

## A STRANGE STORY.

(FROM THE ARARAT ADVERTISER, NOV. 13 1868.)

One of those tragic stories which in the early days characterised digging life in Victoria is likely to be revived with the discovery of some human remains at Elmhurst. Some of the surroundings of the skeleton have been recognised, or have led to the belief that they belonged to a squatter named Young, who was murdered, but of whose remains no trace was ever discovered, thus leading to the supposition that the body of the unfortunate man had been burnt by his assassins. The facts are these:-About ten or twelve years ago, a flock of about 1,200 sheep was travelling in the neighbourhood of Mount Cole on their way to a digging's market—when the scab appeared amongst them, and leave was obtained to dip them on Mount Cole Station. There were three men in charge of the flock—the part-proprietor Young, a shepherd named Coleman (who had once been a sailor trading on the coast of Africa), and a hut-keeper called Behl (a native of Hungary). The last occasion on which the three men were seen together was when dipping the sheep, and it seems to have been resolved after the operation to camp them in the vicinity of Beaufort (then called Fiery Creek), with the view of allowing the sheep to re-cover, and perhaps of finding a market at that rush. Young came to the Fiery Creek once to enquire about a customer, and was never seen afterwards. After the lapse of a day or two from his appearance there, Coleman (the sailor) visited the diggings, dressed in Young's clothes, and told the principal butcher of the place Grant, that he (Coleman) was Young, and that the sheep belonged to him. He agreed for a price, and sold the sheep, for which he received the money, and immediately after the transaction obtained permission of Dr. Law (now of Ararat) to use a private room in his place that he might count the notes there, and prove the amount correct. On the day following the transaction, a man, who subsequently turned out to be Behl, also visited Dr. Law, and after obtaining some medicine tendered a pound note very much torn in payment. This was refused owing to its dilapidated state, and twenty more, similarly abused, were offered before one was taken which the doctor considered was fit to keep. A few hours after this Coleman bought two horses, to carry back himself and his man, whom he represented Behl to be; and since that time no tidings have ever been obtained of the former, although the police made most vigilant search. The authorities were unable to sheet home the charge of murder upon Behl, but he was convicted of sheep stealing, and was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. While in Pentridge, Behl promised to show where the remains of Young were he taken to the neighbourhood of Mount Cole; but he only led the police a wild goose chase, and no dependence was placed upon his statement, which was to the effect that Coleman had killed Young, and hidden the remains. It is now believed that the skeleton found in the branch of a tree at Elmhurst is that of Young, suspicion being led in this direction by the colour of the deceased's hair, the remarkably fine teeth, the description of the pistols, and a locket of hair. The preliminary steps for the identification of the remains have, we believe, been taken by the police, and in the meantime other contingencies arising from the case are being legislated for by them. If the remains prove to be those of Young, his murderers must have driven the body twenty miles from the sheep camp in a spring-cart which they had with them, and hidden it as described. Of the case it may be remarked as an unfortunate fact that the day upon which the news of the discovery of the remains reached the gentleman who had at the time of his disappearance been Young's partner, he also received word that the lady who alone could have identified the locket containing hair, and other things which were found upon him, had died in Tasmania. It is quite certain that, when in gaol, Behl made some confession, which was never disclosed, as it was said to have been made to a solicitor (a co-religionist) under a sacred seal secrecy. All agree in suspecting that Behl killed Coleman after the murder of Young, to be relieved of one who possessed dangerous knowledge and a large sum of money.