamier, letters to Angus & Robertson, 11 June 1896, 7 July 1896 (155-158), 9 July 1896, 7 Sep. 1898 (162-163), *Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932*. 

370
murder” type. The scene is in Australia, & all the descriptions of life, & peculation are essentially Australian. The “Successful Man” is only a typical character.

George Chamier

7.2 Chamier to Angus & Robertson (7 July 1896)

“Albury”
Glassop Street Balmain
7 July 1896

Messrs. Angus & Robertson
Castlereigh St. Sydney.

Dear Sirs

I wrote to my publisher Mr. Fisher Unwin some time ago, informing him that no copies of my book “A South Sea Siren” were available in Australia, although I know for a fact that several enquiries had been made for the work. He replies that he will send me 150 copies—all he can spare—to be disposed of through the local booksellers in any way I like.

I write to know whether you will take charge of their consignment, to sell on commission, & distribute them in these Colonies as you think fit, so as to obtain a circulation for the book & to bring it before the Australian public. [156]

I am quite willing that a certain number should be sent to the press for review, and I would also be willing to have a quantity of slips printed at my expense giving extracts from the best press notices, of which there are many, for distribution. You will run no risk whatever in undertaking this, as I only ask that the copies be sold on commission, any unsold copies being returned to me.

My main object is to get the book known in Australia & New Zealand. The London Publisher has done nothing whatever towards pushing the sale of the work, or making it known in the Colonies, & the reason he assigns is that he has no connection out here. All he does is to offer the work to the London buyers. No copies have yet been forwarded to the Australian [157] Press. Mr. Fisher Unwin thinks that it might be advisable to sell the book at a lower price in Australia, as Colonials can hardly be
induced to give 6/- for a novel, but this is a matter upon which I would be glad to have your advice.

Of course I should expect you to do your best to advertise the book & to have it noticed, by the methods you have so successfully adopted in your late publications. Hitherto I have abstained from advertising it for the simple reason that the book was not obtainable in Australia. But even 150 copies may do something in that direction & should there be a demand I will at once bring out a cheap Colonial Edition which I will place in your hands.

I enclose a few of the notices which have been sent to me. There are many [158] more & on the whole Mr. Unwin considers that the literary reception given to the book has been decidedly favourable.

Several well known Colonists who have read it lately have expressed themselves highly pleased & have assured me that in their opinion if it was only known & circulated freely it ought to be very popular.

Kindly let me have your answer at your earliest convenience & believe me faithfully yours,

G Chamier

“Albury”
Glassop Street. Balmain

7.3 Chamier to Angus & Robertson (9 July 1896)

“Albury”
Glassop Street. Balmain
9th July 1896

Messrs. Angus & Robertson
Sydney.

Dear Sirs

In reply to your letter of the 7th inst I accept the terms you mention & will write to Mr. Fisher Unwin at once to forward the consignment of my book to you direct.
The rate you propose to sell the book at is much less than what I expected, and if I am only to receive 1/9° per copy sold that will not nearly repay the cost of printing & binding, but I will defer to your judgment in the matter, especially as my principal object is to bring the work before the Australian public.

Should it attract attention and a good demand arise I would take steps to bring out a Colonial Edition which could be disposed of at a moderate price without loss.

Mr. Fisher Unwin informs me that the whole of this 150 lot are bound, so there will be no means of altering the Title page as you suggest, but if an additional flyleaf could be put in here with selections from English reviews, as you propose[.] I have no objection whatever.

I will consult with you about any such alterations later on.

Yours faithfully

George Chamier

7.4 Chamier to Angus & Robertson (7 Sep. 1898)

Mercantile Bank Chambers
Margaret St.
Sydney 7/9/98

Messrs. Angus & Robertson
Sydney.

Dear Sirs

My Agent in London has effected a compromise with Mr. Fisher Unwin, accepting a sum in cash & the law costs for the 600 copies of the “South Sea Siren” which he had failed to deliver. All that remains now therefore, are the 150 bound copies in your charge (less a few that you supplied to me).

You made me a proposition in writing some two years ago with reference to the disposal of this lot, which I accepted at the time, and I think the best thing we can do now is to carry it out.

I sent you some extracts [163] of press notices & criticisms of the book which you thought very good. You returned me the papers. Would you like a selection
prepared of these notices, as an advertisement? If so I will send you one. The book has never had a chance, & has really never been brought under the notice of the reading public, although there were some splendid notices published.

If the disposal of these 150 copies would create a demand, I should be very glad, on your advice, to bring out a new colonial edition. This is a matter upon which you will be able soon to form an opinion. In the mean time, please do your best. I don’t look to a profit out of the stock in hand, but don’t want to incur any additional expense.

faithfully yours  
G Chamier

8  
Will of George Chamier (27 Dec. 1912)\(^{936}\)

This is the last Will and Testament of me George Chamier of London. I devise and bequeath all my effects real and personal which I may die possessed of or entitled to in two equal shares one half unto my son Charles Chamier of London or to his heirs and assigns and one half unto my daughter Emily (Daisy) Grove wife of Frank Grove Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers London or to her heirs and assigns absolutely and I appoint the said Charles Chamier and my son in law Frank Grove to be Executors of this my Will. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this twenty seventh day of September one thousand nine hundred and twelve George Chamier Signed by the said testators as his Last Will and testament in the presence of us present at his request and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses Frederick Millar Gresham Norfolk William Witton Leavis 21 Gordan Road Chingford Essex.

The events relating to George Chamier’s death and the administration of his estate are as follows:

a. 27 Sep. 1912 will sworn in London;  
b. 12 Mar. 1915 departure for China on Fushimi Maru;

\(^{936}\) Letters Testimonial from the High Court of Justice of Great Britain and Ireland (25 July 1915), FO917/1703 (C207263), National Archives (Great Britain), Kew; “Wills 1915: Chamier, George,” National Probate Calendars (1915) 414 (fiche 59/7).
c. 24 Apr. 1915 stroke on board *Fushimi Maru* on arrival in Shanghai Harbour;
d. 25 Apr. 1915 death at hospital at Shanghai;
e. 26 Apr. 1915 burial at Bubbling Well Cemetery, death registered at the British Consulate, Shanghai;
f. 12 July 1915 grant of probate to Charles Chamier at the High Court of Justice at London (though the affidavit in Frank Grove’s petition for probate gives the date as 25 July 1915);
g. 21 July 1915 letters testimonial (containing the will) issued at London;
h. 29 Sep. 1915 petition for probate by Frank Grove at the Supreme Court for China at Shanghai (the papers include a formal petition, an affidavit and an account of particulars);
i. 11 Oct. 1915 grant of probate to Frank Grove in the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court for China at Shanghai;
j. 30 Oct. 1915 death duty certificate issued in the value of Chamier’s estate in China;
k. 29 Nov. 1915 probate resealed at Shanghai;
l. 12 Jan. 1916 corrective affidavit filed by Frank Grove at Shanghai;
m. 7 Feb. 1916 revised death duty certificate issued at Shanghai;
n. 13 Apr. 1938 Chamier’s estate in the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of South Australia still being administered by the Public Trustee (distribution unrecorded).937

The majority of these documents appear in the Letters Testimonial from the High Court of Justice of Great Britain and Ireland (25 July 1915), FO917/1703 (C207263), National Archives (Great Britain), Kew. Chamier did not die wealthy, his estate being valued at £806 5s. 10d. after death duties.938

9   *Letter to Grainger (2 Feb. 1915)*939

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939 George Chamier, letter to J. H. Grainger, 2 Feb. 1915, 1-4 (reproduced by permission of Jenny Chamier Grove). I have removed the Germanic double s’s (ß) from Chamier’s letter and standardised the formatting; the emphases and capitalisations are reproduced as given in the original, as is the lack of paragraphing.
My dear Grainger,

Yours of the 9 Dec. reached one a few days ago. & I am sorry to learn that you have not been well. Gout is a vile ailment, altho’ it was considered at one time an aristocratic one—It must be very trying to have to be about & at work under such conditions. I am personally all right, as to health but I have found the winter in London very dull & depressing. I suppose this awful war has much to do with it, the fogs aiding and loneliness capping it all. I can’t remember when I wrote to you last, but I believe it was not long ago. Daisy, with the little girl and a Chinese nurse, left here on 26 Sept. & it took her 8 weeks of an anxious & distressing voyage to reach Shanghai. She travelled on a Japanese boat which was stuck up at Columbo, out of fear of the Emden. Daisy, sick of waiting, changed on to a French boat, which broke down at Légund. But, women are plucky beings! She got on to [2] a cargo boat and was landed safely at Hong Kong. She had the happiness to find her husband quite recovered from his late dangerous illness. Now they are established at Nanking, the head quarters for a big Railway Scheme—the Nanking Hunan Railway—which will need a lot of money—still to be found. Nanking is an interesting old town, but without a European quarter; so that it was difficult to find any sort of decent habitation there. However they seem to be pretty well established now. Daisy wanted one to come over at once, but found that nothing would be ready for one at present, so advised one to defer going till September. Under ordinary circumstances 8 months in Europe would have been all right, but now, Alas! it is not inviting. Here in London I am not in my element & awfully solitary. It won’t be for long. My sweet daughter, who is ever-loving & devoted could not stand the separation either—She has just cabled to me to come in April & to spend the best months with her at Tsingtau purged of Germans. 940 It is a nice place for a sea resort. I gladly accepted & have booked my passage by the Fushimi Maru to sail on the 13 March. [3] So unless my ship is

940 Tsingtao is a summer resort 400mi. north of Shanghai, situated on the south shore of the Shantung Peninsula. It was easily accessible from Shanghai by coastal steamer (“Miscellanea,” All About Shanghai, ch. 15, 5 Aug. 2004, 7 Feb. 2005 <http://www.talesofoldchina.com/library/allaboutshanghai/t-all15.htm>).
torpedoed I may hope to be in China by end of April. I have passed my time here &
found agreeable occupation in painting. Having joined an old established Art School,
& working there steadily 3 hours a day—figure drawing, & am supposed to have
made remarkable progress. Some of the young models, unadorned, come out all right.
Then I have made some portraits. To start hard study, in a new line, at 72 is plucky,
but I don’t believe in any “Age limit.” I mean to be young & lively till I send in my
checks. And I don’t mind when that happens—This, I consider, the true Epicurean
Philosophy to which I belong. My brothers are all, or fast becoming, fossils. A man to
be happy must have a hobby—Mine is painting, which is inferior to music, yet a
blessing. My brothers are bored to death, & their only occupation is worrying over
their health—Malades imaginaires to a great extent. I see very little of them & we
have nothing in common. I have also few friends—So my existence is lonely, altho’ I
get on fairly well even with a British Company! With the French I am much more
sympathetic. [4] Had you been in London when I arrived it would have altered the
whole aspect of things for me. The only subject now, the only concern, the all
pervading anxiety is this dreadful War—A monstrous thing to shock the World—a
disgrace to humanity. Still it is bringing out some noble enthusiasm among Britons—
My boy, now a Second Lieutenant in the New Army, expects to be sent to the front in
a few weeks time. He is in fine spirits—indeed, the only joyful people to be found in
England just now are the recruits. Soldiering is the grandest thing out! I feel
absolutely certain that we shall win, & smash at that infernal German militarism that
has been the curse of the world, that I am partly consoled for the ills & sufferings we
are enduring—
Well, my good old friend, I must bid you goodbye for a while. My address for the
next year, I expect, will be C/o of Frank Grove, Nanking & Hunan Railway, Nanking.
I hope to hear from you often. With all good wishes

Yours affectionately

G Chamier

[Addendum:]

Dear Daisy [Grove, née Emily Chamier]

I think you might like to keep this—your father’s last letter to me.

J.H.G [John Henry Grainger]
Bibliography

1 Works by George Chamier

An annotated bibliography of literary, engineering and artistic works by and personal papers of George Chamier.


Black and white reproduction of watercolour.


8o (22 cm), 9 pp.

This pamphlet was originally published as a paper, “Australian Timber,” in MPICE 89.3 (1886-87): 313-19 (no. 2185). It is cited once under the alternative title “Timber Wharves in Australia.”1 It is also cited in Repertorium der Technischen Journal-Literatur (1888), the Torch and Colonial Book Circular (1888), James Boosé’s First Supplementary Catalogue of the Library of the Royal Colonial Institute (1901), J. H. Maiden’s Bibliography of Australian Economic Botany (1892), Catalogue of the Library of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University (1914), and William F. Clapp and Roman Kenk’s Marine Borers (1957).2

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1 “Contributions Received,” MPICE 90 (1887): 222.
In *AT*, Chamier is mainly concerned with different timbers used in engineering construction in Australia, but also offers some “philosophical” comments in passing. As Chamier saw it, the sustainability of local timber was a problem because of its scarcity and the lack of “a government system of direction,” though he acknowledged its ubiquity as a construction material due to its “strength and durability” and relative cheapness (5, 3). The government “took no action beyond offering liberal concessions to private enterprise” and neglected “needful precautions” like seasonal felling and seasoning the timber, and conservation, that is, “management” or the “systematic effort . . . to conserve” (5, 6, 9). According to Chamier, it only saw timber as a material resource, ignoring its value as “forest scenery” and its salubrity (7, 8).

Chamier would later testify about various local timbers and timber works to the Select Committee on Telephone Tunnels, suggesting that “I have done a great deal to bring the question of Colonial timber under the notice of the Institution of Civil Engineers.”

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*Capacities Required for Culverts and Flood Openings*. London: Institution of Civil Engineers, 1898.

8o, 13 pp.

*Capacities* was first published as “Capacities Required for Culverts and Flood-Openings” in *MPICE* 134.4 (1897): 313-23, then published separately by the Institution in 1898. The formula Chamier published in *Capacities* for calculating water run-off became widely used and made this Chamier’s most widely cited engineering publication. The paper is abstracted in the *Engineering News and American Railway Journal* (1899). It is quoted in

a. J. H. Cardew, “Burraga Dam and Water Supply for the Lloyd Copper Company’s Mine, New South Wales” (1903),

b. A. S. Napier, “The Netravati Bridge at Mangalore” (1908),


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3 “Progress Report . . . on . . . Telephone Tunnels” 50, 53.

d. *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Association* (1909) and the *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Association* (1911),
e. R. W. Holmes, “Rainfall and Run-off” (1921-22), and
   
   *Capacities* is cited in
b. *The Engineering Index Annual* (1901),
c. Walter Mason Camp, *Notes on Track* (1903),
e. *List of Works in the New York Public Library Relating to Hydraulic Engineering* (1908),
g. Daniel Webster Mead, *Water Power Engineering* (1908),
h. Jean Pradelle, *Rivers, Canals and Ports* (1908),
i. F. E. Turneanure et al., *Public Water-Supplies* (1908),
j. Edward Skelton Bellasis, *River and Canal Engineering* (1913),
k. Robert Burton Buckley, *Irrigation Pocket Book* (1920),
l. G. R. Hearn et al., “The Effect of Shape of Catchment on Flood-Discharge” (1924),
m. Francis Edgar Kanthack, *Principles of Irrigation Engineering* (1924),
n. J. M. Lacey, *Hydrology and Ground Water* (1926),
o. Bernard A. Etcheverry, *Land Drainage and Flood Protection* (1931),

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q. L. B. Escritt, *Surface Drainage* (1944),
s. L. B. Escritt, *Surface-Water Sewerage* (1950),
t. B. D. Richards, *Flood Estimation and Control* (1950),
u. P. O. Wolf, “Comparison of Methods of Flood Estimation” (1866),
z. D. W. Reed, “[Technical Note:] Extension of the S-Curve Method of Unit Hydrograph Transformation” (1986),
bb. R. B. Bulman et al., “Application of a Rainfall-Runoff Flood Routing Model to a Tropical Catchment” (1986), and

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Capacities was discussed extensively at the time in a paper delivered before the Engineering Section of the Royal Society of New South Wales: J. I. Haycroft’s “Engineering Construction in Connection with Rainfall” (1898), and described in G. Bransby-Williams’s “Flood Intensities” (1952) as jointly “responsible for the general acceptance by British engineers of the principle that the maximum rate of run-off from a catchment is that caused by the maximum intensity of rainfall that can continue throughout the ‘time of concentration.’” It was excerpted as “Flood Discharges” in The Engineering Record (1899) and described as offering “[a]n elaborate review of the run-off from different areas and a new formula for estimating it. (4500 w.)” (see below). This version is cited in Pradelle (1908) and The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health (1899).
The original paper, “Capacities for Culverts and Flood-Discharge,” is cited in the Repertorium der Technischen Journal-Literatur 1899 (1900) and Engineering News (1900).

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“Flood Discharges” is cited in The Engineering Index (1901) and Factory and Industrial Management (1933).

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Hanyang is described in the abstract as “[a] brief description of the works at Hankow (Yueh’Han).” The paper also appears in the Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute (1910) and in a slightly different and abridged form in the Iron and Coal Trades Review (1910): “Read before the Iron and Steel Inst. Brief illustrated description of these works in China, and the circumstances that have contributed to their marked success. (1200 w.).” The lecture was announced in 1910 in the Times, the Mining Journal, Science, Chemical News and Journal of Industrial Science, Mining and Engineering World, and recorded the following year in the Year-book of the Scientific and Learned Societies of Great Britain and Ireland (1911). The paper is cited in

a. the Engineering Index (1910),

b. Ch’ung-yu [Chongyou] Wang, Bibliography of the Mineral Wealth and Geology of China (1912),

c. “Annual Meeting of the China Institution of Mining and Metallurgy,” Journal of the Association of American and Chinese Engineers (1922),

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Unlike other commentators, Chamier was very impressed with Chinese engineering: in fact, he considered “[t]he awakening of China” to be due not to missionary activity or trade concessions and railway-building by Europeans, but to be “of an internal origin,” that is, “due to engineering enterprise . . . initiated and successfully carried out by the Chinese” (371). However, he did doubt that one could generalize from this success: “the practical knowledge, the business methods [and] the money” were lacking and there was “a prevailing distrust” of foreigners by the Imperial Government, officials by “the masses” and company directors by shareholders that mitigated against such improvements becoming universal in China (372).


Black and white photograph of pencil sketch. 16 x 21 cm.

Chamier must have given this sketch to his friend, Dr Matthew Morris. It appears in *The Weekly Press* on a feature page entitled “Old Canterbury: Three


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Chamier must have given this sketch to his friend, Dr Matthew Morris. It appears in *The Weekly Press* on a feature page entitled “Old Canterbury: Three
Photographs and a Sketch in the Possession of Dr. Morris, of Amberley.”¹³
The date attributed to the sketch must be incorrect, given that there was no Kowai Road Board until 1864 (unless it refers to the building that in time would accommodate the Road Board Office). This sketch appears as the title page of Stapleton.


Watercolour.

On acquisition by the Turnbull Library, the painting was attributed, like the rest of the Scrope/Weld collection, to Frederick Aloysius Weld, Native Minister and Premier (1823-91), who appears as “Hon. Alfred [Dionysius] Cerulean” in *Siren*; his estate, Brackenfield, called “The Bluff” in *Siren*, was nearby (SSS 198).¹⁴ The painting was titled “Mount Grey Station with Windmill” until recently, when the backing was removed to reveal a pencilled title in Weld’s hand. It made its first (uncited) appearance to illustrate Kevin Ireland’s excerpt from *Siren* in *The New Zealand Collection*, “A South Sea Siren.”


Dated 11 June 1896, 7 July 1896 (155-58), 9 July 1896, 7 Sep. 1898 (162-63).

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¹⁴ See Douglas 119.
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Letters to the Survey Department [or the Department of Public Works] of the Canterbury Provincial Government on behalf of the Kowai Road Board.


a. Box/item CP203 (ICPW 834/1866);
b. box/item CP204 (ICPW 925/1866);
c. box/item CP205 (ICPW 1307/1866).

Record numbers match the letter numbers; in full (in chronological order), they are

a. letter 227 (1) 7 June 1864 (25 May 1864), entitled “Report on the Roads of the South Sefton,”
b. letter 533 (1) 15 Apr. 1865 (1 Apr. 1865), entitled “Report on the Main North Roads Kowai District” and
c. letter 1813 (1) 23 Dec. 1865 (28 Nov. 1865) from box CP204 (ICPW 925/1866);
d. letter 11 June 1866 from box CP203 (ICPW 834/1866), including a ratepayers roll (13 June 1866); and
e. letter 7 Sep. 1866 from box CP205 (ICPW 1307/1866).

The Archives New Zealand record numbers match the letter numbers. The dates in brackets record the dates that the letters were officially receipted.

As well as these letters and Chamier’s letters to the Survey Department on behalf of the Kowai Road Board, there exist two sets of correspondence from Canterbury Provincial Government Chief Surveyors to Chamier (the inward letters no longer exist):

a. a series of letters from Thomas Cass to Chamier and his superior Pemberton, dated 1864-66, that concern Chamier’s employment—see *Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1864-1867*. As well as the initial letter from Cass to the Secretary of Public Works concerning the need to appoint more assistant surveyors due to increased land sales in the province (letter 543), there are four letters from September to November 1866 that concern Chamier’s appointment, equipment and give explicit instructions as to his duties (letters 556, 560, 592 and 601); there are two further letters from
Cass to Pemberton concerning Chamier’s appointment and instructions (letters 559 and 590);
b. a series of letters, all but one from Cass’ successor, Cyrus Davie, to Chamier, dated 1867-68—see Chief Surveyor’s Letterbook 1867-1869: letters 17 (from Thomas Cass), 80, 110, 124, 186 (a circular to all government surveyors), 190, 256, 267, 283, from between January and October 1867, and letters 19 and 41 from February and March 1868; the letters are all mostly informational and procedural.

These letters record Chamier’s appointment, movements, duties and the termination of his employment (the inward letters no longer exist). The Survey Staff Salary Letter Book 1867-76 is also still in existence, showing entries for monthly salary payments to Chamier from October 1866 to March 1868.

---. Patawalonga River: Report . . . Upon the Best Method of its Improvement, with a Plan of Proposed Works for Locking and Improving the Patawalonga Creek at Glenelg. Adelaide: The Advertiser, [1883].

The Patawalonga Plan consists of two main plans, a smaller plan and two profile sketches. The first plan is of the mouth of the Patawalonga and Holdfast Bay with proposed sea wall, lock gates and instructions for dredging the basin and land reclamation along Adelphi Terrace to the mouth; accompanying this is a profile sketch of the proposed sea wall and lock with measurements. The second plan, “General Plan of Patawalonga Creek from Sea to River Sturt,” shows the creek from the Sturt River through the Hundred of Yatala on the eastern side and the Hundred of Adelaide on the western side; details include the military bridge and footbridge to Holdfast Bay. The smaller plan is “Proposed Upper Weir above Junction with River Sturt” plus a profile with measurements. The pamphlet is cited in C. Fenner’s “Adelaide, South Australia: a Study in Human Geography” (1927).15


2 vols (vol. 1: 256 pp. [chapters I-IX]; vol. 2: pp. 257-569 [chapters X-XX]) Morocco, 569pp., 8o (13.5 x 20.5 cm); 20s.
1 vol.: 569pp., 8o (13.5 x 20.5 cm); 6s.

PD was first published in October 1890 in two volumes, though it is dated 1891. The novel was advertised in “Mr. T. Fisher Unwin’s List” in the Athenaeum in 1890. It is recorded in Sampson Low’s English Catalogue of Books (1892; 1898) and William Swan Sonnenschein’s Bibliography of Geography (1897) and Best Books (1912). For bibliographical details, see T. M. Hocken’s Bibliography of Literature Relating to New Zealand (1909), the Annals of New Zealand Literature (1936), A. G. Bagnall’s New Zealand National Bibliography (1969), and James Burns’s New Zealand Novels and Novelists (1981).

The two-volume edition was anonymous, though some copies have Chamier’s name in pencil on the title page. This led to some confusion when reviewers misread the handwritten name; the Scotsman and the Westminster

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Review attributed it to “Chumier.” The anonymity of the author was noted by Ernest Albert Baker in the *Descriptive Guide to the Best Fiction, British and American* (1903) and *Guide to the Best Fiction in English Authors* (1913), Nathan Haskell Dole in the *Bibliophile Dictionary* (1904), Stevens, Jones, and Janet Maconie in *Landmarks of New Zealand Writing* (1990).

The single-volume edition was published the year after the two-volume edition with an identical pagination and Chamier’s surname on the spine (but not on the title-page). This attribution led to confusion over the identity of the author: the novel has been attributed to Frederick Chamier, Chamier’s uncle the naval novelist, Daniel Chamier, presumably his nephew Daniel, Edward Chamier, his brother, and once to Anthony Chamier, presumably Chamier’s great uncle. The novel was attributed at least three times to “D. Chamier” in New Zealand: in William Pember Reeves’s *New Zealand School Reader* (1895), Hocken’s *Bibliography*, probably following Reeves, and much later in Ian A. Gordon’s school bulletin *The Early Novel* (1947), Hocken and Gordon presumably following Reeves. It was attributed to “Chamier (E.)” in *Anglia* and “Chamier, A” by Eric Pawson.

The novel was excerpted by both Reeves and Gordon: Reeves’s excerpt (PD 151-59; chapter VI) in the *New Zealand School Reader* he titles “Tribulations of a New Chum”—it is cited as “D. Chamier ‘Philosopher Dick’ 1891”; Gordon’s excerpt (PD 110-17; chapter V) is in the bulletin *Writing in New Zealand No. 5: The Novel 1860-90—The Early Novel* (1947).

Dennis McEldowney asserts that “[c]ritical comment on [Chamier’s] work usually concentrates on *Philosopher Dick*, rather than on its sequel, *A...
South-Sea Siren”; this is only true in the case of Eric McCormick, McEldowney’s mentor, who ignores Siren.25 In fact, Siren attracted only one less contemporary review than Philosopher Dick—and many more on its republication in a second edition. The contemporary reviews of Philosopher Dick, ordered by the title of the periodical, are as follows:

b. “Our Library Table,” *Athenaeum* 7 Feb. 1891: 184;
c. *Glasgow Herald*, quoted in *WP* endmatter;
g. *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* [New South Wales], quoted in *WP* endmatter;
h. *Northern Whig* [Belfast], quoted in *WP* endmatter;
i. “Literary Notes,” *Scotsman* [Edinburgh] 3 Nov. 1890: 3;
j. *Scottish Leader* [Edinburgh], quoted in *WP* endmatter;
k. *[South Australian] Advertiser* [Adelaide], quoted in *WP* endmatter;
l. *South Australian Register* [Adelaide], quoted in *WP* endmatter;

Many of these reviews are excerpted and reproduced with minimal citations in the endmatter of Chamier’s non-fiction collection, *War and Pessimism*.

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25 McEldowney, “Reprinting New Zealand Fiction” 141.
Fig. 56. *Philosopher Dick* (one volume edition): front cover and spine, personal collection of the author.

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*Property in Water*. Sydney: C. Potter, Acting Govt Printer, 1903.

*PW* is an excerpt from *Journals and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales* 37 (1903): xiv-xxiii. It was read before the Engineering Section of the Royal Society in the First Session on 20 July 1903 (lxxix). It is quoted in David J. Gordon’s *The “Nile” of Australia* (1906) and H. H. Dare’s *Water Conservation in Australia* (1939), and cited in the *Experiment Station Record* (1906). It concerns the ownership of water, standing and running, that is, riparian rights in the latter, especially with respect to diversion for irrigation and rights of navigation.

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Cloth, 416pp., 8° (13 x 21 cm), 6s. Robert Lee Wolff describes the book as in “tan linen flecked with white, lettered in gold on front and spine; black endpapers.”

Chamier’s letter to Angus & Robertson of 9 July 1896 records Angus & Robertson’s offer to distribute the novel in Australia and suggests that Chamier paid for the printing and binding of the novel himself. He writes: “if I am only to receive 1/9º per copy sold that will not nearly repay the cost of printing and binding...” This suggests the original cost was more than 1s 9d per copy. The size of the initial print run produced by T. Fisher Unwin is difficult to estimate: in addition to the copies already sold or retained for the English market, 150 copies were sent to Angus & Robertson in Sydney after 1898 and 600 copies were never delivered. The practice described here was usual in a commission agreement between an author and their publisher: as Stanley Unwin writes, “the author assumes entire liability for the cost of production and advertisement and is the owner of the stock.” It is not clear whether it was published on a royalty or profit-share basis, although Chamier did negotiate with Angus & Robertson on the basis of a royalty. Siren was advertised in The Athenaeum and The Scotsman as being “By George Chamier, Author of ‘Philosopher Dick.’ Cloth, 6s.” Short notices also appeared in the Athenaeum and the Bookman.

The suggestion has been made that the novel may have been serialised earlier, but I have found no evidence. Also, I have found no evidence that any of the descriptive passages, “semi-journalistic evocations,” were published.

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28 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 9 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
29 George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 Sep. 1898, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
33 Joan Stevens, Introduction xviii; P. J. Wilson, “Notes” n. pag.
separately in newspapers, as Stevens suggests; though in the novel Raleigh does have articles accepted for publication in a newspaper in the colony (see SSS 260, 304, 314), there is no evidence that Chamier did—at least not in his own name.34

The contemporary reviews, ordered by the title of the periodical, are as follows:

d. *Dundee Advertiser*, quoted in WP endmatter;
h. *Literary World* [Boston] 1895: 463, quoted in WP endmatter;
l. *Star* [London], quoted in WP endmatter.

Many of these reviews are excerpted and reproduced (with only minimal citations) in the endmatter of Chamier’s non-fiction collection, *War and Pessimism*.35 Two reviews are incorrectly cited in this collection of

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34 Joan Stevens, Introduction xvii
35 When Chamier was attempting to have *A South-Sea Siren* republished or distributed in Australia by Angus & Robertson, they proposed that he assemble a collection of excerpts from reviews to be inserted into the volume (see letter to Angus & Robertson, 9 July 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932). He sent them with a copy of the novel. Later he would write: “I sent you some extracts of press notices & criticisms of the book which you thought very good. You returned me the papers. Would you like a selection prepared of these notices, as an advertisement?
excerpts: an excerpt from The Liberty Review review is cited as being from The Literary Guide, in full The Literary Guide and Rationalist Review, a London freethinking (atheist) journal issued by the Rationalist Press Association, with which Chamier’s friend Frederick Millar had a connection, and which was printed by Watts & Co, also the publisher of Chamier’s War and Pessimism.³⁶ For bibliographical details, see the Annals of New Zealand Literature (1936), A. G. Bagnall’s New Zealand National Bibliography (1969) and Burns’s New Zealand Novels and Novelists (1981).³⁷


Hardback, xx, 325pp., 21.5 x 14 cm., $4.00.

If so I will send you one. . . . there were some splendid notices published” (letter to Angus & Robertson, 7 Sep. 1898, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932).
³⁷ NZ Authors’ Week Committee 49; Bagnall n. pag. (C497); James Burns 9.
2,000 copies were printed by Wright & Carman with a jacket designed by Keith Guyan. The novel was distributed by British Book Distributors of Wellington, New Zealand, which was the local distribution arm of Oxford University Press; it was advertised as being by Oxford University Press—though the fact that it was published jointly with Auckland University Press was often noted.

Several reviews of the new edition appeared in New Zealand (there were still none in Australia):


The 1,000 previously unbound copies were rebound by the University of Auckland Bindery and issued in paperback in 1981 with a new cover by Vanya Lowry. About 285 copies of the last section of the unbound text had to be reprinted to complete 500 copies for the paperback edition—why is not

recorded.40 Aside from the jacket, the paperback edition is identical to the hardcover edition.

Fig. 58. *A South-Sea Siren* (2nd ed.): hardback and paperback.


*Successful Man* appeared in thirty instalments from 11 May to 30 Nov. 1895. *The Country* was printed and published by Hussey and Gillingham in Adelaide, South Australia between 1893 and 1896 (1.1 [2 Sep. 1893]-4.173 [26 Dec. 1896]). It was a “Conservative organ” edited by Chamier’s friend Thomas Harry, whom Chamier had met in Adelaide about 1880, when Harry

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was reporting on committees in the South Australian Parliament and they
shared an office in the Exchange Chambers where George practised.41

Carol Franklin announced her rediscovery of the novel in “A Lost Novel by George Chamier (1842-1915)” at the 1994 conference of the
Association for the Study of Australian Literature.42 A citation of this paper on
the AustLit site remains the only reference to the novel and to George Chamier
as an author in Australia since the novels were first published.43 She may well
have discovered the novel through the reference to it in the Angus &
Robertson correspondence; she refers to the survival of a “press copy” of the
manuscript, using Chamier’s term from his letter of 11 June 1896 to Angus &
Robertson about the novel.44

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The Utilisation of Water in South Australia. Adelaide: George Robertson,
1886.

41 “Obituaries: Mr. Thomas Harry.”
43 Franklin 87; George Chamier, letter to Angus & Robertson, 11 June 1896, Angus & Robertson, Publishers—Correspondence, 1884-1932.
38pp. 8o. (21cm).

The pamphlet was held by the Institution of Civil Engineers (Great Britain) in London.45

---. War and Pessimism, and Other Studies. London: Watts & Co., 1911. [WP]

Crown, 126pp., 8o., 1s.

The publication of the collection is recorded in the Société Philosophique de Louvain’s annual Revue Philosophique de Louvain (1912) and Sampson Low’s English Catalogue of Books (1912).46

The essays are:

1 “The Moral Aspect of War” (1-19), written after the death of Leo Tolstoy 20 Nov. 1910 (19), that is, probably in early 1911;
2 “Pessimism” (21-39), written before or during 1895—see below;
3 “Carlyle and Hero-Worship” (41-51), written “[s]ome seventy years” after the “economical, industrial, and political” ferment of the 1830s in England, that is, between 1900 and 1910 (41);
4 “Emerson on Self-Reliance” (53-59);
5 “Sir Thomas More’s ‘Utopia’” (61-69);
6 “Ruskin’s ‘Frondes Agrestes’” (71-78), which reads like a contemporary review—Frondes Agrestes was first published in 1875;
7 “Ibsen’s ‘Hadda Gabbler’” (79-90), written or rewritten “about thirty years” after its “first introduction on the London stage,” that is to say, the introduction of A Doll’s House in June 1889; Chamier’s chronology is incorrect—at best, if the essay were written in 1910 or ’11, he might mean in the third decade since its introduction (79);

8 “Marcus Aurelius Antoninus” (91-99);
9 “Shakespeare’s ‘Macbeth’” (101-09);
10 “Ruskin’s ‘Sesame and Lilies’” (111-18), which reads like a contemporary review—the book was first published in 1865 and into its third edition by 1876 (London: George Allen, 1876), though which edition this review refers to is uncertain.

I have only been able to place the original publication of one essay: “Pessimism,” though others were probably also published elsewhere. As the editor of The Country writes, the essay was “in the first place, delivered before a literary circle in Sydney” (probably not the Bulletin circle). It is announced in The Country on 23 March 1895; it appears there that week and the week following (23 Mar. 1895; 30 Mar. 1895). It is “reviewed” there the week the second instalment appears. I have located one other review: “Warfare is the Spirit of Life; An Essayist Who Sees Little Hope in Arbitration to Settle International Disputes” in the New York Times Review of Books (1911). The dedication is indicative of Chamier’s relationship with Frederick Millar, who facilitated its publication with Watts & Co.:

To my friend Frederick Millar, whose advice and appreciation have aided and encouraged me in my literary efforts, and who, while differing from me on certain principles of public action, has heartily endorsed my antipathy to religious cant and moral hypocrisy, this volume is dedicated. (iv)

Some of the essays at least appear to have been rewritten for the collection (see “Ibsen’s ‘Hadda Gabbler’” [79])—if indeed they were published elsewhere first. Several were probably originally reviews. At least one of the essays, “The Moral Aspect of War,” the first of the two more substantial essays that open the collection and give it its name, was newly written.

Fig. 60. *War and Pessimism*: front cover and spine, personal collection of the author.


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