

my ears, when, with a violent pitch and shudder, the ship bounded along again, over another mountain, and down another valley, in long and slow succession again and again, till I grew accustom'd to the scene, and could gaze without thinking I looked upon our vast and miserable grave.

There were the ghost-like albatrosses sailing solemnly above the tops of the towering billows, or diving beside us into the yawning gulf,—sailing about with the same unruffled plumes, the same quiet, wary eye, and majestic demeanour, that they wore in the brightest calm. Who could doubt their supernatural attributes? Certainly not a spirit-chilled landswoman, with Coleridge's magic legend perpetually repeating itself to her. I wish some of its good and beautiful lines were as familiar and impressive in the minds and thoughts of others as they are in mine:—

“Farewell, farewell—but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

CHAPTER V.

Island of St. Paul's—Islands in Bass's Straits—Mutton-birds—Botany Bay Heads—General Excitement—Heads of Port Jackson—Scenery—New Zealanders—First sight of Sydney—Pull ashore—Comforts of Land Life—George Street, Sydney—The Domain—Eucalyptus, &c.—Woolloomooloo—Government Gardens.

A VIEW of the little volcanic island of St. Paul's was the only thing that served to vary the tedium of our stormy passage across the Indian Ocean; and our view being rather a distant one, the only benefit we derived from it was the introduction of a new topic of conversation.—I believe excellent fish are very abundant there: and, as the story goes, you may stand and pull your dinner out of the cold salt-water with one hand, and drop it into a hot fresh spring to cook with the other! I know not if the renowned Baron Münchhausen ever visited St. Paul's, but this savours something of his quality. A few wild pigs are there now likewise; but the island is a mere volcanic rock, or rather the crater of an extinct volcano, with no trees or bushes, and but very scanty vegetation of any kind. The hot springs show that volcanic agency is still busy there.

Violent gales, cold and rainy weather, were long our portion, but a favourable change occurred in time to decide our route to be through Bass's Straits, which would not have been prudent in the more boisterous weather; and the longer passage round Van Diemen's Land seemed an intolerable prolongation of our most irksome captivity.

Never shall I forget the feeling of intense pleasure with which I greeted the sight of land again, as we passed among the numerous islands in the Straits. Bare, barren as they were, I thought them lovely as the Elysian fields, for they were *land*, solid, firm, dry land. How we leaned over the vessel's side, *smelling* the shore!—enjoying the fine earthy, fragrant smell that our sea-seasoned noses were so quick to detect in every puff of wind that

came over the islands. We passed several very singular rocks* early in the morning of this most happy day, and went sailing on, with a fair breeze, a bright sunny blue sky, and an ever-changing, ever-new prospect around. We passed so near the islands of "Kent's Group," and another called the "Judgment," as to discern flocks of seal sleeping on the rocks; thousands of sea-birds, named by sailors "mutton-birds," were flying or floating around us, and often diving for a considerable distance; and, most beautiful of all in this bright picture, numerous vessels were in sight, all bound for the same port as ourselves; and after each traversing a different path, were here, as it were, falling into the common high road for the Australian metropolis.

Those "mutton-birds" I have just mentioned form a most curious and interesting community. I know not if their habits have been observed by naturalists, being myself totally out of the reach of books of reference on all similar subjects; but the particulars I have heard from my husband, whose early wanderings familiarised him with many of the native creatures of the Australian islands, struck me as being very curious. The birds are about the size of a wild-duck, with handsome black plumage, shot with metallic shades of green or brown, accordingly as the light falls on it; they are web-footed, and the beak is similar in form to that of the albatross family. They live wholly at sea the chief part of the year, but on one particular day in spring—November 1st, never varying many hours in the time—they come in from sea in countless myriads, filling the air with clouds of their dark wings as they hurry ashore on some of the islands in Bass's Straits, where their "rookeries," as the sealers term them, are made. These are burrows in the earth, covering many of the islands; and the first care of the birds on returning is to scratch them out clean from any rubbish that has accumulated, and put them in order for habitation, and often to make new ones. This preparatory business occupies about a fortnight, and then the swarming squadrons put to sea again for another fortnight or three weeks, not a bird remaining behind. At the end of this time they return in a body as before, and with much noise and bustle take up their abode in the rookeries, and

* Called, I think, the Judge and Clerks.

there lay their eggs and sit. The parent birds share between them the "domestic duties," taking it in turns to remain on the nest or go out to seek their food, which chiefly consists of a green slimy matter like sea-weed. They remain on shore until the young ones are a third part grown, and immensely fat, like masses of blubber, when the old birds leave them and go off to sea. The young ones, unable to leave the rookeries, are sustained meanwhile by their own fat; and by the time that is tolerably reduced, their wings are grown strong enough for flight, and they also quit the rookery and go to sea.

The men employed in sealing on these islands derive their chief sustenance from the mutton-birds, which they take in various ways. One very successful method of snaring them is thus practised:—A high pen of stakes wattled together is made on a low part of the coast, into which the poor mutton-birds, who always run down to the water to take wing, are driven with dogs and shouting, and there, as they cannot rise off the land, they can be killed at leisure. An extensive trade in their feathers is also carried on, but these have generally a strong and unpleasant smell; so that a "mutton-bird pillow" is spoken of as something proverbially disagreeable. Great quantities of the birds are cured by the sealers for sale, and I am told that their flavour is similar to that of a red-herring.

Very early on the morning of September 27th, Mr. Meredith was requested to go on deck and identify the land we were then passing, cloudy weather for two days having prevented any observation being taken, and our exact whereabouts being therefore doubtful. The unknown cliffs were immediately pronounced to be the headlands of Botany Bay!—Our weary way-faring was nearly done, the next break in the iron-bound coast that rose dark and threateningly before us would be our welcome haven, Sydney Cove!

In an absolute whirl of delight and excitement, with bright looks and quick eager voices all around, I hastened to put up a few packages ready to take ashore, continually interrupting myself to go on deck and mark our progress. The agitation on board was universal, and the transformations little short of miraculous; passenger-chrysalids were turning into butterflies every instant. Gentlemen, whose whole outer vestments for the past

month would have scarcely brought half-a-crown in Rag-Fair, suddenly emerged from their cabins exquisites of the first water; and ladies, whose bronzed and scorched straw-bonnets would have been discarded long before by a match-girl, now appeared in delicate silks or satins of the latest London fashion. Gala dresses and holiday faces were the order of the day; perhaps a child going home from school may feel as happy as I did, but the degree of delight could scarcely be excelled.

The entrance to Port Jackson is grand in the extreme. The high, dark cliffs we had been coasting along all morning, suddenly terminate in an abrupt precipice, called the South Head, on which stand the lighthouse and signal-station. The North Head is a similar cliff, a bare bluff promontory of dark horizontal rocks; and between these grand stupendous pillars, as through a colossal gate, we entered Port Jackson.

The countless bays and inlets of this noble estuary render it extremely beautiful; every minute, as we sailed on, a fresh vista opened on the view, each, as it seemed, more lovely than the last; the pretty shrubs, growing thickly amid the rocks, and down to the water's edge, added infinitely to the effect, especially as they were really green, a thing I had not dared to expect; but it was spring, and everything looked fresh and verdant.

Here and there, on some fine lawnly promontory or rocky mount, white villas and handsome cottages appeared, encircled with gardens and shrubberies, looking like the pretty "cottages omnes" near some fashionable English watering-place; and perched amid as picturesque, but less cultivated scenery, were the cottages of pilots, fishermen, &c., making, to my ocean-wearied eyes, an Arcadia of beauty. Near the North Head is the quarantine-ground, off which one unlucky vessel was moored when we passed; and on the brow of the cliff a few tombstones indicate the burial-place of those unhappy exiles who die during the time of ordeal, and whose golden dreams of the far-sought land of promise lead but to a lone and desolate grave on its storm-bent shore.

We very narrowly escaped a serious accident even in the port. A large vessel was moored in mid-channel, and our pilot could not decide on which side he would pass her, until we were so near that a collision seemed inevitable, but we for-

unately cleared her, with not two feet to spare, and pursued our course.

During a light shower which fell shortly after, amid the bright sunshine, a most beautiful rainbow appeared, seeming like a smile of welcome to my new country. It spanned over one of the many lovely little bays, and was very broad, so that, although the centre had a considerable elevation, it wholly rested on the water, which, with the rocks, trees, and hills beyond, and the snow-white sands of the bay, shone in all the graduated shades of the bright prismatic colours. It was beautiful beyond description.

The pure white silvery sand which forms the beach in several of these picturesque coves, gives them a peculiarly bright appearance; it is much valued, I believe, by glass-makers at home, and often taken as ship's ballast, for that purpose.

As we neared Sydney, several rocky islets appeared, some rising like ruined forts and castles, and richly adorned with verdant shrubs down to the edge of the bright, clear, deep blue water, that reflected them so perfectly, one could scarcely tell where substance and shadow joined. One of them is named Shark Island; another larger one, Garden Island; and a little one, bearing the unmeaning and not very refined name of "Pinchgut," is now the site of a small fort or battery.

The remarkable clearness of the atmosphere particularly struck me, in looking at distant houses or other objects, everything, however remote, seeming to have such a *clean*, distinct outline, so different to the diffused effect of an English landscape; not that I should like it in a *picture* so well as our softer and more rounded perspective, but in a new place, where one likes to see everything plainly, it is very pleasant. The bright white villas seemed almost to cut into their surrounding trees, so sharp the corners appeared; and the universal adjunct of a veranda or piazza in front, served to remind us that we were in a more sunny climate than dear, dull Old England, where such permanent sun-shades would be as intolerable as they are here necessary.

The harbour-master's boat was soon alongside, and he, with the physician, came on board, to perform their respective duties of inquiry and examination, and to hear the last news from *home*. No vessel had arrived from thence for a month, an unusually long interval, and intelligence was anxiously expected;

but during the day of our arrival and the following one, above a dozen English vessels poured in.

The pilot had informed us that wheat was at an enormous price in Sydney then, but his statement was not credited; it was, however, only too correct, *twenty-seven shillings per bushel* being the average price, in consequence of the severe droughts, which had for two successive seasons destroyed the crops.

The crew of the harbour-master's boat were New Zealanders, fine intelligent-looking, copper-coloured fellows, clad in an odd composite style, their national dress and some British articles of apparel being blended somewhat grotesquely. The New Zealanders are much the noblest specimens of "savages" that I have ever met with. During our residence in Sydney I saw a chief walking along one of the principal streets, with his wife following him. I had often heard of and seen what is called majestic demeanour; but this untutored being, with his tattooed face and arms, and long shaggy mantle, fairly outdid even my imaginings of the majestic, as he paced deliberately along, planting his foot at every step as if he had an emperor's neck beneath it, and gazing with most royal indifference around him. There was the concentrated grandeur of a hundred regal mantles of velvet, gold, and ermine in the very sway of his flax-fringed cloak; I never beheld anything so truly stately. I cannot say so much for his lady, a black-haired, brown-faced body, in a gaudy cotton-print gown, and (so far as I could judge) nothing else. She trotted after her lordly better-half, staring with unsophisticated curiosity at everything, apparently quite a novice in the busy scene; but I verily believe, had you placed the man amidst the coronation splendours of Westminster Abbey, that he would not have been so "vulgar" as to betray surprise. Nor is their courtesy of manner in any degree inferior to their magnificent demeanour. I have heard my husband say, that when at New Zealand, he was treated by the chiefs with such kind, anxious hospitality, and true gentlemanly bearing, as might put to shame many an educated but less civilized European.

About noon we cast anchor opposite Fort Macquarie, a neat stone building, with a few cannon planted around it. Close alongside of us lay a Scotch emigrant ship, her deck thronged with crowds of both sexes and all ages, enlivened by the fearful din of

some half-dozen bagpipers, who were all puffing, squeezing, and elbowing away with incomparable energy and perseverance, though, as they all seemed to be playing different airs, the melody produced was rather of a complex character.

Behind, or rather to the right of Fort Macquarie, was Government House, a long low building with a spacious veranda, in which sentinels were pacing to and fro; before it lay a fine green lawn, sloping towards, though not to, the water's edge, (quays intervening,) and around it grew noble trees, both European and Colonial, the English oak in its early spring garb of yellow green being here and there overtopped by the grand and more sombre Norfolk Island pine. A few other good houses were in view, but the chief of the town, or, as it must now be called, city, is built on the sides and at the head of a cove running at right angles with the stream in which we lay, which prevented the best parts from being observed, and the main portion of what was visible had an air of "Wapping" about it, by no means engaging.

The opposite or north shore of Port Jackson, here about two miles across, is of rather a monotonous character. Hills of no great elevation and very tame outline rise from the beach, dotted here and there with villas and cottages, their adjoining gardens making a pleasant green contrast with the uniform brown hue of the scrub. Numberless boats were pulling and sailing about, giving animation to the scene, and several of the vessels we had passed in Bass's Straits were working up the port; the life and bustle all around making a delightful change after our long solitary voyage; and when the boat came to take us ashore, my joy was complete. Once more seated in the slung chair, wrapped in the British flag, I gladly bade adieu to the good ship that had so long seemed to me a weary "prison-house," and soon, with a delight that must be felt to be understood, stepped again on land.

And how happy a time it is—the first few days on shore after such a voyage! Every action of life is an enjoyment. I could walk, without the floor jumping about and pitching me over; could use *both* hands to brush my hair, instead of keeping one to hold on by; could absolutely set my wine-glass on the table without fear of its upsetting into my plate, though, by the bye,

I often caught myself carefully propping it up against something, or looking above for the swing-tray to put it out of danger. Then the abundant supply of water for ablutionary purposes is a priceless luxury when first enjoyed after the limited allowance on board ship; and I often made the chambermaid smile by asking if she could spare me another ever-full. It is *fresh, clean* water too, not flavoured either by a vinegar or rum cask, and can be used without being "left to settle!" Perhaps few ship-stewards are *very* clean, but all are not *extremely* dirty, and therefore our exquisite enjoyment of clean cups, glasses, plates, and forks, may not be imagined by the generality of voyagers. Vegetables too, after a long diet of pork and rice, were most acceptable. Fruit was not in season, except loquats, a pleasant acid berry, the size and shape of a gooseberry, with large kernel-like pippins. The tree is a very handsome one, bearing large long leaves, and drooping clusters of white, deliciously fragrant blossoms, which are succeeded by the golden-coloured fruit.

When we remember that Sydney has risen within little more than fifty years from the first settlement of the colony, its size, appearance, and population are truly wonderful. It is a large busy town, reminding me of portions of Liverpool or Bristol, with many good buildings, though few have any pretension to architectural beauty. The newer portions of the town are laid out with regularity and advantage. One long street traverses its whole length, about a mile and a half, full of good shops exhibiting every variety of merchandise; and in the afternoon, when the ladies of the place drive out, whole strings of carriages may be seen rolling about or waiting near the more "fashionable emporiums," that being the term in which Australian shopkeepers especially delight. The vehicles are sometimes motley enough in their equipment. Here and there appears a real London-built chariot, brilliant in paint and varnish, and complete in every luxury; with a coachman, attired something like worthy Sam Weller, "as a compe of footman, gardener, and groom," sitting on a box innocent of hammercloth, and driving a pair of mean-looking, under-sized horses terribly out of proportion with the handsome, aristocratic-looking carriage behind them. Sometimes, but very rarely, you see a consistent, well-appointed equipage; I think the tandem is more frequently turned out in good

style than any other kind: and as no "lady" in Sydney (your grocers' and butchers' wives included) believes in the possibility of walking the various machines upon wheels, of all descriptions, are very numerous; from the close carriage and showy barouche or brizka, to the more humble four-wheeled chaise and useful gig. Few ladies venture to risk their complexions to the exposure of an equestrian costume, and accordingly few appear on horseback.

George Street seems to be by common consent considered as the Pall-Mall, or rather as the "Park" of Sydney, and up and down its hot, dusty, glaring, weary length go the fair wives and daughters of the "citizens," enjoying their daily airing; whilst close to the town is the beautiful Domain, a most picturesque rocky promontory, thickly wooded and laid out in fine smooth drives and walks, all commanding most exquisite views of Sydney and its environs, the opposite shore, and the untring ever-beautiful estuary of Port Jackson. It was our favourite spot; even after driving elsewhere out of town (for alas! the splendour of George Street had no charms for me) we generally made one circuit round the Domain, and as generally found ourselves the only visitors. It was unfashionable, in fact, not the proper thing at all, either to walk or drive in the Domain. It was a notorious fact, that maid-servants and their sweethearts resorted thither on Sundays, and of course that shocking circumstance ruined its character as a place for their mistresses to visit; the public streets being so much more select.

Lady Macquarie had this Domain laid out after her own plans; walks and drives were cut through the rocks and shrubs, but no other trees destroyed: seats placed at intervals, and lodges built at the entrances. On the high point of the promontory some large horizontal rocks have been slightly assisted by art into the form of a great seat or throne, called Lady Macquarie's Chair, above which an inscription informs the visitor to whose excellent taste and benevolent feeling he is indebted for the improvement of this lovely spot. It always reminded me of Pierrefield in Monmouthshire, but is far more beautiful, inasmuch as, instead of the black-banked Wye, here the bright blue waves of the bay wash the lower crags, and in place of looking only at one opposite bank, here is a noble estuary with countless bays

and inlets, pretty villas and cottages, and dainty little islands, all bright and clear and sunny, with a cloudless sky above them. The trees are chiefly different species of Eucalyptus, or "gum-tree," some of which bear large and handsome flowers, having a remarkably sweet and luscious scent, like honey, with which they abound. The name Eucalyptus is admirably descriptive of the flower, meaning covered well with a lid; and each closed blossom is shaped like a goblet, with a pyramidal cover, which in due time falls, or is thrust off, by the crowd of squeezed-up stamens within, that quickly expand into a starry circle when released from their verdant prison. The leaves are mostly of a dull green, with a dry sapless look about them, more like old specimens in a herbarium than fresh living and growing things, and, being but thinly scattered on the branches, have a meagre appearance. They are, however, "evergreens," and in their peculiarity of habit strongly remind the observer that he is at the antipodes of England, or very near it, where everything seems topsyturvy; for instead of the "fall of the leaf," here we have the stripping of the bark, which peels off at certain seasons in long pendent ragged ribands, leaving the distrobed tree almost as white and smooth as the paper I am now writing on. At first I did not like this at all, but now the clean stems of a young handsome gum-tree seem a pleasing variety amidst the sombre hues of an Australian forest.

Several species of tea-tree (*Leptospermum*) form the chief portion of the shrubbery here, producing their small pretty blossoms very abundantly, whilst various other shrubs and many species of acacia (generally called Mimosa or Wattle here) display innumerable novelties of leaf and flower to the admiring eyes of an English visitor. One beautiful shrub grows on some of the low rocks, which I have not observed elsewhere: the leaves are large, and not unlike those of a Camellia; the flower, in form, size, and colour, resembles a fine single yellow rose.

Opposite the south shore of the Domain, and forming the other boundary of a beautiful cove, is another similar point or promontory, called still by the native name of Woolloomooloo (the accent being on the first and last syllables), on which a number of elegant villas have been erected by the more wealthy residents in Sydney, being to that place what the Regent's Park

is to London. The views from many of these are beautiful in the extreme, looking down into two bays, one on either side, and beyond these to the town and port, with the magnificent heads of the harbour closing the seaward prospect. Vines flourish here luxuriantly, and many tropical plants and trees mingle with those of European growth. Hedges are often formed of geraniums, and sometimes of the fruit-bearing cactus, called the prickly pear (*C. opuntia*, or *C. nana*?), a detestable thing, which if touched, even with strong leathern gloves, so penetrates them with its fine long spines, that the hands of the unlucky meddler are most annoyingly hurt by them. Some of our rarest greenhouse passion-flowers grow here unsheltered, and flower profusely; and the Brugmansia often forms the centre of a grass plot, with its graceful tent-like white bells hanging on it in hundreds. Geraniums thrive and grow very rapidly, but I did not see any good ones; none that I should have thought worth cultivating in England. A Horticultural Society has now been established some years, and will doubtless be the means of much improvement.

The Government Gardens are tastefully laid out round the sloping head of a small bay between the Domain and Government House, and contain (besides abundant vinerias, and all other productive matters) a strange and beautiful assemblage of dwellers in all lands, from the tall bamboo of India to the lowly English violet. A group of graceful weeping-willows overhang a pretty shady pool, where a statue, by an English sculptor (Westmacott, I think), is now erected to General Bourke, formerly governor of New South Wales. It had not arrived when we left Sydney, or I should have much rejoiced to see the first specimen of high art which the colony has obtained, placed in so lovely a spot, with us, so favourite a spot. The grand Norfolk Island pine, the fig, orange, mulberry, and countless trees, shrubs, and flowers new to me, add to the gay beauty of these gardens; and when tired of roaming about the sunny and fragrant walks, there are grassy lawns and shaded seats—and such a lovely prospect around, that, much as I should dislike to dwell in Sydney, I left its beautiful gardens with great regret. Yet, will it be believed, that even these are very little frequented by the inhabitants? They are evidently, from some cause unknown

to me (but doubtless nearly allied to the cause of the Domain's desertion), not considered correctly fashionable by the fancied "exclusives" of the place, though constantly frequented by all new-comers; at all events, the former prefer the hot, glaring, dusty pavement of a town street for their promenade, to these delicious gardens.*

* Since writing the above, I have seen some remarks in a Sydney newspaper which imply a more general resort to the "Domain" than was the case at the time of which I speak. I rejoice to find that the beauties of so delightful a spot are becoming more properly estimated.

CHAPTER VI.

Sydney Market—Fish, &c.—Dust; Flies—Mosquitoes—Drive to the Light-house—Flowers—Parrots—Black Cockatoos—Ilyde Park—Churches—Libraries—"Currency" population—Houses—Balls, &c.—Inns—Colonial Newspapers.

THE market in Sydney is well supplied, and is held in a large commodious building, superior to most provincial market-houses at home. The display of fruit in the grape season is very beautiful. Peaches also are most abundant, and very cheap; apples very dear, being chiefly imported from Van Diemen's Land, and frequently selling at sixpence each. The smaller English fruits, such as strawberries, &c., only succeed in a few situations in the colony, and are far from plentiful. Cucumbers and all descriptions of melon abound. The large green water-melon, rose-coloured within, is a very favourite fruit, but I thought it insipid. One approved method of eating it is, after cutting a sufficiently large hole, to pour in a bottle of Madeira or sherry, and mix it with the cold watery pulp. These melons grow to an enormous size (an ordinary one is from twelve to eighteen inches in diameter), and may be seen piled up like huge cannon-balls at all the fruit-shop doors, being universally admired in this hot, thirsty climate.

There are some excellent fish to be procured here, but I know them only by the common Colonial names, which are frequently misnomers. The snapper, or schnapper, is the largest with which I am acquainted, and is very nice, though not esteemed a proper dish for a dinner-party—why, I am at a loss to guess; but I never saw any native fish at a Sydney dinner-table—the preserved or cured cod and salmon from England being served instead, at a considerable expense, and, to my taste, it is not comparable with the cheap fresh fish, but being expensive, it has become "fashionable," and that circumstance reconciles all things. The guard-fish is long and narrow, about the size of a herring, with a very