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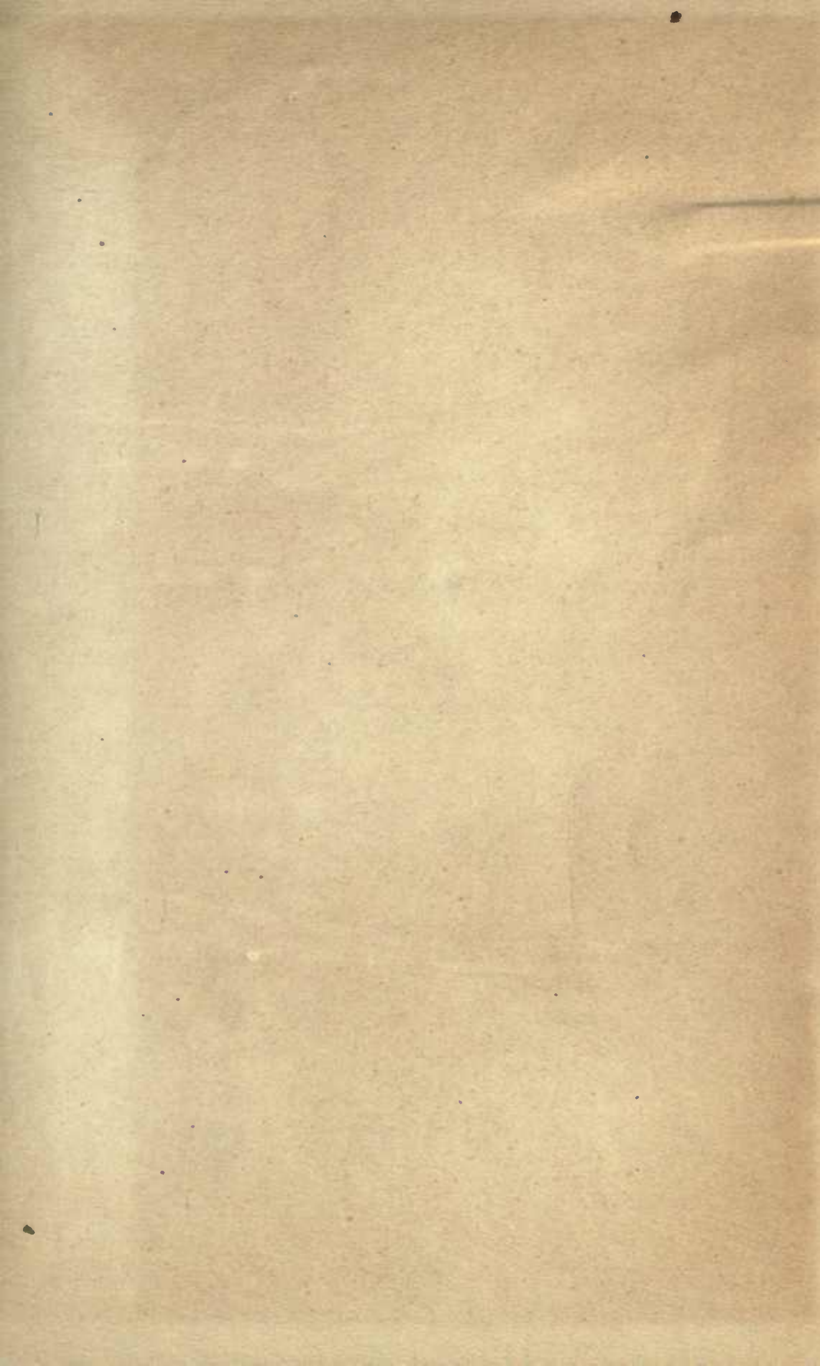

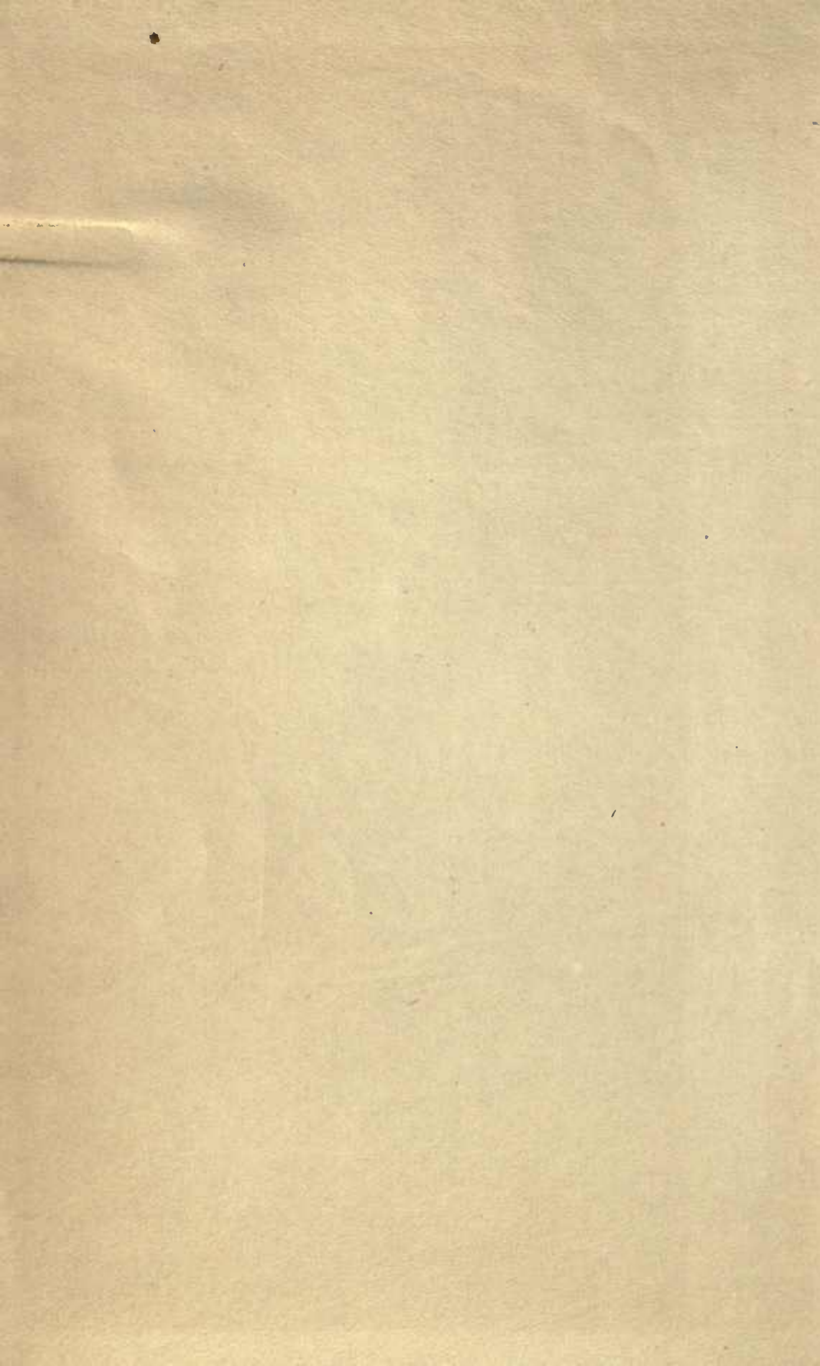

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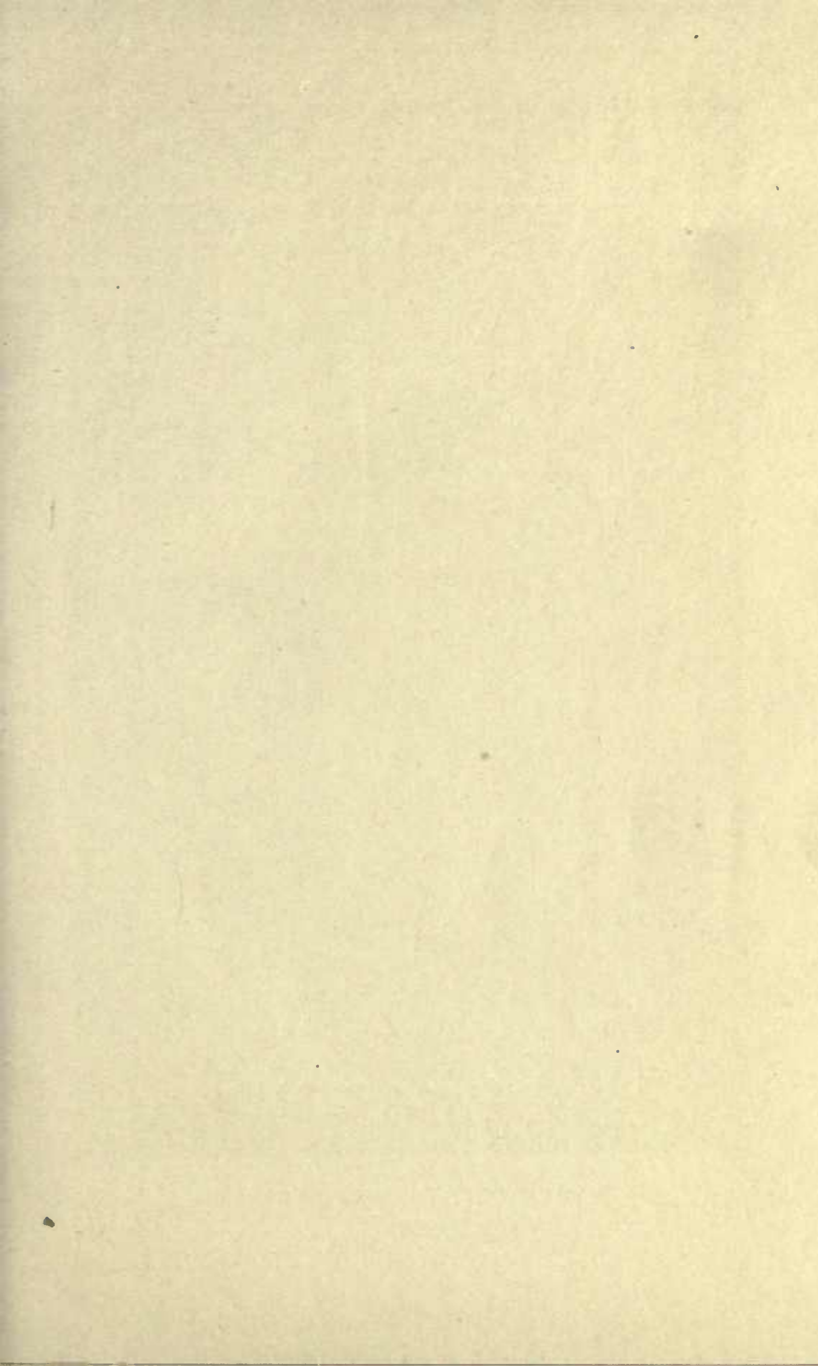

KARRI COUNTRY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Frontispiece.

RAMBLES IN AUSTRALIA

BY

EDWIN & MARION SHARPE GREW

AUTHORS OF "THE COURT OF WILLIAM III"
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WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS
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Published 1916

TO

OUR AUSTRALIAN HOSTS

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

OF MUCH KINDNESS

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PREFACE

THIS little book aims at giving such general impressions of Australia as could be gleaned during a visit lasting from July into September, and including some time spent in each state. We have tried to convey some idea of the aspect of the country itself, with its brilliant sunshine, great plains and trackless forests; of the social atmosphere of warm-hearted hospitality; of its economic problems and democratic legislative experiments. These last are so essentially Australian, that it seemed impossible to omit some reference to them, but they hardly fall within our scope, and are only lightly touched upon. Figures and facts quoted are taken from official handbooks and pamphlets.

With regard to the illustrations, those of Western Australia were provided by the kindness of Mr. Gibbs, of the Lands Department at Perth, and Mr. L. V. Shapcott, Premier's Office, Perth, who was good enough to take special photo-

graphs for us. For those of South Australia we have to thank Mr. Vaughan of the Lands Department.

At Melbourne the Secretary of the admirably organised Government Tourist Bureau was kind enough to have the views of Victoria specially printed for reproduction. For the views of New South Wales we have to thank the Hon. Dugald Thomson, and for those of Brisbane the Secretary of the Government Tourist Bureau for Queensland. Lastly, our grateful thanks are due to Captain Muirhead Collins, Permanent Secretary of the Australian Commonwealth in London, for his great kindness in reading the proofs and for much valuable criticism.

If *Rambles in Australia* leads even a few readers to wish for a closer acquaintance with, and a better understanding of, this great country of which we are so ignorant at home, it will not have been written in vain.

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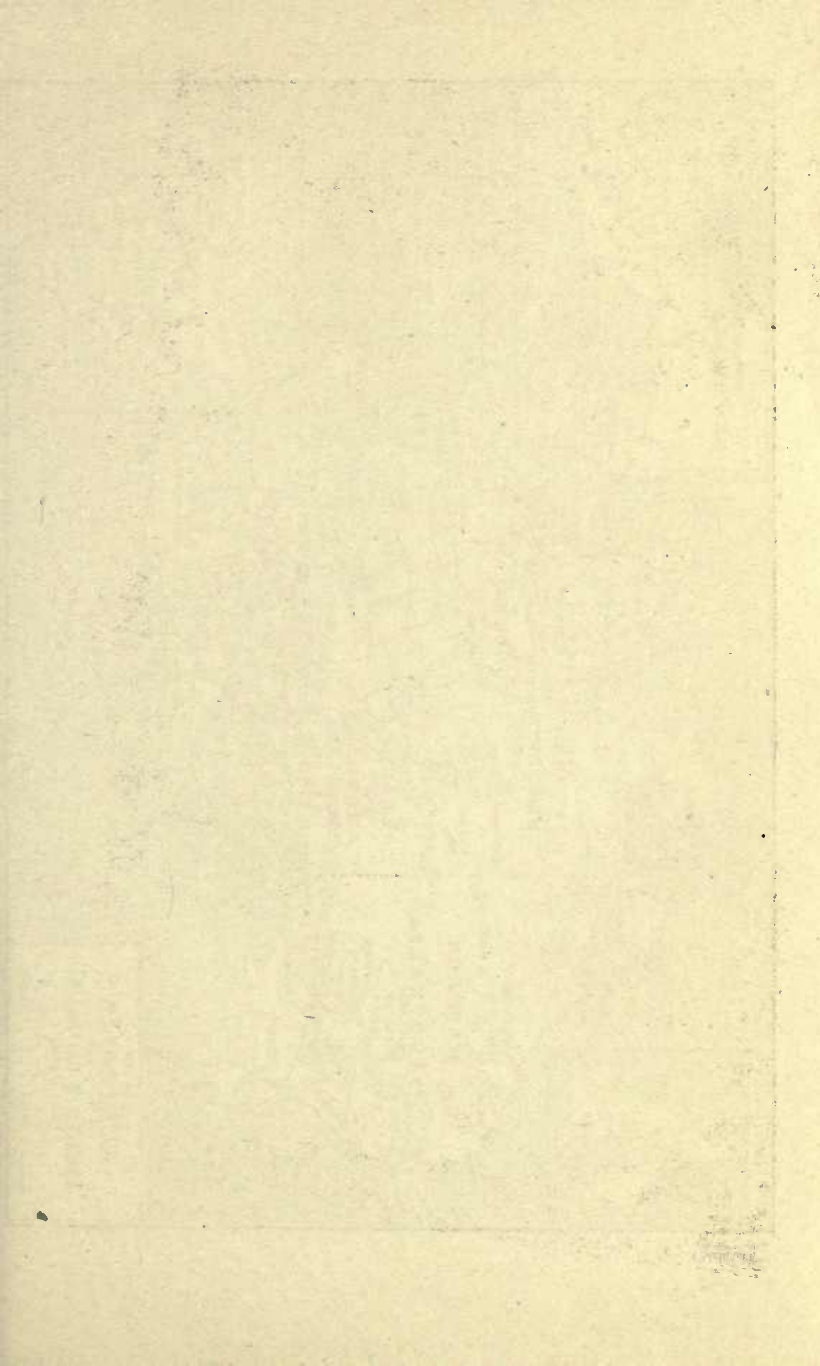
PART I

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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RAMBLES IN AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE LAND OF THE UNLATCHED DOOR

OPPOSITE to us was Australia. During the long days of the voyage across the bleak South Indian Ocean it had seemed no more than a vague area on a map, small, as all countries and even continents are, compared to the interminable stretches of the sea. But the voyage was ended now, and Australia, first no more than a blur on the horizon, and then solidifying into a shore with green trees, had now become resolved into an island with a lighthouse; and now into a harbour with wharves and quays and a background of houses behind the sheds and derricks. There was a train puffing in the distance; and here fussed a launch bringing with it people from the shore. . . .

Quite suddenly the Blue Funnel Liner which

has had the accustomedness of a home to us for all these weeks, shrinks to the aspect of a ship, of no more importance to us than a passenger train ; and impatience seizes us to be off. There is the land, alluring in a glow of sunset barred with feathery clouds . . . there's a shore breeze calling, let us go !

So much for the emotions of arrival. They are quickly submerged by occurrences which are no less stubborn in the poetic moments of reaching a new land, than at any other time. The Blue Funnel Liner had been behind her time, and had not wired her subsequent gain of a few hours ; our arrival had been expected, and was to have been made the occasion of a greeting by the Government of Western Australia to the members of a scientific mission on board. Western Australia's first greeting was to have taken the form of a garden party at Government House, Perth ; and as the invitations had been distributed over hundreds of miles of a wide country weeks before, no postponement had been possible. The garden party was being held—in our regretted absence—and the Port Medical Authorities, not to be done out of their festivity, had gone to it. So there Western Australia was—at our garden party, and there peering at the land of promise were we.

Hours went by. Those of us who had hastened over lunch and wrestled impatiently with trunks and hold-alls that be they attacked ever so early never can be packed at leisure, wandered about the decks, finding that they had lost their friendliness with their deck chairs, and had become as little homelike as a railway platform. The deck-steward, who had become merely a deck-steward instead of philosopher and friend, recovered some of his old standing by telling us that we were to have an early dinner on board, after all. But it was an empty meal. We so much desired to be gone. And at last we were. The sunset had faded, the swift dusk had deepened into night, when at last we went down the gangway and stood in Australia. . . . It was Australia, though beneath our feet were the planks and rails of a wharf. The French have a proverb that at night all cats are grey. This wharf, might it not have been the wharf at Liverpool or Tilbury ? Not quite. There was the Southern Cross overhead ; and in the warm darkness there was a something—something that was not England.

The party that had been so long companions split up and were scattered. The writer of these lines became for an hour or so more single than any of them, for business took him at once into

Perth, where he had to find Reuter's Agency. So looking back, and sorting out his recollections, he remembers first the friendly host that met him and walked to the railway station at Fremantle; and after that the Swan River shining in the starlight as the train crossed it; and after that nothing but the soft Australian night stealing in through the open carriage windows and seeming to come through whispering trees—until the train drew up at the lighted terminus of Perth. And Perth? In the darkness it was much like any other town at which one should arrive at night. Not like Paris, where, as a Frenchwoman in Bâle once said to us, at ten o'clock "Ça commence," nor yet like London, where, in times of peace, the streets are still open-eyed. But not unlike a provincial town; with some shops still brightly lighted, though most of them and the office buildings, are shut; a town with lights, but not lit; and with streets that are kept awake only by the street lamps. Through one such street I tracked down the office I sought, receiving much friendly aid by the way; and finally arriving at it in company with the publisher's clerk of the Perth newspaper.

That is another outstanding recollection: the publishing office with two clerks, one rather

sleepy, the other painstakingly deciphering an obituary notice which a small girl had brought in. When he had at last made it out, and felt that he could leave the office for a few minutes in charge of his companion, he put on his hat and said he would come with me. So he did. As a matter of history his kindness was unavailing, except to make me feel that Australia was filled with friends, for the office we wanted was vacant. So back I went through the gaunt streets and on to the railway station, where I was too new to the country to disregard the notice that smoking was not allowed on the platform; and presently the train was again taking me back to the suburb of Cottesloe Beach.

This was a country railway station, evidently. Just like one at home, to the two lighted shops just outside, and the white road stretching up a hill in the starlight. The road up which I was directed was dotted with houses wide apart; with shaded lamps which I could see through the shrubs; and now and again a piano tinkling. It was very still. At last I found the house I sought. Very white, with trees about it, and a windmill for its well; and windows lighted for the stranger. No; not the stranger, but the unknown, welcome guest. The gate in the wooden fence was swung back;

there was a light in the hall; and the hall door was wide open, though the hall was empty. And that was how I thought then, and have always thought of Australia. It is the "Land of the Unlatched Door."

CHAPTER II

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

IT behoves visitors to Australia to realise that they will have a good many things to do for themselves that they have never done before, and that the conditions of travelling, for instance, are very different from those in Europe. To begin with, the station porter is absent, and everyone has to carry his own hand baggage, for in a country, where labour is very scarce and very highly paid, there are no loafers ready to scramble for odd jobs, even at a port. What cannot be carried ashore by the passengers is left to be dealt with, frequently much to its detriment, by agencies whose representatives come on board for the purpose and convey it, or some of it, to its owner's destination. Stray packages, providentially arrive in time to go on to the next stopping-place with their owner. This applies not only to landing, but to railway travelling; so that it can easily be arranged for by those who are prepared in advance.

It was quite dark when we went ashore, and it is the oddest sensation to land in an unknown country after dark. We had been told on the boat that the station was at a distance of ten minutes' walk, but in the absence of cabs and porters its whereabouts was problematical. We therefore deposited our bags and awaited events.

Then out of the obscurity a man came up with some hesitation and asked us our names. It was our host, who had been guided to us in the dark by some occult sense, for we were unknown to each other except by name. He greeted us heartily with the kindly solicitude of an old friend, took possession of us and the larger share of our hand baggage, and carried us off to the station.

It was our first experience of an Australian welcome and Australian hospitality; that hospitality, which for unaffected kindness and generosity, can surely have no counterpart on any other continent. The hospitality that makes a guest free of all his host's possessions, that grudges no time or trouble in his guests' interest, and that is bestowed in the spirit not of a giver, but the receiver of a benefit. As we walked towards the train the ground seemed curiously soft, as if we were walking ankle-deep in dust.

It was not till next day that we found that this part of Western Australia consists everywhere of loose yellow sand like that by the seashore. The night was very mild after the keen sea air, and encumbered with bags and our heavy coats, we arrived at the station in time to see the train go out, and waited for the next one in a large empty booking-hall. At last the little train rattled in, and we started. We crossed the broad Swan River, above which a crescent moon was hanging, and Venus shone with the luminous brilliancy of southern skies. One of us went on to Perth: the other descended at Cottesloe Beach.

Here the station fly was waiting. It was shaped like a French diligence and drawn by two ruminative old white horses. The driver, surprised and startled at the apparition of a fare, climbed down, and lit a candle inside the fly, the light of which disclosed white lace curtains at the windows tied up with red ribbon. A few minutes jolting drive, and we were at our destination, and, jumping out, plunged immediately into soft, deep sand, before the entrance to a large one-storied house, its corrugated iron white-painted roof shining in the starlight as if it were covered with snow.

Our hostess, who had waited dinner for us an

unconscionable time, had neither allowed that, nor her welcome to get cold in the interim, and took us to a room sweet with the scent of a great bowl of wattle, and a bunch of very large, deep purple violets—a room that seemed strangely quiet after the long-heard straining and cracking of the timbers in our cabin. Here our sleep was lulled only by the fitful creaking of the little windmill in the garden.

The charming house in which we stayed at Cottesloe Beach was typical of nearly all West Australian houses. It stood, as even the smallest workman's cottage stands, in its own grounds detached from its neighbours', a roomy bungalow with a broad verandah running right round it. The verandah is an essential, all-important part of a West Australian house. The family sleep in it all the year round, using the bedrooms merely as dressing-rooms; they live on another side of it during the day.

In the country suburbs the houses are built on piles to protect them from the attacks of white ants. White ants can eat everything except jarrah, a hard red eucalyptus wood, which has been tried for paving London streets. The foundations of all the houses are formed of jarrah piles; on the top of every pile is put an iron saucer, and on this again is erected the super-

structure of the building. The iron saucer is indispensable, and, "capping the pile," takes the place of laying the foundation-stone. The white ants can neither penetrate it, nor run outside it, for they won't come into the light.

An immense corrugated galvanised iron water-tank stands beside every house, and most of the larger ones have their own windmill for pumping up water.

All the gardens were gay with flowers in this beautiful climate, even at the end of the winter. Masses of purple kennedya,* a showy climbing plant with a small pealike flower, hung from a high wooden fence surrounding our host's house. Geraniums grew like shrubs, and a magenta bougainvillea was a curtain of colour.

We arrived in Australia with the wattle; the mimosa sold in London shops can give but little idea of its trees, shining like cloth of gold among the grey eucalyptus, and outlining the streams. It is comparable to our hawthorn, though it is not in the same way a harbinger of spring, for the mild and flowery winters have no terrors. Australians are immensely proud of their wattle. They never lose an opportunity of commenting on its beauty, and just as no two Irishmen

* A genus named after a nurseryman who introduced these Australian plants into London.

can agree on the exact identity of the Irish shamrock among a variety of small trefoils, so wherever you go in Australia a different variety of mimosa is pointed out as the "true" Australian wattle.

One soon takes as a matter of course the brilliant unvarying Australian sunshine, but on our first walk the day after our arrival, it seemed as if we were wandering in a land of limelight; its hard dazzling white brilliance appeared artificial and unreal. There seemed to be an absence of chiaroscuro, and of atmosphere, the clear-cut distance gave an illusory impression of nearness, annihilating perspective; the eucalyptus with their light, springing branches, sparsely covered with long, narrow leaves, give little shade. From pictures and photographs one is led to suppose that Australian scenery is not unlike that of England. It is wholly and entirely different, not only in its atmospheric effect, and in the more uniform and heavier colouring of its foliage, but every individual plant is unfamiliar. Australia, one may say, roughly speaking, is one vast forest of eucalyptus or gum tree. The gums have many varieties, far too numerous for the traveller to distinguish, from the slight pale trees that are not unlike a silver-barked birch, to the soaring giants of the karri forest, with their

smooth white stems ; but whatever the variety, the prevailing tinge is a bluish grey. Sometimes the forest or "bush" has been cleared away to make room for orchards, and crops, or towns, or grazing land ; sometimes acres of trees have been "ringbarked," as it is called, a rapid and cheap way of clearing land, by cutting out a ring of bark so that the tree dies, and only a skeleton forest remains, letting in light and air to the soil. But the "bush" is never very far away. It seems to be only waiting to close in again, and swallow up once more what has been so laboriously cleared. West, east, north, and south, the gum tree predominates, though the bush varies in the nature of its undergrowth, which in the tropics becomes rich and beautiful.

The general effect of Australian landscape to English eyes produces an impression of austerity. It is never friendly, perhaps because of the general absence of water, the sombre wooded hills, the vast dun plains, have something aloof and forbidding.

It would be difficult to find anything in life more stimulating and delightful than the first walk in a new country, where every sight and sound is unfamiliar. Strolling along the soft, hot sandy road that first morning, past the low-verandahed houses, each with its wooden palisade, its wind-

mill and big grey water-tank, we came to rising ground overlooking the Swan River. Behind were the low deep blue hills of the Darling Range, and the broad river lay glassy in the heat of the sun, blue as the Lake of Geneva on a summer's day. Its wooded banks run out in little spits of land with white sandy foreshores, one or two small white-sailed boats were floating idly on it, and some water-fowl swam on its unruffled surface. The foliage of the gums with which its banks are covered is dark and uniform in colour, and had the massive effect of our trees in autumn, before the leaves have begun to turn. The air was heavy with the scent of some white-flowering shrub, the stillness was unbroken except by the note of a magpie; the place seemed a paradise. So it must have looked to the first settlers, the first pioneers, who stood, as we stood, looking down on it. It left an ineffaceable impression, and we never again saw anything more beautiful than that view.

Western Australia is famous for its wild flowers. We were a month too early, but even so we saw many strange and beautiful varieties. They are more numerous here than anywhere else in the world, even now many have not been classified. The most characteristic are as unlike as possible to our delicate evanescent wild flowers at home;

strongly growing, determined, having adapted themselves, by becoming wiry or leathery, to all exigencies of heat or drought. The banksia, for instance, looked as if a fir-cone had suddenly burst into bristling pink flowers; the hard cone of it is called by the natives a "mungite," and is used to kindle fire. Some unobservant person once told the West Australians that their birds were all songless, their flowers all scentless, and being naturally self-depreciatory, they have quoted it ever since. The bird-notes are very beautiful and clear in quality of tone; the note of the magpie will at once occur to the most casual observer, to quote only one instance. Old Dampier, in 1699, on his first landing in Western Australia was struck with "the small birds, all singing with great variety of fine shrill notes." He mentions too, being observant, as befits an explorer, "the small flowers growing on the ground, that were sweet and beautiful," and where else is there a better description of the eucalyptus "sweet-scented and reddish within the bark," and "with long narrow leaves . . . on one side whitish and on the other green." But the "racoons" (kangaroos) which were so numerous as to be easily caught, and were "very good meat," are now but rarely to be seen, where he first sighted them.

Cottesloe Beach, our headquarters while we were in Western Australia, is a pleasant seaside suburb, with, as its name suggests, an immense beach of finest white sand, lapped by smooth waters and protected by Rottnest Island from ocean storms. The cliffs of Rottnest Island, showing yellowish in the bright sunshine, with the white needle of the lighthouse sharply defined are the first sight of land as ships approach West Australia.

The half an hour's railway journey to Perth runs through other little garden suburbs, for all Australian towns straggle out for many miles into the country, and cover a very large extent of ground. Space is unlimited, and nobody's domain large or small, need elbow that of his neighbour. The little train on its narrow gauge railway rattles past roads of one-storied houses, standing on their piles; each with its verandah, and sloping iron roof, each surrounded by its palisaded garden, with its purple kennedya, its pink geranium and wattle, each with its inevitable tall grey iron water-tank; somewhere about there is sure to be an array of the ubiquitous kerosene tin, utilised either as a pail, a basket, a flower-box, or all three. We saw them used to form chimneys, even to construct a raft. These suburbs have an air of having loose ends left hanging out. It is

all so new; there is no time to attend to details when time is so essentially money. So bordering the low fences are rough undergrowth and gum trees and banksias, and coarse wiry grass—the beginning and the end of the bush.

CHAPTER III

PERTH: A PARADISE FOR THE WORKING MAN

THE city of Perth is in a transition stage. Scattered over the low hills of the Swan River, its situation is magnificent, and its climate superb, but it is as yet only partly built, or rather it is undergoing the gradual process of rebuilding. As the municipality becomes more wealthy, handsome houses are replacing temporary structures, so that imposing white official buildings alternate with makeshift affairs hurriedly run up in earlier days, when need was urgent and money was scarce. Perth is, then, on its way to becoming a fine town, and its public buildings are being constructed from simple designs in good taste.

But what most impresses the new-comer from Europe in Australian towns is not the buildings, but the people. Here is no miserable sordid fringe of the poor and wretched. In this happy country there is no poverty. Its people are well fed, well clothed, well housed, well-to-do. Whatever her problems, and they are many and diffi-

PERTH, FROM "THE NARROWS.'

cult, and not to be lightly pronounced upon by the casual visitor, it is the glory of Australia that she has no poor.

It appeared to us, especially in the West, that a characteristic type is developing; lean, loosely hung, wiry, with eyes deep-set from the strong sunlight. In odd contrast to European towns, men everywhere preponderate over women in the streets. Perhaps because of its newness, the attitude of the other states to Western Australia is still a little patronising. Western Australians themselves are fully conscious of this, they on their part always talk about "the East" in tones of desire: "I hope we shall go to the East next year," is often heard in Perth. At first we thought they meant China or Japan, but we soon found that in Western Australia "the East" means Melbourne or Sydney. They stand for London or Paris, and one lady said plaintively: "If I have a nice dress, when I go to see my sister in 'the East,' she says, 'You didn't get that made in Perth.'"

Perth, however, is looking forward. She knows the time will come when she can compete fearlessly with her elder sister the capital of "the East." Meanwhile she has achieved the acquisition of the most attractive zoological gardens of any Australian city. They are small, but

charmingly laid out, the animals left free to roam about in their own little grassy paddocks. The pleasant shady walks are lined by the pretty Cape lilac, which in July is bare of leaves, but covered with clusters of yellow berries, very decorative in effect. These gardens lie on the far side of the Swan River, and a ferry-boat plies across its shining blue waters. Numbers of black and white water-fowl swim alongside, diving below and bobbing up again, or settling on a row of posts that run out from the shore, each one like a little black and white carved ornament. The gardens are a few minutes' walk from the landing stage. We found them charming, the darker evergreens everywhere lighted up by patches of golden wattle. The kangaroos and wallabies feeding in their little enclosures hop up and put gentle inquiring noses into your hand.

Perhaps it is because the little wild Australian animals are so pathetically confiding that they are becoming extinct. The authorities do all they can to preserve them, but it appears to be inevitable, though deplorable, that the native wild animals of Australia, charming little inoffensive creatures, are becoming rarer every year, in spite of large reserves or national parks, where everything is left untouched in its wild state. Unfortunately some of the most interest-

ing cannot be kept in captivity. This applies, for instance, so we were told, to the koala, or little tree-bear, and to the curious duck-billed platypus, a little animal covered with a wiry brown fur, with the bill of a bird, and something of the habits of our river otter. The gardens possessed a one-eyed alligator that caught pigeons in its mouth with astonishing dexterity, and swallowed them whole in two gulps; and some fascinating cranes with beautiful vermilion legs, that danced as gracefully as any ballerina. Our own visit to the gardens was pleasantly concluded by tea, which an Australian lady was hospitably dispensing to ourselves and some other English visitors.

Tea is a most important feature of Australian life. Tea comes in with the maid and hot water in the mornings, and tea is drunk at breakfast; "Morning tea" is a settled social institution. We were invited to it on several occasions, it is served at eleven o'clock. Tea next appears at or after lunch. Afternoon tea is a matter of course everywhere; but it comes in again at or after dinner, and is very often drunk the last thing at night. One would think so much tea would undermine the strongest constitution, but it is made very weak with a great deal of milk. Australians themselves feel that their indulgence in tea-drinking is rather excessive

but they account for it by saying that "In the bush you cannot get anything else to drink," and neither seek nor offer other explanation.

It was at this Perth tea-party that we first saw the brown heavily scented "boronia," for which West Australia is famous. The tables were decorated with that and the delicate pink Geraldstown wax flower. Boronia has a small chocolate-coloured flower, yellow inside, and is so sweet that its scent is overpowering in a room or on a dinner table. The genus was named after an Italian botanist. There are many varieties in Australia, which, to the uninstructed eye, do not in the least resemble each other. *Boronia megastigma*, the West Australian variety, is used for the manufacture of scent, and is cultivated for sale; it is one of the most characteristic spring flowers.

We were not long in discovering that Western Australia, whatever course its future development may take, is at present a paradise for the working-man. Nowhere else is life made so pleasant and easy for him in such matters as housing and education; nowhere else are his children given such facilities for making their way in the world in their turn. To begin with, education is provided free of cost, from the primary school to the University. In the primary schools boys are given manual

training, and girls are taught cooking and domestic economy. Special facilities are provided by the Government to meet the needs of scattered settlers in the bush remote from centres of population; wherever it is possible to assure an average attendance of even ten children within a radius of three miles, schools are already established. The Education Act even takes into consideration the case of isolated families, where the muster of children is less than ten; the department pays £7 a year for each child on condition that the parents find a suitable teacher, and will supplement this grant, so that he may have a minimum of £30 a year over and above the cost of his board and lodging.* In effect the Government pays part of the salary of a private tutor. It can be easily imagined that the education grant must be a very heavy one, in proportion to the population. It amounts, in fact, to about £1 annually for every individual in the state.

From the primary schools children are drafted into the secondary schools, when they are able to profit by the advanced standard of teaching. There are also technical schools, where trades are taught, and a training college for teachers.

* On the goldfields the grant is £8 10s. per each child and the teacher's income £40.

We visited one of the intermediary schools, the Perth Modern School, as it is called, at Leederville, a suburb between Perth and Cottesloe Beach. We found a handsome red brick building, looking like a Nonconformist college in one of our older Universities. In the large, well-kept grounds there is room for football, tennis, hockey, and a gymnasium is provided in a detached building.

The school is admirably constructed for its purpose, the classrooms opening out of a large central hall. We were unexpected and unannounced. In the course of our researches in pursuit of the headmaster we were impressed with the excellent discipline and tone of a school in which the children's attention was not to be distracted by the presence of strangers glancing into their classrooms in passing. The teachers, masters, and mistresses, all wore university gowns. The headmaster, alert and enthusiastic, showed us over his spacious, airy school-buildings, including the well-equipped laboratory and the department of domestic economy. Western Australia does not neglect the practical side of its children's education, and here the girls are taught dressmaking, millinery, and cooking. The dining-rooms of the staff, and those pupils whose homes are at a distance, had the air of a well-appointed restaurant, with its small tables daintily

set out with clean linen, and fresh flowers brought by the children. We noticed among them what looked like a small edelweiss, the Australian "flannel flower."

The period of education at these intermediate schools consists of a four years' course lasting from 12 to 16. A "Leaving Certificate" on the completion of the four years' course must be obtained by examination to enable the student to pass into the University. Some students are drafted into the Training College for Teachers, or, after the four years' course is finished, students may stay on at the school to study special subjects. We were impressed with the appearance of the children. They were healthy, well-to-do, and attractive; their manners were frank and without self-consciousness.

One of the older girls, who was deputed by the headmaster to show us the way to the station, would have compared favourably with any English schoolgirl of the same age. Her father had visited England, "and you have no *sand* in England," she added, half incredulously, "and father could not make them understand about the sand here." She came from up-country, and was able to tell us that two handsome large grey and black birds with a singularly limpid note were "rain birds." She also pointed out to us two

large castor-oil trees, and told us that the magpies, predatory, knowing-looking birds, which are to be seen everywhere in Australia, are called "break o' day boys" in the country, because, like our cocks, they call the neighbourhood.

It is only quite recently that Western Australia has acquired its University; it is in fact of such new foundation, that, like some of Perth itself, it is still housed in temporary buildings. Its professorial staff is appointed, and it confers degrees, but the scene of its labours is at present in a number of classrooms beneath a corrugated iron roof, opposite the charming gardens of Government House—Australia is very good to its governors in the matter of houses and gardens. But Perth is developing with great rapidity, and a probable permanent site for the University is already talked of, on the banks of the Swan River, in the National Reserve or King's Park.*

If working-men are liberally treated by the state as regards education for their children, they are treated no less generously as regards housing accommodation.

One afternoon we visited, in company with the State Premier, some of the houses the state

* A summary of the history of Western Australian Educational Development will be found in the State Handbook, contributed by the Hon. Walter Kingsmill, formerly Minister for Education.

builds for working-men. The bungalows were built on the Western Australian plan on piles; one-storied verandahed houses each in its own palisaded plot of ground about a quarter of an acre in extent. Outhouses, including a washhouse, were at a little distance from the main building. The houses were pretty and picturesque; they were constructed of coloured "sand" bricks, made of cement and sand, and had corrugated iron roofs. They vary in type, and the intending purchaser can see the plans and make his own selection according to his taste and means. Those we visited were situated on the pleasant outskirts of Perth, with a view over the Swan River. We went over several in the course of construction, and then made our way to a street of occupied houses. We left the motor-car behind here, for the roads were of soft sand like a sea beach. The sand was held together by a low-growing plant, a kind of mesembryanthemum, locally known as "pig's face." It has very thick, succulent leaves and an attractive flower like a large primrose-coloured thistle. Sheep or cattle will eat it, and it is almost independent of moisture. We visited some newcomers who had lately taken one of the houses. The owner was a member of the Legislative Council, and had recently left the goldfields to

come and live in Perth; for Western Australia holds that it pays its legislators to legislate, and requires of them whole-hearted devotion to the service of the state for their £300 a year salary. He had already made his garden. The front lawn was sown with grass and sanded over, and he was busied in making a vegetable garden in the sand, in which early spring flowers were showing even then.

Inside, the rooms were large and well furnished, the bedrooms opening on to the broad, shady verandah that faced what would eventually be the lawn. As we drove away the Premier pointed out a small wooden house in a tiny plot of ground—that, he said, is all a man can do without state aid for the same money.

As to the financial part of the scheme, it is regulated on no principle of extravagant philanthropy, but is conceived on a sound commercial basis, to repay the Government the interest of 4½% on the capital expended. The payments of the tenants are calculated on a basis of 5%, with a rebate of ½% on punctual payment. The land on which their houses stand is inalienable, that is, at the end of ninety-nine years it reverts to the state, and in the meantime the owner cannot dispose of it except to the Government, who will take it back on a valuation, allowing compensation

on improvements, or making deductions from the original cost on depreciations. To be eligible as a tenant a man's income must be under £400 a year, and he pays a small deposit. The most expensive houses vary from £600 to £700. The tenant's weekly payments, which may be spread over a period of thirty years, eventually make the house his own; but his payments may vary in accordance with his means, and he can make his house his own at any point by paying off the balance. No wonder that with such inducements to linger in the neighbourhood of a town, men should shrink from the harder, more vigorous life up-country. Yet it is "up-country" men that Australia wants, to clear, sow, and till her rich, fertile soil; with enterprise and energy to win certain fortune, and courage to face the initial hardships and loneliness, which bring their own reward.

With all her natural advantages Western Australia's development is only a matter of the last twenty years. Like most of the rest of the continent, she has an inhospitable and forbidding coast. The Dutch knew of the existence of a southern land or, "Terra Australis," before the end of the sixteenth century, and Dutch captains sailing from the Cape to Java and the East Indies not infrequently found themselves within sight of a desolate and unknown coast, which they

gradually charted, till it was mapped in outline from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Cape Leeuwin. It was not, however, till nearly the end of the century that the first Englishman landed in Australia, when Captain Dampier, commanding the "Roebuck," navigated the western and north-western coastline in 1699, and was not encouraged by what he saw there.

Sailing from the Downs in January with fifty men, and twenty months' provisions, Dampier sighted the low, even shores of Australia in August of the same year, and entered Shark's Bay, as he called it. He and his men went ashore, but sought in vain for water on that waterless coast, digging wells, but to no purpose. A hundred years later, in 1803, the continent was circumnavigated by Matthew Flinders, who suggested that "Australia" should be substituted for the Dutch name of New Holland.

Still nearly another century passed away before Western Australia begun to grow and prosper. In 1826 Major Lockyer was sent from Sydney, with troops and a party of convicts, to occupy King George's Sound on the south coast, where the Port of Albany stands to-day, and a few years later the Swan River Settlement was formed in the neighbourhood of Fremantle and Perth; but these first beginnings of the colony were

unpropitious, and it languished till the discovery of gold brought the first great influx of population, and with it the consequent demand for agricultural produce, which at last gave an impetus to Western Australian development.

Slowly the outside world began to realise the immense possibilities of this great territory, which occupies about one-third of the whole continent, and has an area eighteen times that of England and Wales. Within its fertile and beautiful interior, stretching from the temperate to tropical zones, were found districts well fitted for raising cattle and sheep, for agriculture, and fruit-growing and the cultivation of vines. Vast primeval forests of valuable timber cover many square miles, while the discovery of coal and other minerals accompanied that of gold. Western Australia is no less fortunate in its climate than in its natural resources: over the greater part of the state it is equable and pleasant without violent extremes. The dry season lasts into April; the greater part of the rainfall, which varies in different districts of the state from 40 to 10 inches, taking place between May and September.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE BUSH

ONE great source of wealth to Western Australia are the karri forests, covering thousands of square miles. Karri is a kind of eucalyptus closely allied to the better-known jarrah, one of the hardest woods in existence. It has been used at home to pave the streets of London. In all but one respect karri is as good as jarrah, its only point of inferiority is that it cannot be employed for underground purposes, while jarrah can be left under water for twenty years without being any the worse for it. Karri has to be specially prepared—"powellised" is the technical term—and that is an expensive process. Otherwise it is almost impossible to tell the two woods apart, except by the ash after burning.

Western Australia asserts that its karri trees are the tallest in the world, though Victorians make the same claim for the giant gums of Gippsland. So far these Gippsland trees have been proved to be the tallest in Australia.

The official measurements are: height, 326 feet 1 inch; girth, 25 feet 7 inches; measured six feet from the ground.* Their dimensions are surpassed by the Californian redwood, which have been found attaining a height of 340 feet; but whatever the actual measurements, the effect of the immense height of the Australian trees is everywhere imposing enough to warrant competitive statements concerning it.

Remote from all habitation, the difficulties in the way of felling and transporting the karri are very great, and the Western Australian Government have in consequence established some state sawmills about two hundred miles up-country, in the heart of the primeval, uncleared forest. It is the nucleus of a new township called Big Brook. Australia has not shown herself altogether felicitous in her nomenclature, for generally it is neither original nor descriptive, except where native names have been adopted, which, if not euphonious, have a meaning.

We had the good fortune to be in Perth on the occasion of an official visit organised by the Government. Australian trains always run at night, and so avoid much tedium and loss of time. After an early dinner, we started from Perth at 7.30 for Big Brook in a special train.

* From the Federal Handbook to Australia, p. 204.

The line, like all Western Australian railways, was laid on a narrow gauge, with the result that the carriages jolted and rocked like a small boat in a storm. An odd little characteristic feature of West Australian travelling is that at the end of each carriage is suspended a canvas water-bag, with a cup attached to it. They are also seen hanging in verandahs, impressing on the stranger that he is in a dry and thirsty land, where water is always precious.

One of the advantages of the Western Australian climate is that the nights are cool, though the spring sunshine was intensely hot. Whoever organised this Government visit to the sawmills had a very high standard of comfort, for from first to last it was most admirably arranged. We were a small but very pleasant little party, and met and talked in the friendly Australian way, in each other's compartments. About nine o'clock a light supper was brought round, and we soon after went to bed and fitfully to sleep under a mountain of rugs. Whenever the train stopped there was a loud chorus of frogs from unseen swamps.

We were called next morning by the conductor bringing us tea, and later, while we were dressing, he came round with fruit. We woke to find ourselves already in the

depths of the forest among the soaring white trunks of the karri, the early sun tinging their smooth trunks with red. The line had been recently made, and the sleeping cars were very heavy, so we proceeded slowly. There was very little sign of life; we could almost feel the great deep silence of the forest, moist, and fresh, and cold, in the frost of early morning, for it lies 400 feet above the sea level, and the temperature was very different from that of the dry sandy plains of Perth. At long intervals solitary wooden houses stood in little clearings, with grave-eyed children before the doorway, shading their eyes to watch the unfamiliar passage of a big train. More seldom we came upon a scattered village of tents, roughly put up like a gipsy encampment, pitched among the damp undergrowth. There was something pathetic in the deep isolation of these pioneers, though the near neighbourhood of the railway made their lives almost metropolitan, compared with those of many Australian settlers.

As we drew nearer to our journey's end, we passed an occasional small clearing, where the yellow sandy soil had already been planted with apple trees for the fruit growing, which is one of the industries of the future for Western Australia; or patches of forest had been ring-

barked,* and left to die, after the cheap but wasteful method of clearing in use. Visitors to Australia cannot help being impressed with the waste of timber, which seems appalling to an inhabitant of an over-populated northern country, where everything grows slowly, and every inch of wood has its economic value. They are too ready to rush into print, or public pronouncements, on a subject of which only prolonged residence in the country, and a more than superficial study of its economic problems, could enable them to judge. In the first place the cost of transport is prohibitive, or means of transport may even be non-existent; and secondly, in a new country time is money. Great tracts of forest all over Australia are ringbarked and left to rot. In the Government sawmills at Big Brook, the debris of the great karri trees is lost. There is wholesale waste, wholesale destruction of timber going on in Australia, the least intelligent observer cannot fail to mark it, but time is literally money in Australia. "We can't afford to wait," said one of the leading statesmen of Western Australia, commenting on the waste of timber at Big Brook. "We sacrifice

* "Ringbarking" is effected by cutting away an encircling strip or ring of bark round the trunk and so slowly killing the tree.

five pounds to gain twenty," said one of the shrewdest and best-informed officials of Victoria.

By the common process of ringbarking, dead trees are left standing over great areas of forest land, vast white skeleton armies, a strange and desolate sight. If the land is to be used for arable purposes, the trees have to be removed; but for pasture, when the trees are dead, and can no longer deprive the grass of nourishment and moisture, they remain standing for years, till in time with the process of the seasons, and the attacks of insects, the hard wood decays and crumbles away. Thus the destruction of forests goes on in order to provide timber for building; for fencing, mining, fuel, as well as for commercial purposes of export, or to improve, or create, arable or pasture land. In Western Australia besides, green timber is cut for fuel, in the neighbourhood of the goldfields, because of the scarcity of coal, but natural reafforestation is usually allowed to proceed. However, when all these necessities are admitted, there has been a deplorable waste of timber, the want of which is already felt in settled districts; and it is hoped that further wanton destruction will be prevented, and replanting will be undertaken by all the states. Official opinion is becoming alive to the importance of the question to the future history

of Australia. Victoria and New South Wales are doing some planting, but South Australia is the only state in which forest plantation is being carried on on a large scale.*

The railway ended abruptly in a large clearing in the forest about fifteen miles from the coast and two hundred miles from Perth. The air was that of a keen autumn morning, and we climbed down from our carriages, for there was of course no platform, feeling stiff and chilly, to find breakfast waiting for us in a big wooden hall, with a great fire blazing in the kitchen, which opened out of it, the most cheering and comfortable sight in the wilderness. These halls are a feature of backwood settlements in Australia; they are utilised for all social and business purposes, and are the common meeting ground of the community. In this instance the landlord leased the building from the state, and provided meals for the men employed in the sawmills. He invited us to inspect his pleasant kitchen, the floor sanded with sweet-smelling, deep-red sawdust. At the back he was putting up bedrooms in small detached one-storied wooden buildings. Big Brook with its keen, pure air, the sweet, clean scent of the fresh-sawn wood, and all round, the illimitable forest, mysterious and im-

* See Federal Handbook for this question, pp. 171, 414.

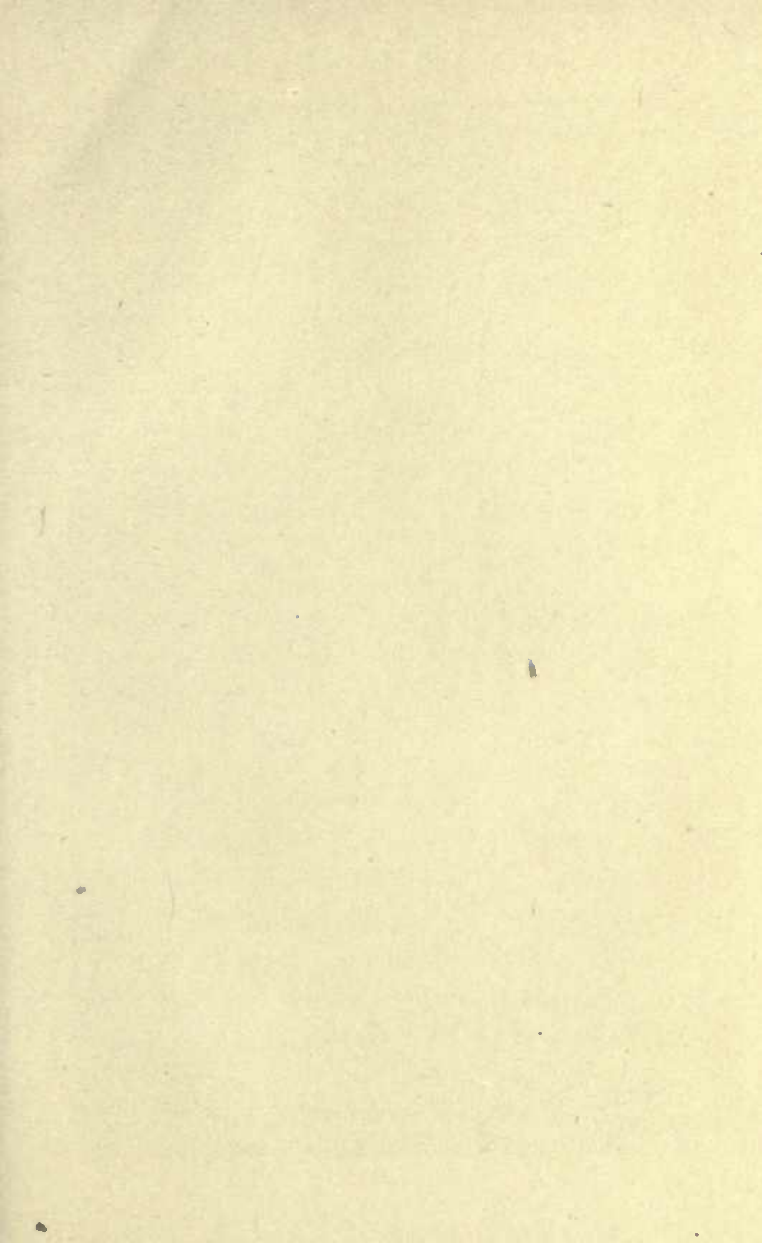
penetrable, would be an ideal resting-place, if anyone in Australia were ever over-worked.

But meanwhile breakfast was waiting for us, a never-to-be-forgotten breakfast of good coffee, hot rolls, porridge, new-laid eggs, and chops the tenderest in the world, the product of the local sheep. Fig jam, with which it concluded, was excellent. Figs grow readily in Western Australia, and produce abundant crops of fruit. They were very noticeable at this time of year, as they were the only deciduous tree.

After breakfast we visited the whole settlement, which of course was built entirely of wood. In the school, in a bright, cheerful classroom, a master was conducting the tiny classes of well-dressed, rosy-cheeked children. Opposite the school was a billiard-room, where the men could meet in the evenings; there was also a bank, and a post office. We were impressed by the splendid physique of the men; they were as agile as cats, muscular and supple; and these qualities were necessary, for the work is very dangerous from the moment the axe is laid to the root of the tree. The logs are of immense weight, they bound and crash down the incline to the back of the mill, when they are unloaded from the truck, and fly asunder with great force when they are sawn. The log, or trunk of the tree is first sawn in two

longitudinally, and is then again cut into smaller and smaller slices, till it becomes planks. The saws are graduated, becoming more and more fine. The task of keeping them true is an accomplishment of great delicacy, it is one man's work ; he corrects deviations in the metal with a hammer, judging them entirely by eye.

In the neighbourhood of the sawmill all the air is filled with flying sawdust, and the sweet scent of the freshly sawn wood. The dust falls to the ground in deep red masses, the flying chips look like scraps of raw meat, but the rich colour fades when they dry. The process of preparing the karri wood for use is at present a very expensive one. The planks have to be stewed in order to preserve them. They are put for this purpose into immense tanks of molasses, and left seething there to harden. It is hoped that scientific experiment may evolve a less costly method. After going over the mills we were taken up a little railway line into the forest to see a tree felled. We sat on benches on trucks behind the engine, which carried a supply of wood for its boiler, for the cost of bringing coal up to Big Brook would be quite prohibitive. Even the boilers that work the mills are fed with wood. The engine was run by a magnificent-looking old stoker with a white beard and the air of a patriarch. When



FELLING KARRI.

we scrambled off the trucks on to the soft, rich earth of the forest, we had to wait to let a bullock team go by, twenty-four of them pulling one log with a big metal "shoe" on the end to prevent its digging into the ground. The passage left a deep slide in the red earth. The bullocks are bound together in twos by very uncomfortable-looking, heavy wooden yokes, and their progress is punctuated by frightful yells and cracking of whips from the drivers.

We had not far to walk; the sun was now almost oppressively hot, and the steamy atmosphere was full of the rich, moist smell of the damp earth and the undergrowth. The wood-cutters, who fell these immense trees, are so skilled that they can gauge the exact spot on which they will fall to within a few inches; such accuracy is a matter of life and death in tree-felling. When we arrived on the scene the great trunk of the karri was already sawn through by two men working on a kind of little platform erected round it. For an instant the slim, white tree tottered, while we held our breath, then it began to fall slowly, at first with a crackling sound; finally it came crashing and tearing its way among the neighbouring trees, followed by a shower of leaves; there was a sound as of the firing of a big gun; all the earth trembled; it

seemed, as if the whole vast silence of the forest was shaken. A second tree that we saw felled measured one hundred and fifty-eight feet to the first fork.

The woodcutters are paid by the load that the bullocks draw, the bare trunk of the tree when its branches have been lopped off. We were told that they can make as much as £6 a week. The cost of living does not amount to much more than 25s. a week for a single man, as he can board sumptuously at the Hall for 22s., and the price of lodgings is about 1s. 6d. This leaves a considerable surplus, and in Big Brook there is no means of spending money. In consequence, men occasionally go off to the nearest town when they have amassed a small capital, and stay there till it is all spent, and they have nothing to show for it. They work eight hours a day, and everything is regulated by contract. They are of various nationalities, but all of magnificent physique. While we were waiting to remount our railway trucks, a team of forty-eight bullocks passed, dragging one enormous log of twenty tons weight, the drivers cracking their long whips, screaming and leaping into the air in a frenzy of inarticulate excitement that somehow conveyed a meaning to the bullocks. Soon after we began the return journey we passed through a belt of

jarrah, the still harder kind of eucalyptus that we had only seen in the form of piles; the trunks were reddish instead of white like the karri.

We saw also for the first time a common feature of the Western Australian bush, the curious "Black Boys," called in Queensland "grass trees." They look like a knotted dead trunk with bulrushes growing on the top in thick bunches. Sometimes the trunk is forked, and there are a pair of odd bushy heads on one black misshapen trunk.

The bush in this part of Australia has little diversity. The keen air of the early morning had made us very hungry, in spite of so substantial a breakfast, and we were not sorry to reach Jarraduck, the settlement in the forest where lunch was waiting in another large wooden hall. The long tables were decorated with masses of golden wattle and purple kennedya. Lunches of this kind, and we sampled very many, are always just alike, varying only with the resources of the neighbourhoods,—lots of flowers and a warm welcome, plates of assorted cold meats, of which turkey is an almost inevitable ingredient; elaborate sweets, of which one is always an excellent trifle, and fruit of the district, in this case the small, sweet, thick-skinned local orange.

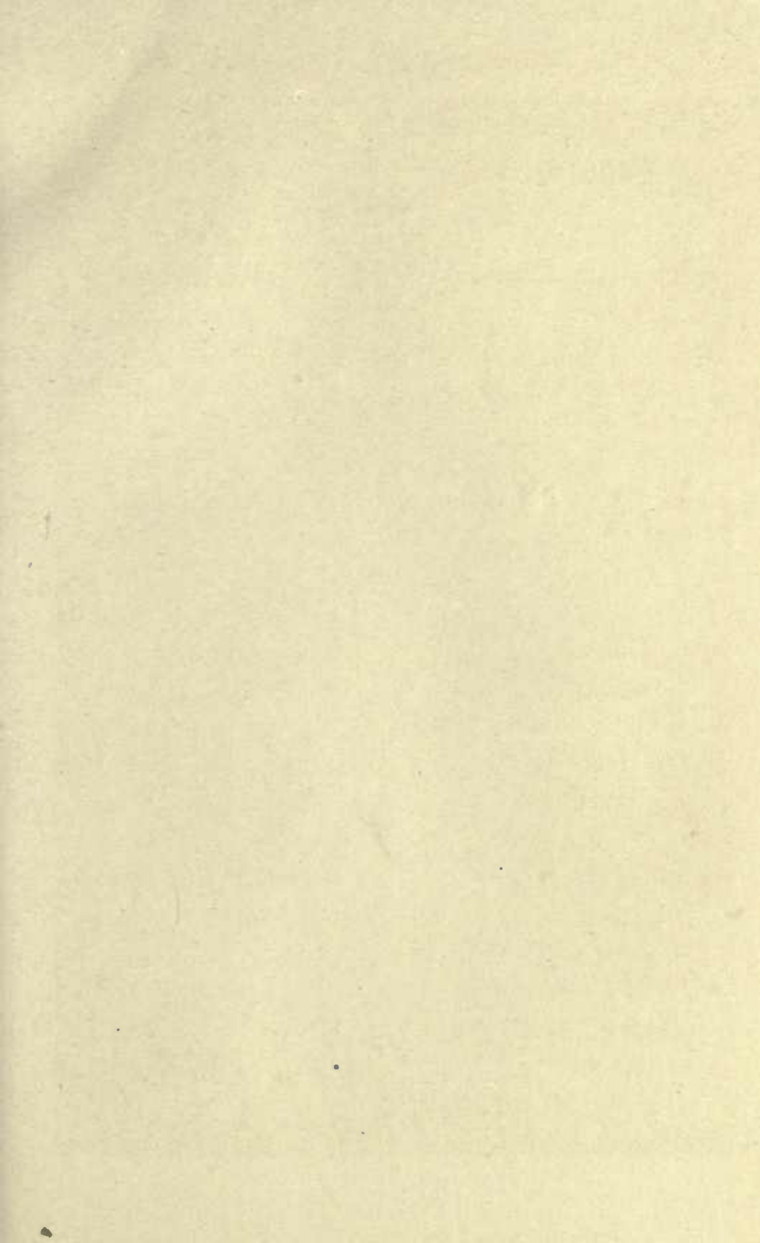
The refined-looking, sweet-faced landlady seemed inappropriate to the rough surroundings. "We shall just stay here till we can better ourselves," she explained. A few more hours brought us out of the forest, there were more clearings, homesteads became more frequent, the red soil was freshly ploughed for oats, orchards began to take the place of the eucalyptus, with apple trees not yet in blossom, and orange and lemon trees covered with fruit. The country became hilly, and half-castes were at work in the fields, shock-headed, and unintelligent-looking. We had left the bush behind, and were now in the region of an older settlement, the fruit-growing district of Western Australia. Fruit-growing is becoming one of the most important factors of Western Australian industry, and it is hoped that it will prove an even greater source of prosperity, because a more permanent one, than the gold that cannot last for ever. The climate, and much of the soil in the South-West are admirably adapted for all kinds of fruit-growing. The apples are excellent, so are the oranges, pears, plums, apricots, and peaches, strawberries and gooseberries, all of which are grown successfully. Fruit-growers, who have taken care in selecting a holding where the soil and conditions are favourable for their crops, have not long to wait before

reaping their profits, as six-year-old apple trees have been known to produce from £50 to £60 an acre. It is important also to select a fruit for growing that will travel and keep. In 1913 there were still more than 88,000 acres suitable for the cultivation of fruit or vine-growing, subdivided into convenient blocks and waiting for selectors.

Bridgetown is the centre of the fruit-growing district of Western Australia. Motor-cars were waiting to show us the neighbourhood, and we started in the golden light of the late afternoon sun to see something of the country. It was our first experience of Australian motorists. To enjoy motoring in Australia one must have an adventurous disposition. Except in the neighbourhood of large towns the roads are very rough; indeed, the long droughts make it impossible that they should be otherwise. The soft, dry soil crumbles away, the light dust is stirred up by every passing vehicle, leaving deep ruts, so that the same road is often on different levels, and a car runs along at a sharp angle, with one wheel poised on the edge of a rut, and the other in a hollow. Practised drivers achieve this difficult accomplishment with much skill and the minimum of jolting, but even so, the car often takes flying leaps. So we started on an apparently breakneck career, holding tight on to

the sides of the motor, and dashed up and down hills that an English motorist would have hesitated to look at, red and rutty as a Devonshire lane in winter. We never knew the name of that kindly motorist, who so gallantly risked his own and our lives, not to mention his machine, in showing us as much as possible of the surrounding country before the light faded. He was one of the many, many unknown friends who did us some passing kindness on our rapid journey, leaving only a warm memory behind it. Hail and farewell to each and all of them!

The country-side was very beautiful, more English, and less unfamiliar-looking, than anything we had yet seen, with steeply undulating hills and valleys, springing young green crops, and orchards, with apple trees whitened against some parasitical scab, or oranges and lemons. The comfortable homesteads had a more finished and abiding air than anything we had yet seen; for Bridgetown, as our host explained to us, "is a very old settlement—sixty years old!" It even possessed a tiny stone church, which gave it a pleasantly homely and established air. We crossed the beautiful Blackwood river by a picturesque wooden bridge where the river flows through a deep gorge up which black and white wild duck were sailing. In the fading glow of the sunset the country



OXEN HARNESSED TO A LOG AT BIG BROOK.

looked still more English, for the groups of gum trees that crowned the hills were indistinguishable, and the evening light seemed to diffuse an atmosphere of calm contentment over the thriving country-side, as of a day's work well done. We ran through the little scattered township, to the Freemason's Hotel, at which our friend the motorist deposited us, and vanished into the dusk.

As we went in out of the darkness one of our fellow-travellers brought us a specimen of the pretty, curious "kangaroo paw," a flower that looks as if it had been cut out of bright red and green moss, whose buds take the exact shape of a kangaroo's little foot. After dinner we strolled along the broad, silent country road, leading out into the deep stillness beyond, broken only by the barking of the village dogs, and the croaking of unseen frogs. The men of the neighbourhood loitered in the light of the shop windows, kindly looking and highly curious. We met at Bridgetown a Government official at the head of the Fruit-growing Department. He told us that this corner of South-Western Australia, a district as large as the state of Victoria, was the finest soil for fruit-growing in the whole state. The industry was of very recent growth, the first trial shipment was only made ten years ago, but

since 1907 the trade had been established upon a commercial basis, and the export of apples was greatly increasing every year in quantity.

Western Australia has also successfully exported grapes, but unfortunately the manufacture of wine is now on the decline. A very delicate and pleasant chablis is produced there. We tasted two kinds, a pale, and a warmly coloured golden chablis. They compared favourably with the light wines of Italy, and though like them, they would probably lose all their character and flavour after being fortified for export, they could be grown for home consumption. The explanation of the decline given to us at Bridgetown was that since Federation, and the abolition of inter-state customs, growers cannot afford to mature their wines sufficiently to compete with the longer established trade of the Eastern states. It is hoped that raisins and currants may be produced, and the climate is also suitable for the growth of olives; the evergreen trees would serve the further purpose of affording shade for the cattle. Our return journey was made successfully and uneventfully, and we slept soundly, only awaking occasionally, to find ourselves being shot to and fro like shuttles in a spinning mill; and arrived home to breakfast at Cottesloe Beach.

CHAPTER V

AGRICULTURE AND GOLD

IT was the discovery of gold in West Australia that gave the first real impetus to the development of the state. In the earlier half of the nineteenth century the country was urgently in need of labour, and from 1843 onwards was glad to supply the deficiency by the importation of convicts. The convict system "assigned" people, as it was called, to the settlers to live upon their property and perform compulsory labour for them; the residue worked in "road gangs" or in Government penal settlements. All the other states, as they grew and prospered, began to resent the dumping on their shores of the least desirable element of the population from home. As early as 1837 a Parliamentary Committee was appointed to inquire into the whole question, both from the point of view of the unhappy convicts and their Australian hosts, and recommended that the practice should cease. It was, however, too convenient a solution of a difficulty to be readily relinquished by the

home authorities. It continued in a modified form till the Eastern states protested so vigorously and actively, that soon after 1848 the home Government, not without reluctance, were obliged to limit the importation of convicts to Van Diemen's Land, as Tasmania was then called, and Western Australia.

The fact that Western Australia was glad to utilise this forced labour, and continued to do so, for many years later, provoked deep resentment in the Eastern states; it was seriously suggested that Western Australia should be boycotted by the other colonies. It was not till 1868 that transportation was finally abolished, and by that time the colony was firmly established.

So far the most important product of Western Australia has been her mineral wealth. As early as 1842 mining operations were begun with the discovery of lead and copper. Minerals form three-fourths of the value of all the exports by the state since 1900, and nearly a third of the whole mineral produce of the continent from the same date. The chief mineral has of course been gold. It was discovered in the north at Kimberley in 1882, and the announcement of the discovery brought many fortune seekers whose adventure ended in disappointment, for Kimberley has not produced any startling results.

The real history of mining in Western Australia did not, however, begin till 1892. It was in the early nineties that the gold rush took place to the mining centre of Coolgardie, and it is the East Coolgardie goldfield which includes the mining centre of Kalgoorlie, that has produced more than half of the whole value of the mineral products of the state. The total produce was calculated up to the end of 1912 at more than £113,000,000, and of this total more than 54% was produced by the East Coolgardie goldfield.* The principal part of it came from the famous group of mines which form the "Golden Mile" at Kalgoorlie. Much has been written about the goldfields of Western Australia, and the gold rush of the early nineties. Now Coolgardie has burnt itself out, is a dead city, though mining is still carried on at Kalgoorlie. When gold was discovered there was no water within three hundred miles of Coolgardie, and an engineer of rare gifts and indomitable enterprise, conceived a scheme for conveying water from the hills round Perth the three hundred odd miles through the intervening almost desert plains. His name was C. Y. O'Connor, and he is also responsible for the artificially constructed harbour at Fremantle.

* Federal Handbook, pp. 445-53.

He got his water from the Darling Range, the low wooded hills that make such a charming background to the Swan River, utilising a stream in the hills to form a great dam or weir. Mundaring Weir is one of the sights of Perth, not merely as a triumph of engineering, but for its beautiful scenery. We started early in the afternoon one hot day on the pretty little journey up to the granite slopes of the Darling Range. The intervening country is almost populous, and very busy. The line runs through Midland Junction, where the rolling stock for Western Australia is constructed, and past a blank stretch of brickfields. The granite begins to crop out on the grassy slopes of the hills as the train approaches Mundaring. The neighbourhood is very fertile, with large vineyards, and groves of orange trees covered with fruit. The river, which forms the weir, had the appearance of a large lake lying between steep, wooded banks, in the hot afternoon sun. It was faintly reminiscent of Coniston, except that a large area of the trees on the distant hills had been ringbarked to increase the water supply. They stood a melancholy sentinel company on the hills they had once clothed, tossing twisted, white arms to Heaven in mute appeal. The air was heavy with the scent of wattle flashing golden among the sombre grey

of the other trees. The distant rattle of frogs in some backwater below, and the occasional sharp trill of a bird were the only sounds to break the stillness. We descended the rocky bank to get a better view of the great dam. Its concrete walls are so sloped that the falling water does not leave them at any point, and so an impact that would wear out the wall is avoided.

In the course of its construction a large fissure was discovered in the bed of the river, which had to be filled in with cement. We visited the power-house, where the great pumps are busy day and night sending water to the goldfields. It took eleven days from the time the first trickle of water left Mundaring Weir for it to reach Coolgardie. While the work was nearing its completion, its successful achievement seemed incredible to the outside world. Unfortunately the inventor of this great experiment, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, died just too soon to know that the water from Mundaring Weir had covered the three hundred odd miles to the goldfields. A statue of Western Australia's famous state engineer stands on a hill above the scene of his greatest achievement. The execution of this scheme, as well as that of the harbour at Fremantle, were largely due to the influence and interest of Sir John Forrest, first Premier of Western

Australia, to whose enlightened views and active patriotism the state has owed much.

We had tea at a hotel, whose verandah overlooked woods falling steeply away at the back. It was a charming little place, and we should have liked to stay there, forgetting that in Australia there is no soft, lingering twilight, but dusk follows immediately, darkness very swiftly, on the setting of the sun. Sometimes there is an afterglow, a luminous orange light suffuses the darkness, and the heavy masses of gum trees stand out inky black on the horizon. Such an afterglow illuminated our return journey from Mundaring Weir to Perth.

Apart from its natural beauty and engineering achievement, Mundaring Weir, or at least its neighbourhood, has a peculiar interest for the zoologist. It is the home of a certain little black animal. To the uninitiated its appearance is something between that of a small black slug and a caterpillar, but to the scientific man it is of paramount importance, because its legs are not real legs. Peripatus is its name, and it lives under stones. Only recently, however, the secluded and innocent life of the unfortunate peripatus has been rudely interrupted, and he was in fact well-nigh exterminated by the visit to Perth of a learned society all in search of specimens. So

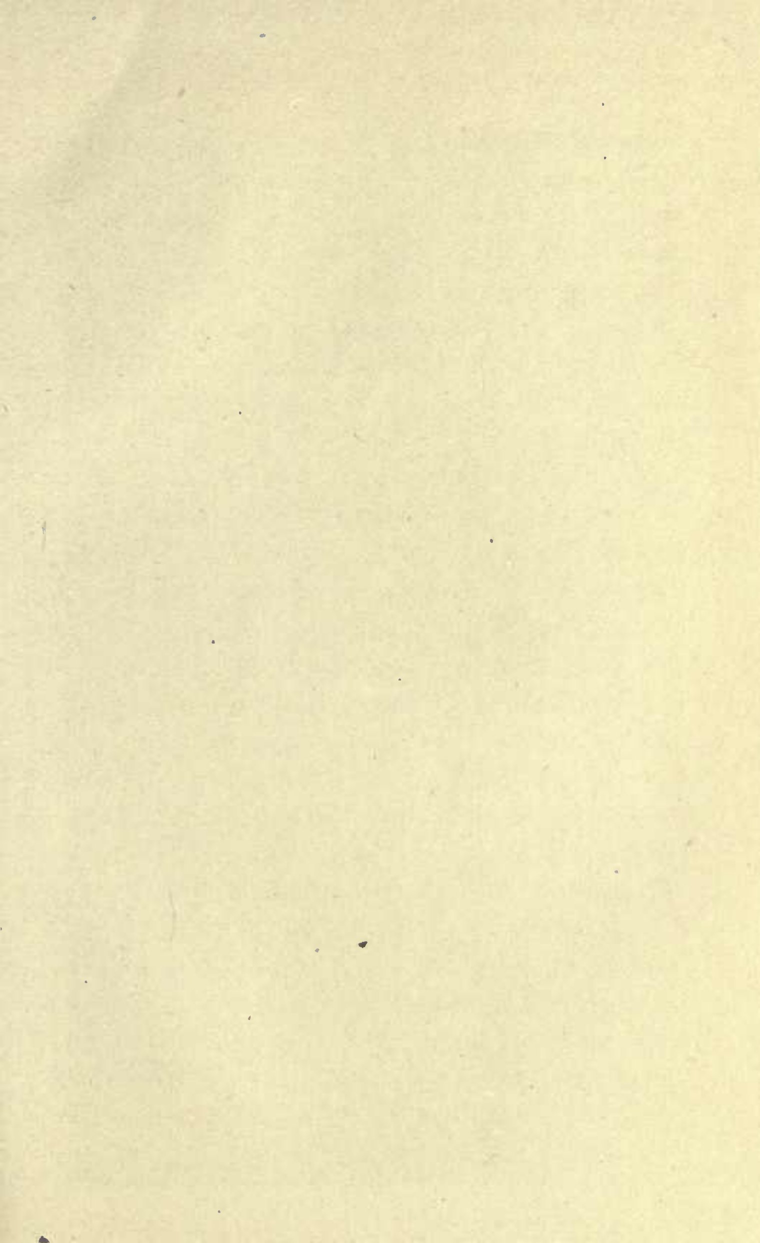
that henceforth the peripatus will be more esteemed than ever in the scientific world.

We said it was the gold rush that created, or at least accelerated the agricultural development of Western Australia. The influx of population, with the direct aim of gold-digging, brought in its train a dependent and attendant crowd of settlers to minister to its needs by the provision of agricultural produce, meat, flour, butter, and vegetables. Moreover, many of those who had come out to seek gold in the mines, sought it instead in the fruits of the earth, in grain, and in hay, in fruit and corn-growing. In the extreme north, known as the Kimberley country, cattle are raised; south of that, in the south-west pastoral district, sheep are the principal stock. The wheat belt, as it is called, is a strip of country stretching about five hundred miles from the Murchison River in the north, to the south coast east of Albany. But the limits of the wheat-growing area cannot at present be defined, the riverless districts of Australia are not desert in the sense that the Sahara is a desert; strips throughout the so-called desert are pastoral country on which grass will grow, supporting a more or less sparse vegetation. After rain the desert is clothed with vegetation, and the permanent plants depend on small local supplies of

subterranean water. But there is besides a vast artesian storage. These so-called desert areas are shrinking every year, and the "wheat-line" is encroaching upon and absorbing them as improved methods of agriculture prevail. Thus at present farmers "are getting remunerative crops from regions of low rainfall and light sandy soil, which would have been looked upon as chimerical a decade ago." *

The land laws in Western Australia are framed on easy terms for the settler. The holdings are limited to two thousand acres of agricultural land, including a homestead farm, or the equivalent of five thousand acres in grazing land, but the husband or wife of the holder may select an additional thousand acres of agricultural land, or two thousand five hundred acres of grazing land. A homestead farm of 160 acres can be taken up by new settlers on payment of about £9 in fees, with an additional 30s. for a Crown grant at the end of seven years. Larger grants may be had at from 10s. an acre, payable in twenty years without interest. Certain conditions attach to land purchase. The holder of a homestead farm of 160 acres, for instance, must reside there for six months in each of the first five years; he must expend four shillings an acre

* Federal Handbook, p. 173.



ORCHARD AND HOMESTEAD AT BRIDGETOWN.

within the first two years, and a total of fourteen shillings an acre in seven years, of which total only £30 is allowed to be deducted in value for the cost of his house. Half the land must be fenced within five years, the whole within seven years. One hundred to a thousand acres of "Conditional Purchase Land," at from 10s. an acre, may be taken up. It is paid for in forty half-yearly instalments, which, during the first three years, need not exceed 3d. an acre. Conditions of residence, relating to improvements and fencing are, of course, attached to these holdings. Conditional purchase by direct payment is made on equally easy terms.

We spent a Sunday in Perth, which was devoted partly to attending the cathedral service, and partly to visiting a native compound some distance away. Perth appeared to be a church-going place, and its people, Prayer Book in hand, and in their Sunday clothes, were setting off to their various places of worship, of which the neighbourhood affords a great variety. The service in the cathedral was well attended, and was conducted with that dignified simplicity characteristic of the best traditions of English church worship; and the familiar words of the liturgy seemed more deeply filled with meaning in this far-off country. The singing of the choir was an admirable per-

formance, and would compare favourably with that of most English churches.

After the service we were to lunch with the State Premier, and his car was waiting for us. The chauffeur was not the uniformed and correct personage, who drives our cars at home, but, as befits a democratic country, a genial and friendly soul, who having bade us welcome to the car, whirled us up to Mount Lawley, throwing occasional information at us over his shoulder. Mount Lawley is a pleasant suburb of Perth, if one can talk of suburbs where all is suburban; it lies upon the slopes of the Swan River, and commands an inspiriting view of the city, spreading out far and wide over its hills in vigorous new growth. This Australian household in which we were guests had a charmingly patriarchal atmosphere, for three generations sat at table: a delightful, picturesque old couple, who had come out to Australia in those hard and grinding early days, before a colonist had his bread buttered, and his house built for him immediately on his arrival.

It was on this occasion that we saw for the first time those formidable, but insignificant-looking Australian pests, the white ant. We had gone out to see our host's collection of wallabies, large, brown, rat-like creatures, with the hind legs of a

rabbit, and we expressed a wish to see also the insect that could eat everything except iron and jarrah wood. Australians cannot bear to disappoint a guest. They would regard it as a breach of hospitality, and an exhaustive search was made at once, till some white ants were discovered under a wooden tub of plants—tiny white specks hurrying away from the light.

The road to the Native Compound, for which we started after lunch, led through the King's Park or Government Reserve. Near all large townships the Government has wisely set apart a tract of country to remain public property. These are not parks in our sense of the word, for they are not laid out in trim lawns and flower-beds, or at least only a small fraction of them; but the bush is left in its wild state, a sanctuary for birds and animals. In the King's Park red carriage drives lead through the bush, at one point giving place to lawns and flowering trees, and commanding a fine view of the Swan River and of Perth, whose extent we for the first time realised. We were impressed by the prosperous air of the crowds, whom the fine warm Sunday afternoon had brought out; there were none among them who did not look well-to-do. But our afternoon was only beginning. The Native Compound lay in the direction of Guildford, a village about ten

miles off, a settlement of some antiquity compared to Perth. The way out into the country was crowded with innumerable buggies taking whole families for an airing, and a haze of red dust hung over the road.

We passed the race-course, as indispensable to an Australian town as the post office, and the football ground, where we paused for a moment to look on at a vigorous match between "the jockeys" and the "bread-carriers." Farther on people were playing on a newly laid-out golf-course, driving off from tees on which the unfailing kerosene tin did duty for sand-boxes, though one would hardly have thought it necessary to collect sand in boxes in Western Australia. Turning up a narrow, muddy road, we passed a lot of small nursery gardens, "Chinamen's gardens," with the Chinamen busy in them, but the activity of the Chinaman in Australia is hardly more popular than that of the white ant. We ploughed and splashed our ways along this side track, for the road was not made, till it ended abruptly in a gate. Now inured to the methods of the Australian motorist, we almost expected the car to take the gate in its stride, but having opened it, we ran up the side of a grassy bank on to a sort of plateau, girdled by the bush, with what looked like a very low-class

THE PREMIER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

gipsy encampment in one corner, not aristocratic gipsies with vans, but dirty little round tents like those that were formerly dotted about the banks of the Thames, near London, in haymaking time, but which have vanished before a too inquisitorial County Council.

This was the native camp we had come to see ; it had been a camping-ground for the blacks from time immemorial, and the present owner of the estate leaves it free to those, whose camping-ground was formerly the whole vast continent. There are not very many natives in Australia now ; it is supposed by some that they were never very numerous, that the struggle for existence on those arid plains and waterless hills was too severe for these hardy nomads. Be that as it may, they are dwindling, and in contact with the whites they lose the primitive virtues they possess. The natives we saw at the camping-ground near Perth certainly did not appear to have primitive, or any other virtues. They were, it is true, principally half-breeds, and whether regarded from the physiological or moral point of view, they were a depressing spectacle. They were provided with Government blankets, instead of kangaroo skins, and some form of a mission was singing hymns for their edification ; but both men and women were a miserable, degenerate,

apathetic looking crew. They talked English with a cockney accent. The strange mob of yapping, small dogs of indistinguishable breeds were the only thing that evinced much vitality.

There were, however, among them a few full-blooded blacks. One of these, a shrewd-looking old woman with a grizzled mop of hair, told us that when she was a baby, "the white people took me, but I lay in the wood and listened to my people talking till I learnt their language; then I ran away and went back to them." We were anxious for an exhibition of throwing the boomerang, or "kyle," as they call it, that curved stick, which, apparently missing its aim, describes an arc and returns to the hand that threw it. The half-castes have lost the art both of throwing and carving the kyle, and are too indolent to achieve either, but an old native stepped out from among them to show us how it was done. He had thick black hair, and his bright dark eyes gleamed in his flat, glistening, ebony face. It was very curious to watch him standing there turning his head about, sniffing and feeling the direction of the wind, and at last he threw the kyle, spinning, circling, returning, many times, while we watched him fascinated, and the motley crowd of half-breeds looked on too at the art they had no skill to practise. They have

even lost the art of making fire with the hard fruit of the banksia, "mungite" is the native name for it. "Never go before a black," they say in Western Australia; they can't be trusted, apparently, not so much from their malevolence as a sort of light-hearted instinct of destruction. For instance, seeing a man standing by the wall of a small shed at a little distance from the camp, one of the blacks playfully let fly at him with a boomerang. He fortunately missed the man's leg, but made a hole in the building.

We left the camp, for there appeared a pretty little English girl, who, having heard that there were visitors to the compound, had been sent by her mother to ask them to tea in the hospitable Australian fashion; so following a grassy track, we came to our great surprise upon a dignified old country house on a wooded promontory overlooking a higher reach of the Swan River. The owners of this beautiful estate belonged to one of the "Seven Families" of Western Australia; that is, they were descended from Australian grandparents on both sides. In Australia one says, "My grandmother came over in 1830," as we should say in England, we came over with the Conqueror; for 1830 is in the West, at all events, the beginning of Australian civilised history, and those early

settlers had a heroic struggle, and had to face every sort of hardship, hunger, and the want of any kind of comfort, in a way that settlers of to-day, even those who venture upon the strenuous life of the backwoods, can never experience. The details of the lives of these pioneers would form an extraordinarily interesting chapter in Australian history, and, as was the fashion at that time, they beguiled their loneliness with keeping diaries, a most valuable fashion to the historian, for even the dullest chronicler unconsciously throws light on manners and customs of the day, commonplaces to him, that the next generation has forgotten. But invaluable as these old diaries would be, they have unfortunately been in most cases destroyed.

Our hostess told us regretfully of several instances she had known of this being done by very old people. They were very small communities in those days, the life was rough and wild, and there was no public opinion to control it, and, for that very reason, these intimate records would have been all the more valuable and curious. As we sat at tea in the charming drawing-room, with something of an old-world atmosphere, somebody commented to our hostess on the extremely difficult approach. Yes, she said, matter-of-factly, I prefer to have no road

to the house, it keeps "sundowners" away. The sundowner is the Australian tramp; he arrives at nightfall and demands food and lodging; if he does not get it, the householder pays the penalty in missing poultry, or burnt ricks. Of course he only extorts this toll in lonely places; but what a delightful career for a man of indolent habits, and sufficient obtuseness of feeling, to wander through that beautiful country, where the sun always seems to shine, sure, if not of a welcome, of supper, bed, and breakfast, where he would.

The golden light of the setting sun was flooding the river and the wooded hills, when we came away, our host and hostess pointing out to us sadly a noble English oak tree on their lawn, that the white ants had riddled through and through, reducing it to touchwood. We hurried back, entering once more, as we neared Perth among a crowd of returning cars, buggies, and bicycles, a haze of its soft red dust, while from its hills the city itself was wrapped in a mysterious dull grey twilight.

On one of our last days at Perth we paid a visit to the Parliament House. Only the back is finished, and is impressive in its simplicity of white freestone columns. The designs for the front are very effective, the interior simple and well proportioned. While as for the Upper

House it is as luxurious as the council chamber of a medieval Dutch town hall. We observe in passing that they provide remarkably agreeable hot buttered toast there.

Our host on this occasion was an ex-Minister of Education, from whom we learned many interesting facts about the social and economic development of Western Australia. He was especially enthusiastic on the importance and good results of cadet training, which he had done much to promote. In the case of schoolboys of twelve to fourteen years old it consists mainly of physical training calculated to produce better development. This training carried out by the school teachers is given for not less than fifteen minutes a day, the boys learn marching, drill, and either first aid, swimming, or miniature rifle-shooting. Teachers are trained for the purpose of giving this special education in Government Schools of Instruction, where certificates of proficiency are conferred; but the whole subject of the complete and admirable system of Australian military training is dealt with in another chapter.

Soon after our arrival we were overtaken by rumours of European war, almost incredible, except that Europe seemed so remote. Then came the news that Germany had declared war on Russia and France. Great Britain, it was said, would

stand aloof. Even so the news was sufficiently serious, and telegrams on the Perth post office were eagerly scanned. It was not till quite the end of our visit that definite intelligence arrived that England had joined the cause of the Allies, and even then nobody realised it in the least.

Our last day came all too soon, warm and sunny, when we made the short journey from Cottesloe Beach to Fremantle. The war news seemed more real, when we saw a German tramp held up in the harbour, with the guns of the forts trained on her. The big Orient liner was lying alongside, and we boarded her with many regrets at what we were leaving behind, for we had to say good-bye to many friends, and our cabin was filled with flowers, sweet violets, and the heavy scented boronia, of which Western Australia is so proud. At last we started on the four days' voyage to Adelaide, and it was not till we reached Northern Queensland that we again encountered that atmosphere of primitive freshness and novelty, that we were leaving behind. So we left Western Australia, with its warm-hearted, generous people, its vast, almost untouched resources of primeval forest, and rich soil, its social problems, on which the visitor is incompetent to pronounce, problems acute in the old

world, making themselves felt even here, especially that seemingly irreconcilable one of the interests of the Labour man and the Liberal. Irreconcilable so it seemed to us, for the Labour man may be clear-sighted, but he cannot afford to be far-sighted, because, as he himself would put it, he can't afford to wait.

PART II

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER VI

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

IN a poem written long ago by Bret Harte the opening of the Pacific Railroad which joined East to West was commemorated in an imagined dialogue between the engines that met midway on the track.

> What was it the Engines said,
> Pilots touching—head to head,
> Facing on the single track,
> Half a world behind each back ?
> This is what the Engines said
> Unreported and unread.

Then Bret Harte went on to record the puffing phrases in which each engine described what it brought from the land of its base: the engine from the East, speaking of the shores where the Atlantic beats, and the broad lands of forest and of prairie; and the engine from the West rejoining that it brought to the meeting the storied East:—

> All the Orient, all Cathay
> Find through me the shortest way.

That parable will find a new application (will have found, perhaps, we should say) in the meeting of

the engines on the track which is to join Western Australia to South Australia, Perth and Albany to Adelaide. One might speculate on what the engine from the West would say on this occasion. It might breathe a few words of the Orient, and would be entitled to add others concerning Afric's sunwashed lands, for it is not to be denied that the bulk of the liners coming through Suez, and all those from the Cape, make West Australia their headland. But East Australia touches Cathay more nearly both in climate and in steamer connections, and a day will dawn when the construction of yet another railway from Port Darwin in the Northern Territory will make that port the nearest to Europe; and there are yet other projects for joining Australia in shorter and shorter links to Panama and San Francisco. So perhaps the engines will call a truce over their claims on the older East and West, and will confine them to that newer West and fast-developing East which the Australian continent provides within itself.

The engine from the West, if it were of a philosophic turn might say that the land it came from was of immemorial age, a relic of the world before the Deluge; that its strange flowers, its bush coming as close to its towns and settlements as grass to the trees on a lawn, were older than

mankind, and if by some accident of social progress its towns and villages were swept away, then in a few years Western Australia would slip back through time till it became again a strip of the earth as the earth was when first the mammals began to appear on its surface. Western Australia is as old as that; and he who looks on it now with any spark of imagination cannot but be thrilled at the vision afforded him of the planet as it was millions of years ago. No tropical country, perhaps no country at all which men inhabit, except Patagonia, conveys this impression of the unaltered primeval world. But one could hardly expect a locomotive, a thing of steel and steam, to dwell on this aspect of the land of its adoption. Rather would it say that in Western Australia you could see at its earliest and best, man the pioneer, making for himself a clearing, a home, a community in the wild, blazing out the trails, watering the desert, laying a toll upon the elements. Here he had built a town growing like a city of enchantment in the bush; here he had found gold in the wilderness; and here—you could see him at the beginning—he was carving wheatlands and orchards from the forest. Now, lastly, he was going to bring his fields and forests and the harvest of his untapped sea-board by rail to the markets of the East.

The locomotive from the East, with puffs which politeness had hitherto repressed, would yield the point about antiquity in order to show that in the more modern period the East had done very well with its time. On the progress of Melbourne and Sydney it would not enlarge; suffice it to point out the advantages of Adelaide.

It lies between the hills and the sea, a trap for sunbeams; a garden city sweet with almond blossom in spring, tree-shaded in summer. A girdle of parks is about its comely waist, and beyond them lie suburbs, where the houses all have room to breathe. In the towns of the old world the houses are on the top of one another, and the people too. In Adelaide expansion takes place laterally, stretching out always to the encircling range of hills; and the houses are one-storied. The city is linked with its suburbs by radiating tramlines; and here one may pause to interpolate an anecdote. Some years ago, when the writer was in Naples, he was journeying by one of the trams which runs round the rim of Naples' incomparable bay. On the garden seat in front of him were two Americans, who looked with him at the lovely vision, and said one of them: "Well, I've been most everywhere, and seen most everything, but I've never seen anything to compare with——" The writer leaned

forward to catch the anticipated eulogy on the view. "But," concluded the American lady, "I've never seen anything to compare with our car service at Seattle!"

That is what the locomotive from the East would say about the car service at Adelaide, which links up the spreading homesteads of the periphery with the nucleus of handsome buildings, official, municipal, educational, commercial, at the centre of the city. Adelaide is a city within a park, surrounded by a garden suburb, and that is as good a definition as one can find of it. It is handsome within its city limits, taking a pride in its big buildings, the University standing among lawns, its handsome private houses, its broad streets, its general air of competence; but outside them, beyond the parks, one would rather call it charming. The motor-car is bringing its changes to Adelaide as to other places in the world. Just as in London a generation ago the merchants and the well-to-do City men built big houses at Streatham and Dulwich, but now are moving out to Ascot or Sunningdale, so in Adelaide the prosperous are now building towards Mount Lofty and the hills—though the gradients here are trying even to the hard-driven Australian motor-car. The fringe of suburbs is therefore occupied by what in England we

should call the professional classes, though no such conventions segregate the trading, the commercial, the professional classes in the same way as in the home country. But Adelaide is in one respect different from other Australian cities. It has more nearly a professional class—or may we say a professorial class?—than Perth or Melbourne, or Sydney, or Brisbane. An English journalist once tried to express it by saying that Adelaide represented "culture" in the Commonwealth; but that is unkind both to Adelaide and the Commonwealth, for the soil of Australia is unfavourable to the growth of culture or any other pretences. But Adelaide has a large population in its trim bungalows of the suburbs, interested in university work, in education, in social and democratic problems, in art, in literature. It has the most eclectic collection of pictures of any of the states; and here perhaps one may tell another story. In the year before the War there was an outbreak of allegorical canvases on the walls of the New English Art Club where a return to primitive methods of expression in paint reflected the activities of Post-Impressionism and Cubism and Futurism which permeated the studios of Europe. Among others who had a hack at allegory was that most capable of the younger school of painters, Mr. W. Orpen, and

he produced a representation of "The Board of Irish Agriculture sowing the Seeds of Progress in Ireland." It was a picture which was full of remarkably fine drawing, as one might expect from one of the best two draughtsmen in Britain, and the nude figure of the lady distributing seed (on the left of the canvas), as well as the two naked babies in the middle, and the black-clothed missioner on the right, were all admirable. But what did it mean? Most English critics were silent on this point, and nobody seems to have troubled Mr. Orpen to explain himself, for, as Wilde wrote to Whistler, "to be great is to be misunderstood." However, the picture was bought for the Adelaide Art Gallery, which is rightly anxious to collect work of the younger artists, and made no mistake in choosing Mr. Orpen as one of the most brilliant among them.

When, however, the picture was hung at Adelaide, the people gasped. Then they wrote to the newspapers. Then artists wrote to the newspapers. Some of them sympathised with the public bewilderment. One of them, the best of Australian water-colourists, bludgeoned the public for their ignorance in not appreciating the colour and drawing of the masterpiece; but he did not insult the picture by saying what it meant, and that was what the public wanted to

know. . . . Probably the discussion would be going on yet, but the War put an end to it, and the picture in 1915 still adorned the Art Gallery; and we hope it may continue to do so, though it was rumoured that Mr. Orpen had offered to substitute something less recondite. However, this anecdote will perhaps illustrate the vividness of the interest which Adelaide takes in artistic and intellectual movements. It is an interest which may be perceived in its active University, a University that has contributed several first-class men to English Universities, and is no less perceptible in its society which reproduces very closely the social atmosphere of an English University town such as Cambridge. The resemblance becomes closer still if the comparison is made between Adelaide's flowering and tree-shaded suburbs and the residential environs which stretch away from the University town at home.

Such is Adelaide. Beyond and outside it, and on the farther side of the tree-covered barrier of hills is rural South Australia, which, if one were to indicate on a map, one might shade off to the northward as the population grew less dense and the region of widely separated sheep stations became more prevalent. As the herbage grows more scanty and the water supply more precarious, the sheep stations themselves become

larger and fewer, till they give place to desert. Perhaps the greatest surprise to a European visitor is the kind of land which in the more distant stations, where the rainfall sinks very close to the margin of double figures per annum, is called pasture land. It is khaki-coloured and scanty, and one would imagine that only a persevering sheep could find anything on it to eat. Industry is certainly demanded of the sheep, for the phrase of three acres and a cow is altered in Australia to five acres to a sheep. When the rainfall sinks the sheep has still farther to travel for its daily meal; when it fails, the back block sheep farmers see their sheep die by the thousand and ruin approaching.

Nowhere does the rainfall become a factor that can be neglected, and South Australia was suffering from drought in the year 1914, when we visited the state; but though the extremity of scarcity had not been reached, there seemed to eyes accustomed to English well-watered pastures, hardly any water at all. From the summit of Mount Lofty, whence one could so easily see the vast shield of the sea, there were also pointed out to us nearer patches of water shining like dull steel in the hollows of low hills. These were the reservoirs, basins filled by streams which we called brooks. These storage reservoirs

are the device which South Australia is developing to counteract drought; and we visited a new one in course of construction among the hills to the north-west of Adelaide.

That was the day on which we visited Mr. Murray's sheep farm, a mere trifle of forty miles from Adelaide. Before leaving the subject of the reservoir, which was interesting from the engineering design of its dam, then being thrown across the gap of two hills—a difficult and masterly piece of work—one may give some idea of the size of the basin by remarking that Mr. Murray, who lived some ten miles away, had protested against the first plans. The reason was that when the reservoir became filled it would have come flooding up to his front door. A very pleasant front door it was too, belonging to something that was part manor-house, part farm, and the counterpart of which might have been found in many an English county. A long, low house with windows meant to shade large, cool rooms, a wide hall, with pictures and polo sticks and photographs—photographs of famous sheep—and a side table gleaming with silver—the cups won as prizes. In front of the house roses and flowering borders and a lawn—on it playing a collie and a tame kangaroo. Beyond, the orchard garden. And not a sheep in sight.

Far better as a picture, our host and his tall sons on the stone steps to welcome us; and in the pretty drawing-room—the drawing-room of a Victorian house at home—the hostess and her daughter. You might see them both any summer's day at Hurlingham, or Henley, or at Lord's when the Oxford and Cambridge match is being played.

However, our purpose was to see sheep. Could this be a sheep farm? Where were the countless thousands which ought to have filled the landscape—as they do in the photographs? We had driven over rolling downs of short grass, through clearings of trees, and by tracks which made the car leap like a tiger as it cleared the ruts, but where were the sheep? We had seen other things that filled us with delight, a flock of wild cockatoos—and though that may seem nothing to you who read, let us add that there is an inexplicable thrill in seeing wild anything that one has never before beheld except captive. There were flocks of green and red and blue parrots too, and the laughing jackass perched on the tree-stumps. But about the sheep?

They are there; no doubt about that. An Anglo-Australian whom we know at home once confessed to us that the only blot on life in that southern continent of free air and sunshine was

that there was too much sheep in the sheep-rearing districts—there was nothing else to talk about. And at this point we recall an anecdote told to us by Dr. E. S. Cunningham, the editor of "The Melbourne Argus." There was a Colonial Conference in England some years ago, and he and some of the others who came to it, Mr. Deakin among them, went back to Australia across the United States. One night in the Far West their train was held up by accident, and they stopped at the hotel of some wayside station. After supper, as they sat round the red-hot stove of the hotel parlour, some of the citizens of the township blew in for their evening conversazione, and hailed the opportunity of conversation with strangers.

They quickly found that the strangers were Australians, and as quickly turned the conversation on to the comparative advantages of the two continents.

"I suppose now," said one of them, "that you reckon to have a few sheep in your country. We have sheep here too. Some. Now what size holdings do you put up down there?"

Mr. Deakin, to whom the question was addressed, paused reflectively and said: "Well, I don't know that I'm well posted about sheep; but I believe my friend has some knowledge of

the subject. Cunningham, what was the size of that farm that Colonel Burns got rid of last autumn ? "

" I can't quite tell you the size," said Dr. Cunningham, after assumed cogitation. " It was pretty big. There were about a quarter of a million sheep with it."

The American looked from one to the other, and expectorated at the stove in a discontented manner. After a minute or two he started in again.

" We get a good figure for our stock hereabouts," he observed ; " we breed for quality. I guess wool is your strong suit. Now what about is your figure per sheep over there ? "

Again Deakin referred to Cunningham, the authority.

" What was it Murray of Adelaide was asking for that merino ram of his, Cunningham—it was called Lion II, I believe ? "

" I don't know what he was asking," returned Cunningham swiftly, " but I can tell you what he got for it. He took eleven hundred guineas."

The American looked from one to the other and swallowed hard.

" Thunder ! " he said. " Give me cattle ! "

. . . . . .

Well, we didn't see the quarter of a million

sheep, and Mr. Murray's thousand-guinea ram lives only in portraiture in the hall of his farm; but we did see some of the famous herd of which Lion II was the congener. They had been rounded up for us, about fifty of them, in one of the shearing yards; and most attractive animals they were. Their thick merino fleece was about five inches deep, like soft fibre, and their thick necks were in folds—concertina folds, as they are called. They have been bred to this type, and their peculiar scientific interest is the information which they afford to the explorers of Mendelian principles of the permanence of the so-called "factors of heredity." But to the practical stock-breeder their immediate interest is the vast amount of wool they yield. Mr. Murray said (if memory is not at fault) that they each yielded about fifteen pounds' weight of wool at a shearing.

Of course the reason why we saw so few sheep is that, though this was a comparatively small holding of very good pasture, and the sheep on it are all, in a sense, specimen sheep, yet here, as elsewhere, the thousands of the flock are spread over a very wide area of pasturage. It is only at the shearing season that the sheep would be brought together in great numbers. These occasions, and the life on sheep farms—especially

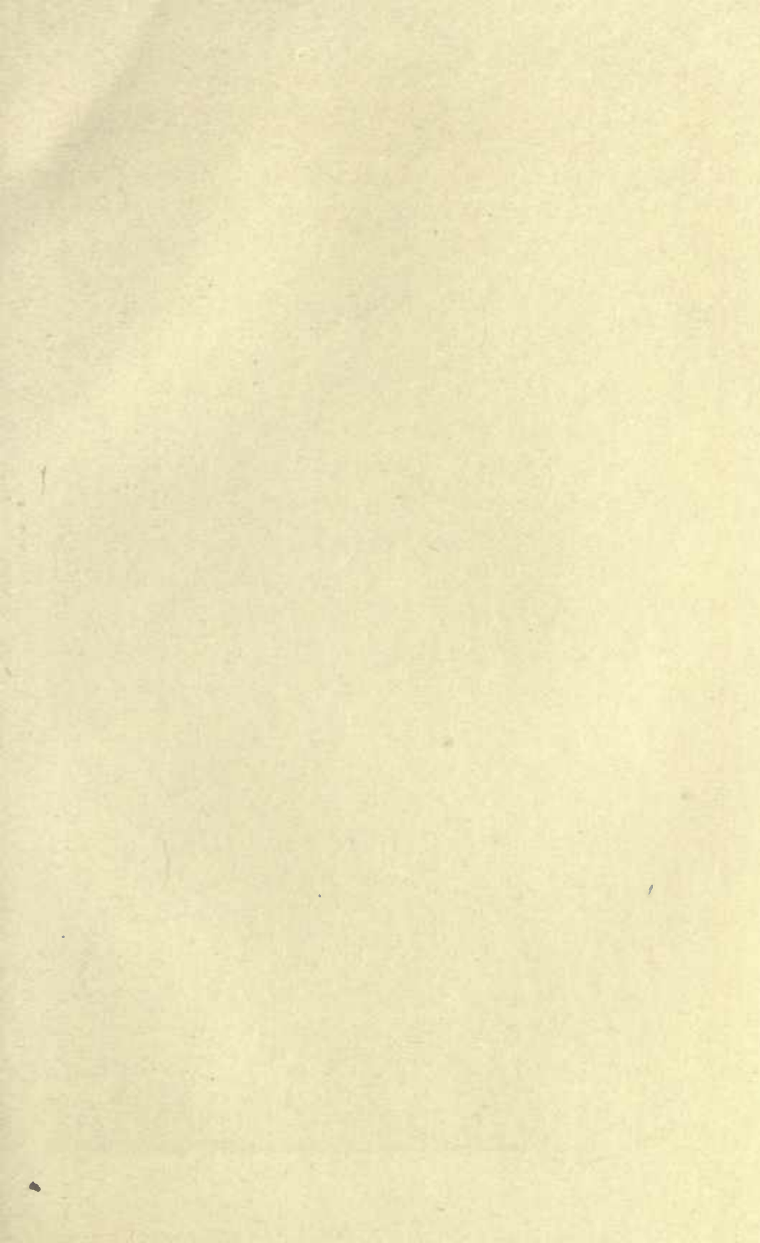
in the back blocks, where the life is wilder, the herbage scanty, the seasons precarious—are interesting enough, though here we cannot dwell on them. What does remain as the recollection of Mr. Murray's sheep farm is that of a hospitality and a generosity which are so natural that they are never ostentatious, but which, long after the day and hour have gone, warm the heart with the memory of them.

CHAPTER VII

ADELAIDE

WE had been warned to expect cold and rough weather, if anywhere, in the great Australian Bight, but like everything we had ever been told about Australian weather, the prophecy was fallacious. The Tuesday in August on which we sailed from Fremantle and the four following days of the voyage were fine, calm, and sunny. We skirted a coast bound by gneiss rocks, rounded, ground, and weather-worn to smoothness, with immense breakers dashing their foam up the face of the cliffs. Except the beautiful harbour of Albany, it is a most inhospitable-looking coast.

On the third day out a wireless message from Perth warned the captain to alter his course and to moderate the ship's lights at night so as to disguise her. It was a significant suggestion, that the War, the outbreak of which took place while we were at sea, but in which we hardly yet believed, was a matter of grim earnest. Otherwise the voyage was uneventful. We reached Adelaide, sliding in through glassy water, with



NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE.

land on either side, and numbers of diving birds swimming round us. After the inevitable delay of disembarkation that seems so unnecessary to the impatient traveller, we at last got ashore, walked through the Customs, merely an amiable formality, and took the train for Adelaide, which is at some distance from its harbour. The line runs through salt marshes, dotted with pink mesembryanthemum in flower. Then come trim suburbs with English names, a Cheltenham among them; presently the train appeared to be running through the streets of a big city, and we had arrived at Adelaide station.

The different capitals of the Australian states are as unlike each other as possible, and Adelaide is especially distinctive. This graceful garden city has none of the rawness of our dear Perth. She has, on the contrary, an established air. The hotel at which we stayed might have been in any large town in the world, except for a certain friendly loquacity on the part of the staff, and a trifling indifference to details characteristic of Australia.

The first impression of Adelaide is a delightful one. She is a city of space and light and air, with broad, tree-planted streets and fine buildings; in fact, more like the Australia we had imagined, because less unlike England, than the West. The

cathedral with its twin spires dominates the whole from rising ground. The city is laid out in straight lines, separated by parks from its spreading, growing suburbs, the whole place is green and restful.

In the afternoon of our arrival we were motored round the city and its suburbs, and a closer acquaintance deepened this impression, for we passed through avenues of plane trees and saw English plants growing in the gardens. Rising ground revealed the lovely situation of Adelaide and gave a view of the city as a whole, scattered among her trees and gardens, girdled by green hills rising abruptly from its environs, with the grey Pacific spread out to infinite distance beyond. The cloudy, hazy distances, a certain crispness in the air, as on a fine March day at home, the grass that grows freely everywhere, and suburbs with such names as Knightsbridge, all deepened the sense of familiarity. We shall always see Adelaide in imagination as we looked down on her that early spring day, with all her orchards a delicate pale pink mist of almond blossom, and the soft grey distances that felt like home.

Of course, there was a great deal that was unfamiliar: here were hedges of olive, thick-set and cut like box, other hedges were made of the

South African box-thorn, and everywhere the sides of the roads were yellow with a pretty pale oxalis, regarded by the inhabitants as a noxious weed and called Sour Sod. There were many vineyards, and sheep and lambs feeding, for South Australia is largely a pastoral state. The development of pastoral industries has been an important element in her general prosperity. The pastoral settler gauged the capacities of the land and paved the way for agricultural and closer settlement. South Australia now has a larger acreage under cultivation in proportion to the population than any other state, and the annual returns from pastoral industries amount to nearly £4,000,000. In 1912 between two and three million pounds' worth of pastoral products were exported, including sheep, cattle, horses, frozen meats, skins, hides, tallow, and wool.

South Australia was declared a province under the British Crown in 1836 by Governor Hindmarsh in the reign of William IV, so that the state has a history stretching back over a period of nearly eighty years, during which time she has progressed rapidly, and at the time of our visit was actually enjoying great prosperity after a series of good seasons, though we heard on all hands in Adelaide that there had been two dry springs and rain was badly wanted.

The climate is mild, the high temperatures that occur in summer are mitigated by the absence of humidity, and extreme cold in winter is unknown. Sheep, cattle, and horses live out of doors all the year round and thrive on natural herbage, so that neither artificial feeding nor housing is necessary, and the cost of production is thus greatly reduced. It is superfluous to enter here into figures showing the purposes for which the area of the state is leased or alienated, but beyond the limits of agricultural settlement more than 143,000 square miles are held by Crown lessees as sheep or cattle runs. Formerly the principal part of South Australian wool was shipped to London, and it was not till within the last forty years that local wool auctions attained importance.

Agriculture is determined by the rainfall, which varies from 10 or 11 inches in northern and inland districts to 30 or 35 inches in the south and in the more hilly regions. Within these widely varying conditions almost anything can be grown from corn to grapes, nearly every kind of cereal, fruit, or vegetable. But economically all the conditions of agriculture are very widely different from those at home, for it must be taken into consideration that the wages of farm labourers are about double those paid in

England, and the cost of plant and implements about 50% more. Wheat predominates in the value of all crops grown, for while it is estimated that the total value of all crops, including fruit, amounts to £18 per head of the population, the value of the wheat crop for grain and hay is over £13 per head. The production of hay in Australia is intimately associated with the cultivation of cereals, as the greater bulk of this fodder is composed of wheat or oats. The Year Book returns for 1911–12 show more than two million acres under wheat cultivation with a total production of over twenty million bushels, a low average compared with other countries, but against which must be set the exceptionally low cost of production brought about by conditions of soil and climate.

One peculiarly local industry is the growth of wattle for its bark, which is utilised for tanning leather. The industry is a lucrative one. At from five to seven years old, when they are fit to strip, the trees yield from one ton an acre, and the market price of the bark is from £5 to £8 a ton.

But we must again insist that in trying to estimate the position of agriculture in Australia the different labour conditions have to be taken into consideration. In the first place it is possible

for a man owning a team of eight or ten horses and the latest and best machinery, to do all the work on a holding of from 200 to 240 acres of wheat himself, with some extra help at harvest time, so extensive is the use of labour-saving machinery—multiple furrow ploughs, for instance, 12 or 14 furrow twin ploughs on the lighter land, and 8 to 10 horse cultivators. This being so, it can be easily seen that there is no surplus of skilled labour, for under such conditions a capable man very soon saves enough to begin farming on his own account, especially as he can get cheap land on easy terms. This, of course, applies to Australia generally; at harvest time, though the demand for labour is great and the pay high, thoroughly efficient men are not to be had. The same thing is true of dairying, so that the farmers are actually reducing their herds to numbers that can be conveniently managed by their own families with the aid of milking machines.

At the same time the Labourers' Union has drawn up a "log" of prices and hours of labour, and requires its acceptance on the part of the farmer, who would be willing enough if the supply of labour were efficient. Economists question whether, if these conditions, including the regulation of hours, were enforced, the result

WOOL STORE, PORT ADELAIDE.

produced might not be an increased adoption of grazing, where hardly any labour is required.

In the pastoral industry all conditions of labour and living are fixed by the Arbitration Court, and good accommodation is provided for shearers. Among farmers, on the other hand, though good food is always provided, the men often have to sleep in machinery sheds. Here, as everywhere else, labour is dependent not merely on supply and demand, but on desirable conditions of employment, and it is extraordinarily interesting to see our tentative efforts in the direction of Wages Boards, and the regulation of employment, reproduced in the form of the finished article in the Commonwealth, which had no great mass of vested interest and tradition to oppose to a generous system of Labour Legislation. It must be remembered, however, that Australia can hardly yet be considered as a manufacturing country, though her industrial development has been so rapid in recent years, that the total value of manufactures already amounts to more than a quarter of the whole production of the country. It is calculated that the value of productions from all sources per head of the population exceeds that of any other country.

The Australians meanwhile, seeing the course which the future development of their country

is likely to pursue, have taken time by the forelock, and in order to obviate the recurrence of the disastrous conditions in the Old World have inaugurated an elaborate system of Labour Legislation calculated to safeguard the interests of working men and women in all branches of occupation. Such measures as Wages Boards, Conciliation and Arbitration Court Systems, a minimum wage under the Factory Acts, an eight-hours day, early closing, and holiday regulations, are accomplished facts all over Australia, though their constitution is not uniform in the different states.

A Government Labour Exchange was established in 1911 to bring employer and workmen into communication. This does not, of course, include professional and clerical labour. All the departments of Public Service, including the railways, apply to the Labour Exchange for workmen, and if the work lasts for less than two months the men's fares are refunded to them.

Of course, not all Australians see the social development of their country in the same rose-coloured light. The social reformer and the moral enthusiast are seldom business men; to such the question appears in a wholly different aspect—in terms of material profit and loss.

Each state has its own industrial problems, and

the question of water supply occupies the attention of all who are concerned with the development of South Australia, for the only area in the Commonwealth having an average annual rainfall of less than five inches, the Lake Eyre region, lies within the limits of this state. Throughout the more closely settled part of the state the difficulty has been met by the Government by the construction of reservoirs and the distribution of supplies.

CHAPTER VIII

COMPULSORY TRAINING AND SOCIAL LIFE IN ADELAIDE

ADELAIDE, when we reached it, was like the rest of the Australian continent, celebrating the declaration of war by a tremendous outburst of patriotism; the whole place fluttered with little flags, Union Jacks were on every bicycle or cart or motor-car, loyal crowds were assembling at street corners. We in England have no conception of the depths of feeling that our fellow-countrymen in Australia have for "home." It embraces all those who come out there on a visit, so that instead of strangers in a strange land they feel like a dear and welcome friend returning to his own people. By the evening the occasion had been felt to be so momentous that the youthful male population, with whom the streets were crowded, had celebrated it in some cases to excess, and this was the sole occasion on which we saw anything approaching to intemperance while we were in Australia, or on which the population forsook its habitual and universal beverage of

weak tea. That they were carried away by enthusiasm was all to their credit. Trained to military service from his school days every Australian realises, as few Englishmen have yet done, the importance of self-defence, and the obligation of every man in the country to take his share in it.

We have much to learn from Australia, but in no respect more than in her admirable system of universal military training. We have already mentioned her cadet training in schools. When a boy reaches the age of fourteen he becomes a senior cadet, and a general military training is added to the physical training that is already part of his school curriculum. At the beginning of the year in which he reaches his fourteenth birthday he has to be registered, and his registration papers are sent to the Area Officer, under whose jurisdiction he now passes. This officer sees that the boys go up for their medical examination; after passing this, a boy is measured for his uniform, and allotted to his company in the senior cadet battalion of the area. The average percentage of rejections after the medical examination is only seven and a half. The senior cadet is now subject to military discipline and becomes part of the military system of the country. He has to attend four whole-day drills

of at least four hours, twelve half-day drills of two hours' duration, and twenty-four night drills of one hour's minimum duration. Boys who are still at school may be formed into special companies. It is an important feature of the system that all the companies in a battalion area form one battalion independently of the numbers involved, for the battalions are training, not fighting, units. The training for senior cadets consists of physical drill, company and some battalion drill, field training and musketry. An excellent provision secures good work on the part of the cadets. At the end of each year's training an inspection takes place, and all who fail to satisfy the regular officer responsible, lose the value of their year's work, as the Act requires an additional year's training for each failure of the inefficient.

Ammunition and uniforms are supplied free. In his fourth year of training the senior cadet must satisfy the medical officer of the training area of his fitness, those falling below the standard are certified in their record books as "exempt." In the third stage of his training, from eighteen to twenty-six years old, the young Australian becomes a member of the Citizen Forces. This system is gradually superseding the older militia, which prescribed a period of three years' training

only, and consequently attains so much the more an efficient military standard. The training is arranged as far as possible with a view to the convenience of the men, who are only obliged to be absent from home during a short period spent in camp every year. Parades are held on holidays, Saturday afternoons, or in the evening. In some districts Sunday training has been advocated and has raised considerable opposition, but Brigadier-General J. G. Legge, C.M.G., commanding, at the time of writing, the Division of the Australian Forces in Egypt, in an article on Australian Defence,* reminds his readers that "not so many centuries ago it was the law of England that every able-bodied man should practise with the bow at the village butts on Sunday after church hours, and why not now on Sunday afternoons? This would get over the difficulty with employers quite well." Pay is given for attendance at parades in the Citizen Forces.

Under the universal training system all start as privates, and each rank competes for promotion to the one immediately above it. But it must be remembered that in Australia, as in other new countries, there are no sharply drawn class distinctions, there hardly exists an idle class, and to quote Brigadier-General Legge once more:

* "Army Review," Vol. IV., January, 1913.

"Brains and practical proficiency alone will carry weight with units such as we now have to lead and discipline in Australia." There is no room in that happy land for the promotion of influential incompetence.

The Australian system is working smoothly and well, and presents the spectacle of a trained and disciplined people, far indeed removed from militarism, yet with a corporate sense and a deep and zealous patriotism. Almost equally important is the fact that the Australian Government makes ample provision for all munitions of war and equipment for its forces.

It is with the boys that every country must begin. "I believe this," wrote Lord Methuen,* "to be the proper solution for the national defence of this country. . . . It is to be noted that each colony has adopted compulsory cadet training as its foundation. We worked on Lord Kitchener's admirable Australian scheme in forming the Citizen Army in South Africa. . . . The physique and discipline of our nation will gain enormously if the lad is trained from the age of twelve till he reaches eighteen. . . . Let the nation accept the principle and the details can be made to fit in without any difficulty."

With regard to Education South Australia is,

* "Times," January 28, 1915.

in one respect only, the least progressive of the states, for it has fixed the minimum age at which children may be employed in factories at thirteen, as compared with fourteen elsewhere. Victoria leads the way with a minimum of fifteen for girls. On the other hand, the state has been a pioneer in dealing with destitute and neglected children. The Chief Secretary of the Government appoints a State Children's Council composed of men and women. Its work is conducted on the most enlightened methods. The children, whether, as in most cases, they are boarded out, or in institutions, are judiciously looked after and provided for, till the boys have reached the age of eighteen, and the girls of twenty-one years. The work, whether paid or unpaid, of the large staff of assistants in urban and country districts, is given alike "ungrudgingly and in the spirit of the volunteer," says Mrs. Margaret Wragge, a member of the council. Thus the state is providing with foresight for the useful careers of every one of its future men and women.

In the matter of general education the system is that in force elsewhere. Primary education is free and compulsory, there is an elaborate system of training for teachers, who are given every facility for self-improvement. Technical educa-

tion is provided for by the "School of Mines and Industries." The Adelaide University is of comparatively old foundation, as it dates from 1874. It has been fortunate in receiving generous endowments from local benefactors, and has handsome spacious buildings. The name of the late Sir Samuel Way, the Chief Justice, and a prominent, active citizen, will always be associated with the progress of the University.

As we have said, Adelaide is girdled with hills, of which the most important is Mount Lofty, and part of this high ground has been set aside as a national reserve, a park in perpetuity for the community; a large area left in its natural state, to show what Australia once was to the children's children of the first settlers.

The drive up the hills is not an easy one, for the road ascends steeply and the ground falls sharply away. The view over Adelaide grows more and more beautiful with every few feet of the ascent, as the semicircle of hills, with their valley and city, and the illimitable expanse of ocean are spread out below. The reserve is a vast area of sloping green lawns, more or less thickly covered with trees. Growing among the gums were the curious shea-oak, and the still more curious wild cherry, whose stone grows outside

WATERFALL GULLY, BURNSIDE, NEAR ADELAIDE.

the fruit; the wattle was here only bursting its yellow balls into flower. We saw a clump of the pretty drosera or sundew, and a quantity of small purple orchids not unlike our blue squills in shape and size.

All kinds of birds live in this retreat: especially the Australian magpie with his odd conventual air, and the white cowl and black frock that make him look like a Dominican friar.

The magpies are sociable birds, friendly and companionable. They are, besides, greedy and carnivorous. An Australian lady, who was acting as our hostess on this occasion, told us she had once seen a magpie swallow three mice in succession, and sit afterwards ruminating over their digestion with the three tails hanging down from his beak.

There, too, was the laughing jackass, or to call him by his musical native name the "kookaburra," who resembles in shape and colour a large untidy jay. We heard for the first time the sweet note of the Australian thrush, and saw several red-headed parrots. The road led into a beautiful wooded glen, a favourite place for picnics.

Picnics are a great institution in Australia, and to avoid the dangers of bush fires little open-air hearths are made in such places as these, with an iron rod across them and hooks for hanging the

"billy" to boil the water for the weak tea that is the invariable accompaniment of all meals. There is always plenty of dry wood in that dry climate, and generally a little shelter is put up, with a rough table and benches, sometimes a tank for rain water, but this, when it is there, has a way of being rusty. On this occasion time demanded our return, for we were lunching with one of the University professors, so we came back to the city that is only less pastoral than its hills, and were deposited at our destination by the kind new acquaintances, who had devoted a long morning to us.

Our hosts lived in a charming bungalow on the side of a hill, the garden was full of early spring flowers, jonquils and other bulbs. Their guest house was detached, as it were, in a little garden of its own, which seemed a particularly pleasant way of entertaining one's friends, giving a sense of freedom both to visitors and hosts. In the drawing-room was a big bowl of camellias, which flourish in the open air in Australia. Our host and hostess came of one of the oldest Australian families; that is, their daughter told us her grandfather came over in 1837 and her grandmother three years later. Life was a hard thing in those days. To begin with, there was the six months' voyage in the old sailing ships. In their early

days of married life they had no food except salt pork and damper, or a kind of bread made without yeast, which is very nice on a picnic, but would be trying as a staple form of food. On Sundays they had rice boiled in water and raisins. "My grandfather used to be so hungry that he once shot a sitting magpie." It must, even so, have been a meal of bones and feathers.

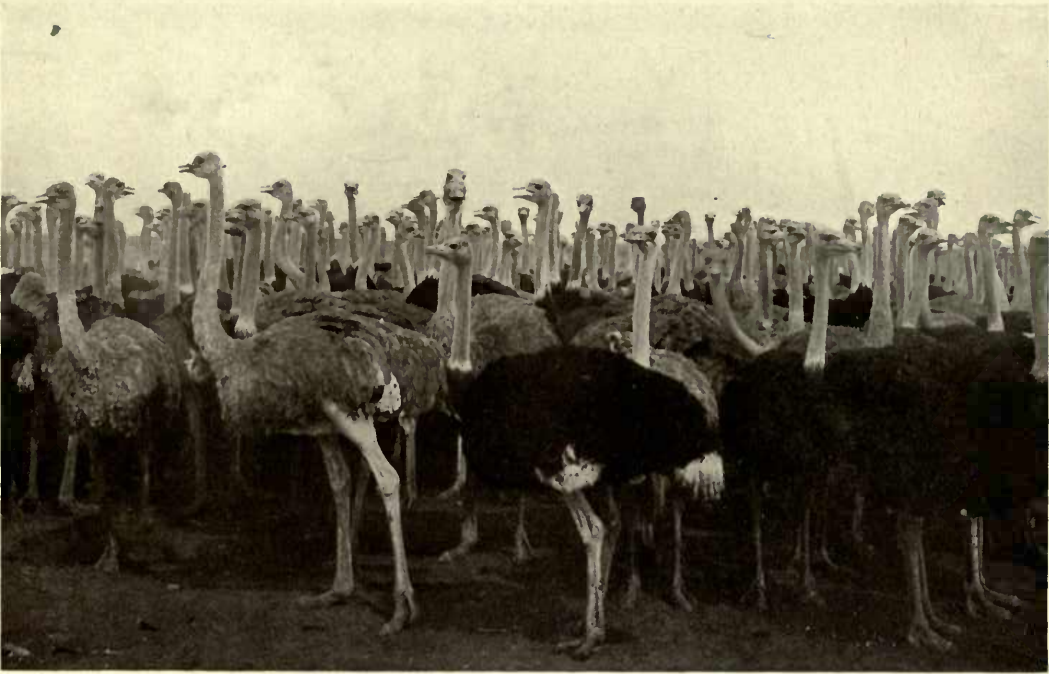
There was something patriarchal about this pleasant, cultivated household. The settlement which the earlier generation had won from the bush remained in the family, and the descendants of its servants still served them. After lunch we were taken off to tea in the hospitable Australian way to some friends of our hosts' who were giving a tea-party. Their house lay at some distance from the town, with its back to the hills. It was approached by a park much like an English park, with eucalyptus for oaks and magpies for rooks, and the house itself was much like an English country house, and an English tea-party, with great bowls of roses and violets in the drawing-room.

It would be difficult to find anywhere a lovelier situation than the slopes of these hills, facing the far-distant sea. The entrance to the drive was heavy with the scent of stocks, and gay with masses of red geranium, a bougainvillea covered with purple flowers hung over the flight of steps,

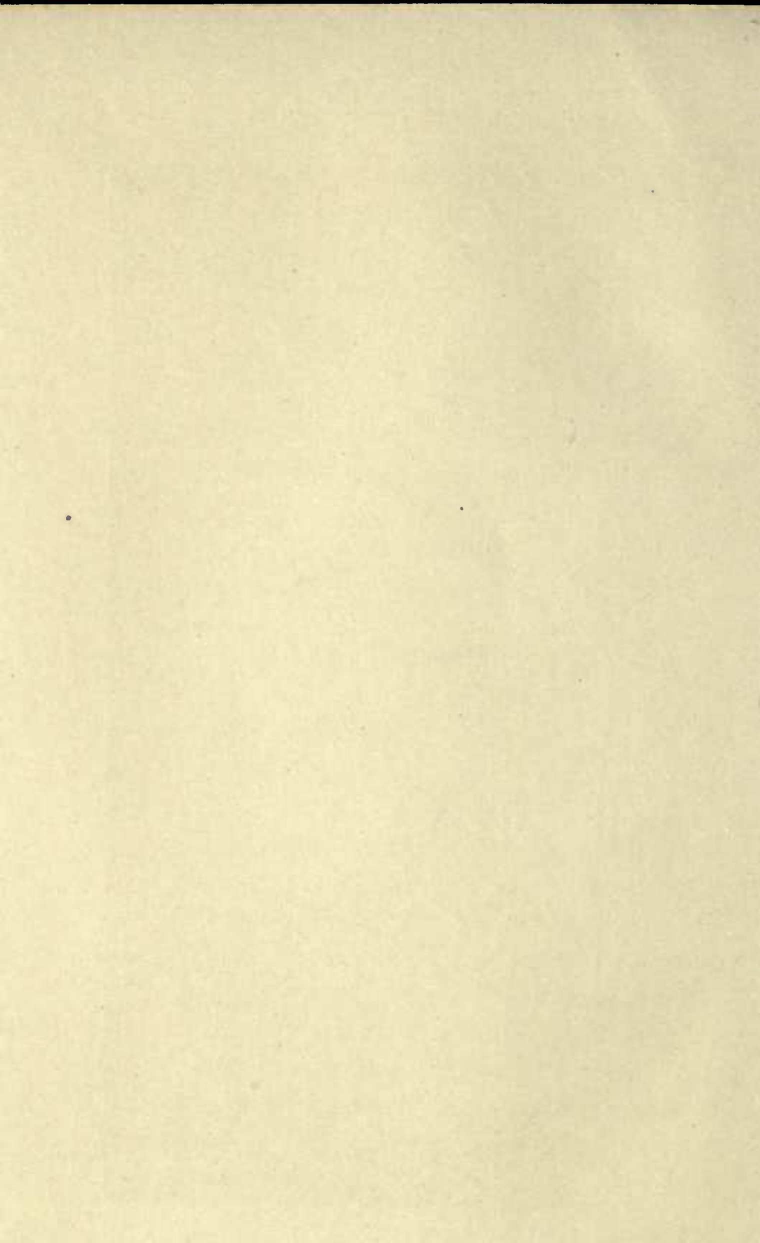
and below the garden lawns, on which the large, handsome black and white Australian wagtails were hopping about, orange trees displayed their golden fruit and glossy leaves against a background of almond blossom, and ripe limes and grape fruits.

As it was only about three miles back into Adelaide, with a good road and a fine evening, we proposed to walk home to our hotel, as we had had no exercise since we had left England. The suggestion, however, was considered so entirely impracticable as to be not worth discussing. It was merely waved aside, and the whole time we were in the country we were impressed by the fact that Australians never seem to walk. They motor, they have excellent tram services, but except up-country they don't seem to ride. An older resident at Adelaide lamented that there were actually so few young men who could ride in the district, that their numbers were insufficient to keep up the local Hunt Club.

We left Adelaide on a warm sunny August day. The long, long railway journeys from one state capital to another are made by night. The trains are dusty, the scenery monotonous, so that the tedium and discomfort are by this means minimised as much as possible. Of course, there



OSTRICH FARM, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.



are beautiful tracts of country, that the railroad passes through, but in a land where the eucalyptus is everywhere the prevailing form of vegetation, and water is rare, monotony is inevitable. On leaving Adelaide the main line towards Melbourne runs through charming park-like country, with green lawns and trees and deep gorges. The train climbs the Mount Lofty range with delightful glimpses of the sea, and an ascent punctuated by peculiarly sulphurous little tunnels, reminiscent of those on the Apennines.

Afterwards we crossed a spacious pastoral country dotted sparsely with homesteads, peaceful in the great calm of the luminous evening, then the swift dusk fell and blotted out all. At Murray Bridge we paused for dinner, in the old-fashioned continental way. Dinner in railway stations in Australia is simple and expeditious, and in our experience invariably excellent. It is thrown at the traveller by a miscellaneous assortment of young women, who fall over each other in their hospitable anxiety to get through the menu in time. That, however, did not suffice, for having hastily despatched our soup and the very good turkey, which is always a standing dish in Australia, and trifled with a sweet, we were summoned back to the train. Here we observed in passing along the corridor to our own carriage

a bulky-looking passenger disgorging from his pockets large quantities of the dessert, which we had had no time to eat, and which he had adroitly commandeered. He was bulging with it, in fact, and was now proudly exhibiting a selection of it spread out on the opposite seat of the carriage—five oranges, three apples, and some bananas. Seeing our eye upon him he offered us a share of the spoils, as a species of hush money in kind. Oranges and apples and bananas are delicious in Australia; the dry soapy things sold for bananas in London give no idea of what a pleasant form of food a fresh banana can be.

He is no traveller who cannot sleep on any occasion under any circumstances, even in a rattling and draughty train. After a good night we woke up next morning to see an immense grassy plain stretching away to the horizon on either side. Cattle and sheep were feeding, and there were patches of plough land. For the first time the "bush" had retreated to a respectful distance.

PART III

VICTORIA

CHAPTER IX

COLLINS STREET—MELBOURNE

ON the day we reached Adelaide the train that took us from Port Adelaide to the city slipped by an encampment of tents, those of the naval division; and on the day we left Melbourne we saw the recruits for Australia's first contingent swing past us along Collins Street. Splendid they looked: young and strong and confident. The cars and motor omnibuses bunched up by the pavement, and the people hung out of the windows to cheer as they went by. I remember I suddenly found myself without a hat and the tears running down my cheek, when the last of them disappeared in the dust, the crowd closing in behind them. There was only a fortnight or so between that first glimpse at Adelaide that war had begun, and the assurance that Australia had grasped what was to be her share in it, when she sent her boys on the way to camp through Collins Street.

Collins Street. For better or worse, for richer or poorer, Melbourne will always be expressed to

us in terms of Collins Street. It is a wide street of tall buildings, and it photographs well. It has not grown up haphazard. It is rectangular; and it exhibits Melbourne's ideal of doing the thing well, and of doing it in an official way. No street in London is very like it, though Melbourne has more in common with London than any other city we have ever seen. There is the same nucleus of business and trading, shopping and luxury; the parks almost, but not quite, set in the middle of things; and trams and suburban lines linking up nearer suburbs (with High Streets of their own), and more distant ones with large houses and their gardens, and more distant ones still where the houses are cheaper. It has an official residence for the Governor-General, set, as Buckingham Palace is, in a green park; and it has a river though we will not press the point of any resemblance in it to the Thames. In short, if you were to name anything in London to us—Regent's Park or Tottenham Court Road, the Mansion House or the Natural History Museum, St. Pancras Railway Station or the Reform Club—we believe we could find you something of the kind in Melbourne. They have even a Tate Gallery, and it has pictures which might have been the choice of the Chantrey Bequest.

One word more about Collins Street, and then,

having served its purpose as a simile, we may leave it. It is a London street, the artery of an organism much smaller than London, so that it is a composite. It has shops and clubs, hotels and banks, and nearly all are square and solid. It is as wide as Kingsway, but less uniform than that thoroughfare will be; as busy as Cheapside, but less heterogeneous; as popular as Regent Street, but one of less specific attractions; and the one characteristic of it which is unmistakable is that it is the principal street of a big city. That is what Melbourne is. It is a city, a city where money is made, and big business goes on. It is to Melbourne and to Collins Street that you must come if you are to talk to the men who are planning and financing and ordering the Australia of the future.

There is a Melbourne of another kind, just as there are many Londons. There is Melbourne of the University, nestling in its gardens and secure in the strongest foundation a University can have, the solid research of its professors and teachers. It would not thank us for any forced comparison with the ineffable charm that the years and memories have brought to our own older Universities; but it has their air of un-self-consciousness and breeding.

There is Melbourne, too, which sets the

fashion; and which, if the word were not so detestable, forms the "society" of the capital. But "society," so misused a word elsewhere, is more vague in its application in Australia than elsewhere. Government House is the vortex about which it eddies; and perhaps cards for Government House garden parties, or receptions, or invitations to Government House luncheons and balls may be the fount of as much rivalry and as many heartburnings as in the oldest capitals of Europe. Certainly Government House maintains a ceremoniousness which is in extraordinary contrast to every other usage in this land of democracy. Ladies curtsey to the Governor-General's wife and to the Governor-General, as if they were of Royal blood, instead of the representatives of Great Britain. The Governor-General goes out to lunch attended by an aide-de-camp; nobody would go to a reception at Government House in anything other than the most official dress he was entitled to wear; nor would any lady go in anything that was a stitch less than the best of her dresses—for Government House is the Court. And yet . . . one day when one of us was lunching at the Melbourne Club,* the Governor-General came into the luncheon room and sat down at our round table, with his aide

* Ladies are not admitted to the Melbourne Club.

and a friend, and the other lunchers at the same table, who all more or less impartially went on with their own conversation or exchanged a word or an answer with the Governor-General, were an editor, a doctor, two business men, a lawyer and a geologist. There was somebody else whose profession I have forgotten, but the luncheon party was very typical of the social life of Melbourne, and typical, too, I think, of what is the most vivifying and vigorous thing in Australian intercourse and converse.

In England, not altogether as a consequence of our social conventions, though they are the chief thing, the people of one social circle know very little of one another; and doctors, lawyers, artists, or literary or scientific men, merchants, men in commerce or finance, tend to limit their intercourse to those of the same profession as themselves. There are exceptions to this rule, of course; and it grows less rigid. But in Australia such limitations hardly exist at all. If you have a job of any kind, in letters, or politics, or science, or commerce, or trade, and are doing it well; and if you are a man of intelligence—then you stand on your merits, not on your social position, and you are of the same standing as anyone else. A few years ago in an English novel written by a lady of talent and insight, a duke

is made to say, as almost his last utterance on his death-bed, "We big-wigs have a good time." Such an incredible observation would appear even more fatuous in Australia than in Eaton Square; for there are no "big-wigs" in Australia.

It would be hard to say who or what takes their place in such a democracy: talent perhaps; ability in such public affairs as bring a man into relation with European politics or with the home country, though in politics or affairs men do not stand apart from their fellows as they do over here. In England, or in any European country, the men of affairs are known to their countrymen chiefly by their photographs. How many people, for example, in England have ever seen Sir Edward Grey? But in Australia the public men are not photographed; they are known to everybody and are spoken to by everybody. The only exceptions are the Governors. If they are men of great ability, a limited divinity hedges them, but they are the only people thus fenced in, and the fence can be seen through if they are not first-rate. If there are no big-wigs in Australia, the land is knee-deep in critics.

In the absence of any deeply separated social circles in Melbourne, there is a social life of unbounding vitality and capacity for enjoyment. During our stay there, despite the outbreak of

war, a great deal of ceremonial festivity was taking place, so that abundant opportunity was given for surveying Melbourne in its ball-dress at Government House, or in its silk hat and morning coat at official garden parties. One impression left on the mind and the eye was that these things were sufficiently uncommon and sufficiently enjoyed for no one to leave them out if they could attend them. I have a recollection of good-tempered struggles for hats and coats at the City Museum and Library (where a conversazione was held), such as obliterated every other impression—even the impression of that massive and graceful City Library with its domed roof and white arcading; or of the serried multitudes coming and going from the supper rooms. There was the hunt for the motor-car, too . . . in a sudden night wind that brought stinging dust from the north . . . and there were the throngs of ladies quite cheerfully sacrificing their satin shoes as they walked along the streets to the cars, sometimes to the street cars. For if you go home by street car in Melbourne it makes no difference to your social standing.

Gay, cheerful, social, hospitable Melbourne. It is full of memories of kindnesses, of hospitality, of dinner parties, of gay and—forgive the blighting phrase—of that cultivated converse which

our better instructed grandfathers called "good talk"; of houses which were luxurious and homes which were deeply comfortable—and of one house, to which, however long and tiring the day, we always came back as those who come back home.

CHAPTER X

SOCIAL LIFE IN MELBOURNE

THE country surrounding Melbourne was far more populous than anything we had yet seen. The land was very flat, and the plain was extremely bare, even denuded; there was hardly a tree to be seen on the great expanse; scattered over it were innumerable little yellow boulders, thousands of them. Sometimes they had been laboriously collected and heaped up to form walls. These are the recollections which the approach to the Victorian capital by railway from the west leaves in the mind. The entrance to Melbourne itself is much like that to any other great seaport. The masts of the ships showed above the houses, the air was cool and fresh, and invigorating after the night in the train. Melbourne was in fact the coldest place we visited in Australia, but even here heavy winter clothing such as one would wear in an English winter is unnecessary in that dry air and brilliant sunshine.

Our hosts had sent their car to meet us, and we spun out of the station yard into a city of im-

mensely wide straight streets, sometimes rather sharply ascending and descending, with handsome tall buildings, some of which had a quite venerable air; the cathedral of St. Paul's, for instance, is grimy with age. From a local station people from the suburbs were pouring out to their day's business, as if it were a London terminus, and there was little to distinguish them in general appearance from the London morning throng. We gleaned a rapid impression of gardens and parks and open spaces, and after crossing the Yarra River, arrived in the pleasant green hilly suburb of South Yarra, where we were to stay. The car drew up at a large bungalow in a sloping street of bungalows each in its own garden. A broad verandah ran round the one-storied house; at the entrance to the garden a pepper tree had been cut back and a rose trained over it. These lovely trees, with their grey fern-like foliage and strings of red berries are very common in Australia, but they are untidy things in a garden, with obstreperous roots. Geraniums were in flower even here, and a pink camellia bush.

The door was flung open by our hostess almost before we had had time to ring the bell. We had arrived unseasonably early in the morning, rather chilly, rather tired, with that uncomfort-

THE RIVER YARRA, 48 MILES FROM MELBOURNE.

able, unkempt sensation attendant on a hurried toilet in a rocking train, breakfastless, very hungry, and it is only on such an occasion that the whole-hearted warmth of an Australian welcome can be appreciated at its true worth, a welcome no less generous to strangers than to recovered friends. Our host and hostess in Melbourne had never seen us before, yet not only were we made to feel as if we belonged there, as if their house was a home in which we had the claim of longstanding friendship or relationship, but though they were both very busy people of many engagements, their car was placed at our disposal during our visit, and they themselves made use of the very efficient Melbourne tram service. Perhaps this extraordinary and generous kindness, which we met everywhere, differing only in degree, not in kind, exists in Australia as nowhere else.

It is sometimes spoken of as Colonial; and so in the best sense it is. We had some foreshadowing of it at the Cape. Here certain of the passengers had a collective invitation to a motor drive round Table Mountain by the members of the local automobile club. A day's entertainment was planned by them, but owing to contrary currents our boat was late. We only had a few hours to spend there. It was between seven

and eight o'clock in the morning when we went on deck, and our host for the moment, a boy of about seventeen, came up smiling and helped us into our fur coats. "Are you always as nice as this to strangers?" we asked. "*You're* not strangers," he said, with genuine surprise, and even a little hurt. And it is that feeling that makes colonial travelling such a delightful experience. Even the conductor on the train will bid you a cordial farewell and hope you will enjoy yourself. England must seem a cold place to Australians when they come to it on a visit. We once heard some travelled Australians discussing this very point. After lavishing hospitality on his English visitors the Australian comes to London, and perhaps meets his former guest at a club. After some few minutes' conversation he says, "When are you going back?" and adds, "Ah, I hope I shall see you again before you go!" and that is all.

On the afternoon of our arrival in Melbourne, we went to a tea given by the Women's Union at the University. Australian women are in a very superior position to their British sisters; they have the vote, and their share in political life takes place quite unobtrusively and as a matter of course. Women's suffrage was adopted in Victoria comparatively recently, and the state

is now governed by the vote of all those over the age of twenty-one who have not been convicted of felony. Consequently there is no aggressive "Women's Movement," though women have their own separate clubs in all the large towns, and do useful and active work both in connection with public bodies concerned with their interests, and in political organisation. We were frequently asked with surprised incredulity if the newspaper reports of suffragette activities at home were not wholly untrue or at least greatly exaggerated. To women in peaceful possession of the vote, the exasperated fuss on both sides about conferring what seems to them so simple and obvious a benefit was wholly incomprehensible. It appears that in Australia it has had very little effect on the balance of parties except that of strengthening the Labour vote to some extent.

An active and experienced citizen of Melbourne has recorded his own conviction that the measure "has produced little or no change for better or worse in the general course of legislation. It has not purified public life in the sense in which the term is generally used ; it has not enabled women to obtain adequate treatment in the subjects they are specially interested in. It has in my opinion made but one substantial alteration—the capacity of women to organise political

associations has been demonstrated repeatedly, and the interest of women in public affairs is in conspicuous evidence." * Working women are, however, already in a better position in Victoria than in any other part of the world. As long ago as 1873 an Act was passed forbidding the employment of any female for more than eight hours in any day in a factory. Nowhere is the factory worker, whether man or woman, better looked after as to his wages, personal safety, health, and moral surroundings than in Victoria.† A little over 33% of all the women in the state are employed in factories, earning an average wage of 17s. 4d. a week.

In any comparison of labour conditions at home and in Australia it must be borne in mind that though foodstuffs cost about the same, imported manufactured goods of all kinds are dearer. The higher wages are not therefore proportionately greater in purchasing power. They have, however, been much affected by the institution of Wages Boards. These were first established in 1896 with the definite object of

* Dr. J. W. Barrett, C.M.G., M.D., in the "Handbook to Victoria."

† See Mr. H. M. Murphy, Chief Inspector of Factories, on the "Victorian Labour Laws," "Handbook to Victoria," p. 203.

raising the wages of women employed in the clothing trade, especially the sweated home workers. The measure had the immediate effect of raising wages in this trade. The Boards, which are composed of equal numbers of employers and employed, elect a neutral chairman, discuss all the aspects of the trade, and fix a minimum wage accordingly. The system has now been gradually extended to practically all urban industries, in which wages have in consequence steadily risen. The Wages Board, says the Chief Inspector of Factories, "has now come to be regarded pretty generally as the most nearly perfect system of fixing fair wages and conditions that has yet been devised." * It is a cardinal principle of the Victorian system that, having provided the workers with the means of securing a fair living wage, it takes no cognisance of strikes. It is claimed that the Victorian method has had the result of preventing strikes.

But to return to the Women's Union tea at the University. Our hostesses were representative of Melbourne's social activities, and it was a pleasant and interesting festivity, as well as an introduction to the University, the centre of Australian intellectual life. The University has done much to leaven Melbourne society, and has

* H. M. Murphy.

been fortunate in securing first-rate men, not merely in point of scholastic attainment, but in an equally invaluable social refinement. A splendid growing country like Australia should have only the best we have to send, whether as teachers or governors, nothing less is worthy of her deserts and importance as a factor in the empire. The University is the coping-stone of the educational machinery of Victoria, where the whole of the primary and secondary education is in the hands of the state, with the exception of certain schools owned by religious corporations. There is an admirable system of small rural schools, and teachers earn promotion by good work done in them. There are also a number of technical schools and Agricultural High Schools—an interesting development—one of which we visited.

The University Buildings stand in tree-planted grounds, with the imposing Wilson Hall in the foreground. It is used principally for social purposes and for examinations, and is an ecclesiastical building, like a large college chapel, spacious and well proportioned. In front of the open doors stands an immense Moreton Bay pine, one of the handsomest of Australian trees, evergreen, like all the native vegetation, large and shapely with glossy dark leaves. It is so called from the beautiful Queensland bay on

which Brisbane stands, where it grows in great profusion. On the lawn beyond, two great black swans were feeding, looking oddly incongruous. The various schools have their main lecture rooms and laboratories grouped round an artificial lake in the middle of the grounds. Residential denominational colleges are erected on grants of land within the University precincts. One of them, the Methodist College, we visited through the kindness of the wife of the President, who showed us over the buildings.

It was vacation, and all was swept and garnished, but we saw the little chapel, the dining-hall, library, and the men's rooms. All was very pleasant and comfortable, with fine views over Melbourne, and all was as unlike as possible from the dreamy, stately old halls where our English boys go and learn to be luxurious and extravagant at home, and also learn other things which after all cannot be learnt elsewhere. We were present at the conferring of some honorary degrees at the University. It was a gay and picturesque scene, with the doctors' scarlet gowns on the platform; and what we missed in the ancient academic atmosphere that gives to such functions their impressiveness at home, was compensated for by the lively interest and enthusiasm of the visitors by whom the hall was

filled. The ceremony was incidentally memorable from the fine enunciation and beautiful voice of the Professor who presented the candidates to the Chancellor.

After the degree ceremony we went on to the Town Hall, where the Lady Mayoress was giving a tea-party. Mayors and Mayoresses are very important people in Australia; they are lavish in their entertainment of strangers, and are the centre not only of the civic life of a town, but often of its social life as well, the two things being usually indistinguishable. The Melbourne Town Hall is worthy of a great city that is the seat of government, and the rallying point of all the different phases of life on the continent. One sumptuous council chamber is decorated with Australian woods, many of them very beautiful, the central panels of black wood especially, which were delicately variegated like the back of an old fiddle.

The same day we went to an evening party at Federal Government House. Melbourne is the seat of the Federal as well as of the State Government; and the balls or receptions at Government House bring together what in a less democratic country one would call the society of the state. Society in Melbourne is very cultivated and agreeable. It is more settled, more homo-

geneous, more cosmopolitan than elsewhere in Australia, so that here, if anywhere, one loses the sense of a new country, which is at the same time part of its charm. The women and girls in Melbourne are also prettier, and more prettily dressed than elsewhere, and it makes a cult of charming-looking, elderly, white-haired matrons, wearing the dignity of their years becomingly. Not that pretty women and girls are not to be found everywhere, but Melbourne has a colder, more bracing climate, and is more in touch with the outside world. Two facts that tell in complexions and clothes.

CHAPTER XI

BALLARAT

NOBODY has seen Australia who has not seen a goldfield, and though with a certain reluctance, for the way was long and the trains unprovided with restaurant cars, we decided to visit one from Melbourne, whence, as one counts distance in Australia, they were easily accessible. The choice seemed to lie between Bendigo and Ballarat; they were equal as far as we were concerned, but there was something about the name of Bendigo that expressed a smug prosperity, while Ballarat suggested something of the unbridled spirit of adventure and undisciplined audacity of the pioneer. We elected in favour of Ballarat. We started very early in the morning, as you have to do in Australia if you want to get anywhere, feeling full of enterprise and prepared for any hardship. There had been a riot in Ballarat, they told us, quite a serious affair, with military intervention. The line to Ballarat runs at first through the flat country that we had already traversed, covered with the odd little

yellow boulders, which a well-informed passenger now assured us were formed of lava. There had been a lava flow all over the plain in some former geological period, he said, and the lava had gradually broken up into these little yellow boulders. The line then crosses the Bacchus Marsh Valley; this neighbourhood is the centre of the milk and butter trade, and china clay is also found in the district. Farther on we passed through the beautiful Werribee Gorge, remarkable for having been "eroded through glacial conglomerate into the underlying Ordovician sediment," a well-informed passenger hastened to explain to us. While we listened respectfully an immense bird appeared hovering, lonely, majestic, above the gorge. "Aquila audax," cried the too well-informed passenger eagerly; the largest known eagle. "How do you spell "Hordax?" inquired a lady. This tacit reflection on his pronunciation so discomfited him that he retired to another carriage, and we proceeded on our way unenlightened.

No sooner were we within sight of Ballarat than all our hopes of adventure were dashed; instead of the mining town that we had expected with little rows of corrugated iron huts, and miners in wideawakes and shirt-sleeves, what we did see was a cloud of white dust driving

along a road, and behind it a town like any other town, containing, as a guide-book informed us, a "Hospital, Orphan and Benevolent Asylums, Women's Homes, Mechanics' Institute, with Library, Fine Art Gallery, Banks, Commercial Houses, two Town Halls, three theatres, forty churches, School of Mines and Museum, Agricultural High School, State schools, six iron-founderies, a brewery, a flour and two woollen mills, boot and other factories . . . !"

We were fifty years too late. We had come to see Ballarat, and we were shown it by a kind and hospitable stranger to whose care we had been consigned for the purpose. There is a tremendous fund of local patriotism in Australia. Everybody is very proud of their own town, for the simple reason that they have seen it grow and helped to make it. They have a paternal or proprietary interest in it. In Ballarat they are most proud, and justly so, of their principal street, Sturt Street, called presumably after the pioneer who named that wonderful hanging scarlet and black flower "Sturt's desert pea." Ballarat lies on the side of a hill, and Sturt Street, very wide and planted with trees in the centre, slopes sharply away through and out of the city towards a green hill that rises abruptly, and is framed, as it were, by the street.

. . .

Ballarat, we found, was gradually relapsing into what it had originally been, an agricultural centre. It was in the year of Queen Victoria's accession that six prospectors, seeking good pastures for their flocks, reached Mount Buninyong, and looking westward saw a rich expanse of well-watered country that was soon settled as sheep runs, with its centre at Buninyong. It was not till 1851 that gold was first discovered in New South Wales, and the Melbourne authorities, alarmed at the consequent exodus of population, offered a reward of two hundred guineas for the discovery of gold in the state of Victoria. In July a man accidentally discovered gold in felling a tree at Buninyong, and a further search revealed the presence of gold in immense quantities on the site of what is now Ballarat. In those early days, "The Roaring Fifties," as they were called, diggers hastened to Ballarat from all parts of the world, including New South Wales itself, for gold in such quantities had never been seen before. The whole neighbourhood became a vast encampment of tents and huts, and the peaceful sheep-farmers were forced to migrate.

The Government sought to enforce order among the cosmopolitan riotous crew of diggers. Licences were issued for a fee permitting them to work within certain specified limits, and the

violence used in enforcing this rule in 1854 produced a riot among the diggers, who opposed armed resistance to the police and Government soldiers at what was known as the "Eureka Stockade." Order was restored after some bloodshed, but the ringleaders went unpunished, for public opinion was on the side of the diggers. The gold licences were withdrawn and the grant of parliamentary representation soon brought about more civilised conditions, or, in the words of the local guide, "Thus these early years of revelry and devilry have faded and dissolved into the far-famed golden city of the south, the garden city of Ballarat."

That was sixty years ago. The greatest output of gold for any one year in Victoria occurred in 1856, and amounted to nearly £12,000,000 in value; for many years afterwards the mines yielded annually more than five millions sterling. It can be easily seen that the discovery of gold had a very great influence on the prosperity and development of the State and the disposition of its cities. Ballarat and Bendigo, for instance, are respectively the second and third cities in Victoria. As the extraordinarily rich surface alluvial deposits of gold were exhausted, mining was carried on at lower depths, involving greater expenditure of plant and machinery, and producing smaller profits.

But in Ballarat, both east and west, there is a profitable field for further development. After having been well fortified with lunch, our host of the day took us off to see a gold mine.

We motored through the handsome main street of Ballarat, noting with surprise the number of very large and important drapers' shops, with their impressive expanse of plate glass. They were all having what they called " clean up sales," and we wondered how a population of about 42,000 could possibly support them, till our chauffeur, who was also the owner of the car, explained that Ballarat was the metropolis for the whole surrounding agricultural neighbourhood of the mines. On the way we passed through old Ballarat, the driver jumping a gutter with surprising skill. Old Ballarat is a wonderful, ramshackle-looking place, run up anyhow in the early days of the gold rush, when fortunes were made in other ways besides digging, and a " pannikin of rum " fetched an ounce of gold. It had the air of Earl's Court after the season, when the exhibition is shut ; the houses were of all shapes and sizes, and the arcades over the pavement were the only concession to convenience.

Gold-mining, like all other forms of mining, is an untidy process, and we presently came to rough, shapeless patches of irregular yellow

ground, all holes and hillocks, and now partly overgrown, where mining had formerly been carried on. Our destination was a hill of grey heaps and smoking chimneys. Even an Australian motor-car looked askance at the approach to it, so we walked up, for this was the mine we were asked to visit. We were shown into an office out of which opened two dressing-rooms. A litter of old boots was on the floor, the walls were hung with derelict felt hats and clean suits of butchers' blue overalls. Here we were asked to attire ourselves suitably for the occasion. It is an odd feeling that of walking out into the light of day for the first time untrammelled by skirts, but this agreeable sensation was detracted from by carrying several pounds' weight on either foot and by the difficulty of keeping on a large alien hat. Some other visitors were going down the mine, and one of the ladies' hats blew off. Retrieving it from the mud, a man politely offered her his own, a quite clean one, in exchange. It belonged to somebody else, but he had had the foresight to select it in the dressing-room in preference to those provided for visitors. We were each furnished with a tallow candle.

Going down a gold mine feels exactly like being one of a new box of Bryant and May's matches. A little two-storied platform takes

down eight adventurous souls at a time. There is a bar across to hold on to; two people stand on either side squeezed close together. Then the platform is lowered so that four more can get on to its upper story. With stringent warnings to inexperienced passengers to keep their free arm pressed close to their side, the platform descends the shaft just like a box of matches being pushed into its case. It is quite dark in the shaft. A sound of running water accompanied us, and we could hear it swishing far below. As we got lower it got hotter and hotter, till it felt as if we were suspended above the steam of some immense kettle, producing a curious feeling of suffocation, which, however, wears off. We had a general impression that the bottom of a gold mine would be a beautiful, glittering thing, with shining white walls of quartz and glimmering threads and patches of gold shining in it like the small samples given as mementoes to visitors. Nothing of the kind. It might as well have been a coal mine. On scrambling rather breathless out of the little cage, we found ourselves in a low, small, open space, with walls of some dun-coloured reddish stone, and narrow tunnels running off it with wooden supports for the roof. That was the gold mine, and except that in this Turkish bath of grotto and passage men were "picking"

walls like rock-salt or alabaster, nothing more is to be said.

Coming up the shaft we were on the top of the platform, and the water we had heard going down now splashed on to us, as if somebody with a primitive sense of humour was watering us from above with a large watering-can. Altogether, we were very grateful for the blue overalls and the hats. Apropos of these, when we had recovered our own clothes and were waiting to inspect the machinery above ground, a distraught gentleman was passionately inquiring for his hat. The lady who had exchanged hats observed innocently that there was quite a nice hat hanging up in her dressing-room. He hurried off to look, and emerged ruefully with the hat in which she had been down the mine. It had been well watered with muddy water, and was now almost indistinguishable from the hats provided for the purpose.

The machinery was to the uninitiated much like other machinery. There were enormous pumps, fascinating like all such powerful, ruthless looking things. We saw the slim-looking cable that draws the cage up the shaft—("Looks thin, don't it?" said the workman in charge of it)—and the stamper for breaking up the quartz, and the sifters, which sift the mineral when it is crushed.

But there was much more to see. We were

taken to see the Agricultural High School. These schools are an interesting feature in the Australian system of education, and play an important part in it. The Ballarat Agricultural High School is a large, well-lighted building standing in its own grounds, where students can learn the practical arts of agriculture, at the same time that they attend classes, they learn to test milk and to understand the properties of soils. As it was Saturday we were unfortunately unable to see any classes at work. The art room had a south light, which is the aspect corresponding here to our north. The afternoon was now far advanced, so we paid a rapid visit to the Botanical Gardens, very large and handsome ones, adorned by statuary that is the great pride of Ballarat, the work of a local artist.

Finally, skirting Lake Wendouree, a piece of ornamental water on which pleasure steamers run in the summer, our host took us to his house, where we had a high tea, with one of those sumptuous cakes that only Australian housewives can produce. The journey back seemed very long, and we were very tired. There were innumerable stations, all quite dark, so someone ran along the train, inquiring at each carriage, "Anyone for . . . ?" whatever the name of the place happened to be. There

never seemed to be anyone, and he then said in disappointed tones, " Right Oh! Jerry," and we slowly creaked under way again.

We were very glad when we at last steamed into the brightly lighted Melbourne station, and found our kind host and hostess waiting there for us with their car, in spite of the lateness of the hour. Afterwards, in talking over the development of Australia with the people who lived there, we learned how great a part had been played by the discoveries of gold in populating the state. The first permanent settlement in Victoria, the smallest of the five states of Australia, was made by some immigrants from Van Diemen's Land, as Tasmania was then called, in Portland Bay in 1834. This is an open bay which lies at some distance from Melbourne to the south-west; it was found to be unsafe for shipping, and there was a lack of good land in its immediate neighbourhood. Melbourne was founded the next year at the head of the deep inlet called Port Phillip Bay by parties of settlers from Van Diemen's Land. Other settlers came from Sydney, and beginning to explore the interior were struck with its great capabilities. Immigration rapidly progressed, regular government was established under Captain William Lonsdale in 1836, and the capital was named Melbourne.

THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS, NORTH-EAST VICTORIA. MOUNT FEATHERTOP 6,300 FEET.

By the end of 1850 the population already numbered more than 76,000 people. The next year gold was discovered, and in 1851 the population had risen to over 400,000, and was six times that it had been before. The gold boom brought in its train cultivators, and pastoral settlers, for the staple of Australia is still wool. The state has an area of 56 million acres, less than 6 millions of which are under cultivation. The climate varies greatly according to rainfall and elevation, and there are even snow-bound districts during the winter months. Part of the country with a low rainfall is excellent for the cultivation of wheat, and one of the principal problems in Victoria is to guard against an uncertain rainfall by the conservation of water. For the north-east and north extensive irrigation works have already been undertaken, but the whole question awaits further investigation.

At present it is not known whether drought cycles can be predicted; how far the large quantities of water which flow through the Murray River and its tributaries could be utilised for irrigation; how far improved methods of farming will increase the extent to which the rainfall can be utilised. "No country in the world," says Dr. T. W. Barrett, whom we have already quoted, "is more dependent than

Australia on such knowledge as can be afforded by meteorology; and perhaps no country in the world is more disadvantageously placed, since at present there is no means of obtaining information from the waste of ocean which lies to the south."

This brings us to a problem of very great interest in the land question in Victoria, a tendency to convert agricultural into grazing land. Returns show that the very large holdings of 10,000 acres are decreasing in number, and that an aggregation of holdings of from 500 to 800 acres constitutes the present problem. The successful farmer tries to increase his holding, but when he begins to grow old, and is confronted with the disorganisation and high wages of agricultural labour, he relinquishes cultivation and resorts to grazing stock on his larger area, which will provide him with a comfortable living. Consequently less labour is employed, the local schools decline, the trade of the neighbourhood languishes. So it comes about that many of the richest districts of the state are the least progressive. "The land around these centres," says Professor Cherry of Melbourne University, "is probably as rich as that in any part of the world. But instead of the farm areas being reduced by subdivision they are steadily growing larger by aggregation. . . . The evil is intensified,

because as the land goes out of cultivation, the workmen leave the district and general stagnation ensues. . . . Not one-tenth of the available land is under cultivation." * And it must be borne in mind that agriculture is the basis of existence in Victoria.

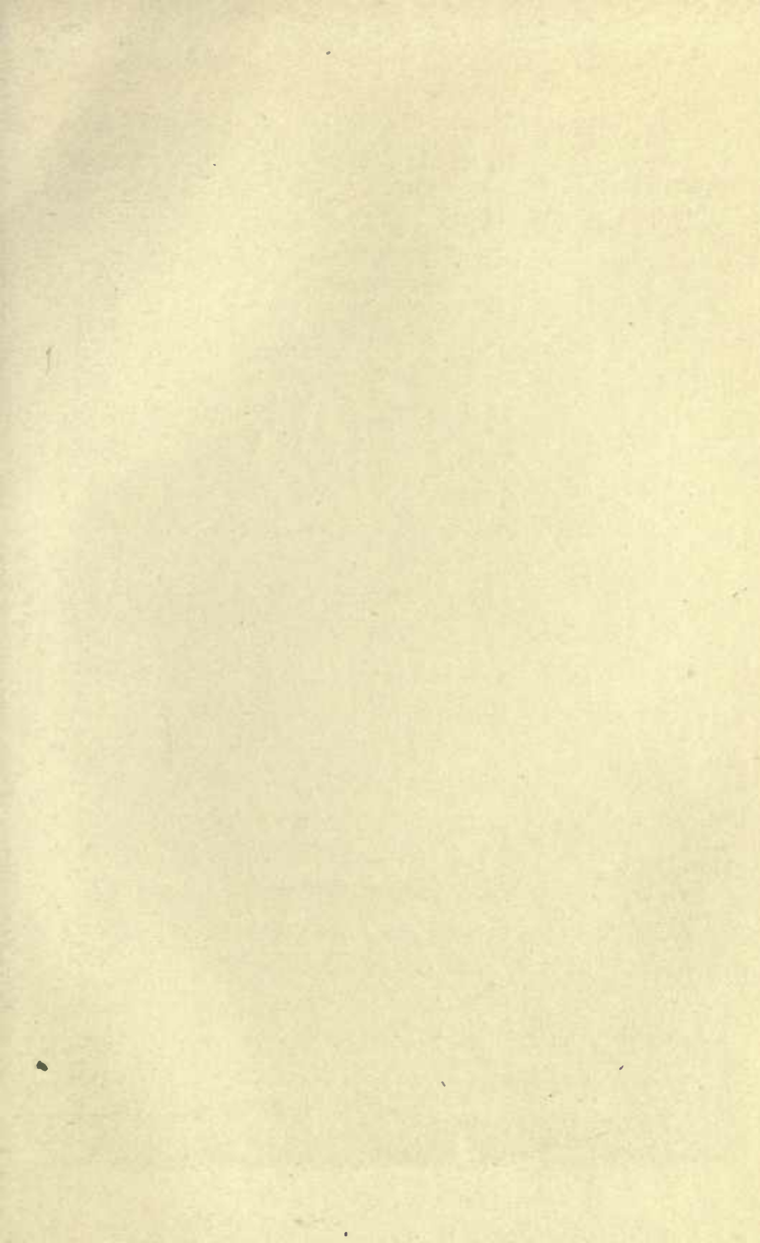
The Government realise this. There are the Agricultural High Schools, an Agricultural College, a School of Agriculture at the University, and every primary school has its experimental plot of ground for gardening. Australia has its own peculiar problems to solve here as in other districts, especially that of breeding wheat which will be "drought-resistant and capable of growing outside the existing rainfall margin of profitable cultivation." It is believed that vast areas of pastoral country in the interior of the continent, which now support a few sheep, might be successfully brought under cultivation, if a kind of wheat could be evolved that would grow, as many native grasses grow, under a low rainfall. As yet the average of wheat grown per acre is very low, only amounting in ten seasons up to 1911–12 to 10·58 bushels an acre, due, it is believed, partly to imperfect methods of cultivation, as well as to the growth of wheats that are not well adapted to local conditions.

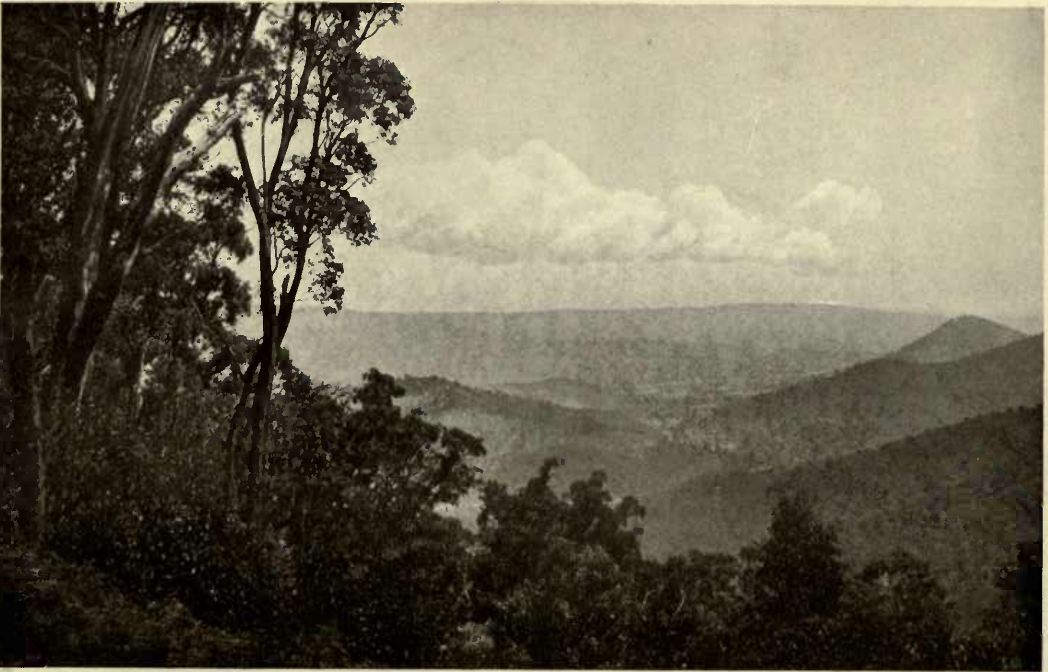
* "Handbook to Victoria," p. 40.

CHAPTER XII

THE BLACK SPUR

THE Victorian bush is very beautiful owing to the immense tree-ferns that grow among the gums, and during our stay in Melbourne we were motored out to Black Spur, a favourite objective of Melbourne picnic and week-end parties, and a point of the "Great Divide," as the Dividing Range of Australia is familiarly called. From Melbourne, which lies at the edge of a plain, the country rises to the great Dividing Range. This belt of highlands starts from Queensland, and separates the coastal drainage from that flowing westward. An early rain had laid the dust, so that we had ideal conditions for motoring, as we left the city behind us, and passed through a region of trim villas or bungalows in gardens, each one of which showed its patch of wattle gleaming among the grey gum trees. At one point the road was bordered by fir trees, often planted by early Scotch settlers to remind them of home. Presently we had left all traces of the suburbs behind and were crossing "Kangaroo





THE DIVIDING RANGE.

Ground," where, alas! kangaroos have long ceased to browse and skip. The distant mountain range loomed up before us gloomy and threatening. Every stream we crossed had its course marked by a ribbon of wattle flashing among the sombre eucalyptus. Boys were going out rabbiting this spring morning with bags of ferrets; the whole countryside lay open to these infant patriots intent on slaying their country's enemies. The day was like a showery April morning at home, with heavy drifting clouds, that threw deep shadows on the dark mass of the mountains rising on our left. Sometimes we ran through cleared open country with pale patches of early crops, oats or barley, springing here and there, or lean store cattle, brought from up-country to be fattened for sale, and feeding on the richer pastures. Sometimes our way led through the bush, sometimes through occasional villages.

At last we had climbed Christmas Hill, and stopped to survey the famous view from its summit. Here the road runs between banks with the dark shining gum trees stretching away on either side. We climbed through a fence, where a little cleared space enabled us to look over the tops of the trees to the valley of the Yarra spread out beneath; a wide, wide plain with the stern-looking ranges in the background. Below us the

Yarra meandered like a yellow ribbon threaded through the green, for its course was outlined by flowering wattle. Beyond, the gloomy and forbidding wall of the Great Divide went up to meet the low-hanging clouds.

At the foot of the Black Spur there is a sort of pleasure place, with villas, hotels, and a golf course. Immediately afterwards we began to ascend a very steep gradient. Here the Government have taken over a reserve large enough to provide a sufficient water supply for Melbourne. From time to time we had seen the aqueducts on our way. In the early part of the year there had been a great bush fire; it had raged for three weeks, and the smoke had hung about distant Melbourne like a fog. The after effects of the fire were curious and very interesting. In some places a whole gully had been burnt out, leaving only the immense white poles of the gums upstanding like the masts of ships. So wonderful is their vitality that in many cases the gum trees had begun to reclothe themselves with young green shoots as if with ivy. Great tree-ferns shot up too in the cleared spaces, repairing the havoc that the fire had wrought; bracken covered the ground, and some kind of pink heath was coming into flower. The fire had been curiously partial, sometimes leaping the road, sometimes

leaving a small area untouched. Nothing can be done to stem the torrent of these fires or to arrest their course, for they travel at sixty miles an hour.

Descending from Black Spur, we stopped to lunch at one of the characteristic Australian picnic places, above a tumbling mountain stream close to a place called Fernshaw. A fine rain was falling, and it was pleasant to find the shelter of a roof, and dry benches and tables. The place was a bird sanctuary; beautiful, and to us, unknown varieties came and watched us from a wooden fence that bordered the little clearing, or hopped about on the grass. The gorgeous Australian robin flaunted his brilliant vermilion and black plumage, here was the fabled "blue bird" in the life, a kind of wren; green finches, a large crow, the ever-present magpie, of course, and pretty fawn-coloured honey birds, said to cull honey from the flowers like bees, and the peewit, black and white, like a smaller magpie, and so called from his shrill, insistent note.

On the slopes of the Black Spur the eucalyptus attain to an unusual height, even for their soaring growth, and some of the tallest trees in Australia are to be seen here. It is impossible to be long in the country without hearing much discussion on questions of forestry. A great part of

Victoria is still forest, about 4,000,000 acres of which are reserved by the state. But though there is much valuable timber—in the mountain ranges in the north-east especially—it is impossible to transport it. Much forest country is let for grazing at nominal rents, and forest let for grazing is inevitably burned. The timber is cleared out by fire to obtain pasture. The fires are generally lighted on purpose, with the consequent enormous destruction of valuable timber. On the other hand, there are few cases in which the timber could be profitably sent to any market, and a land covered with forest cannot be used for grazing. Australian public opinion is becoming alive to the importance of this question, and there is a Department of Forests in the state of Victoria, but it is not considered that its powers are sufficiently drastic and untrammelled. or its supply of expert opinion adequate.*

The return journey was an exhilarating experience, for it was downhill most of the way, and we spun through the sweet invigorating air, with one wheel generally poised on a higher level than the other, bumping and plunging, dodging the deep broad ruts, holding on tight with that pleasant sense of adventure and hairbreadth escapes that only an expert Australian motorist

* "Handbook to Victoria," p. 42.

can give. At one point we stopped to take a photograph of the Yarra, where its swift green stream took a sharp bend in a low-lying meadow. Its opposite bank was one brilliant blaze of wattle; through a gate in the hedge the mountains showed blue and distant. While we were adjusting the lens a kookaburra somewhere out of sight burst into his peals of derisive laughter; the shrill chorus of unseen frogs, an ever-present accompaniment to the stillness of the Australian country, was the only other sound. It was so typical, so arresting, so unlike anything to be seen elsewhere, that we wished we could have transferred the whole scene with its intensity of colour and freshness to these pages. While we were busy on the bank a boatload of rough boys swung into sight, shouting, barging, and splashing, disturbing the peaceful charm of the little picture, breaking up and destroying the reflected wattle on the smooth water by the bank. We called to them to put ashore. They immediately did so, and, landing, came up to us and asked some technical question about the photographic process—it was a colour photograph on glass—with perfect civility and friendliness. The little incident was such a marked contrast to the relationship of different classes of the community at home that it impressed us as being equally

characteristic with the scene in which it took place.

As we neared Melbourne the wet roads of the morning had already dried and we were swept home in a cloud of dust. We arrived in time for a very late tea, and went on to dine at one of those pleasant colonial houses, whose warm friendliness and lavish hospitality is so homelike and yet so un-English.

The next day, after lunching at Government House, we visited the zoological gardens. This was the first unpleasant example of Australian weather; it was like a nasty March day, with gusts of cold wind sweeping up swirling clouds of blinding, stinging dust. It only lasted one day as a weather sample, but it was a singularly objectionable day, with a kind of parching quality in the air.

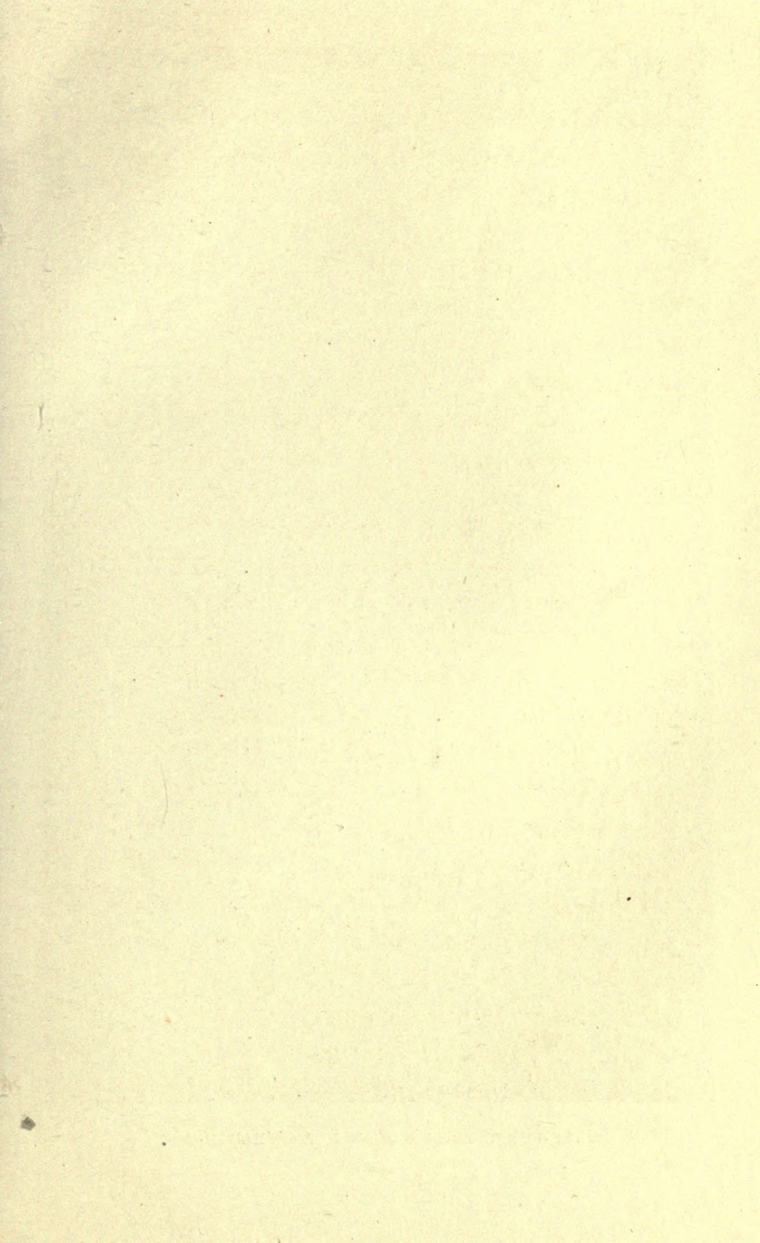
On this occasion we pursued a fruitless quest on which we had already exercised considerable energies since our arrival in Australia. We were very anxious to see a live platypus, that curious little hairy animal, with the bill of a duck, which burrows, or used to burrow, for it is becoming very rare, in Australian river-banks. We were told that if we wanted to see a platypus we must go to Tasmania, there were plenty there, but this was not part of our programme; however, there was

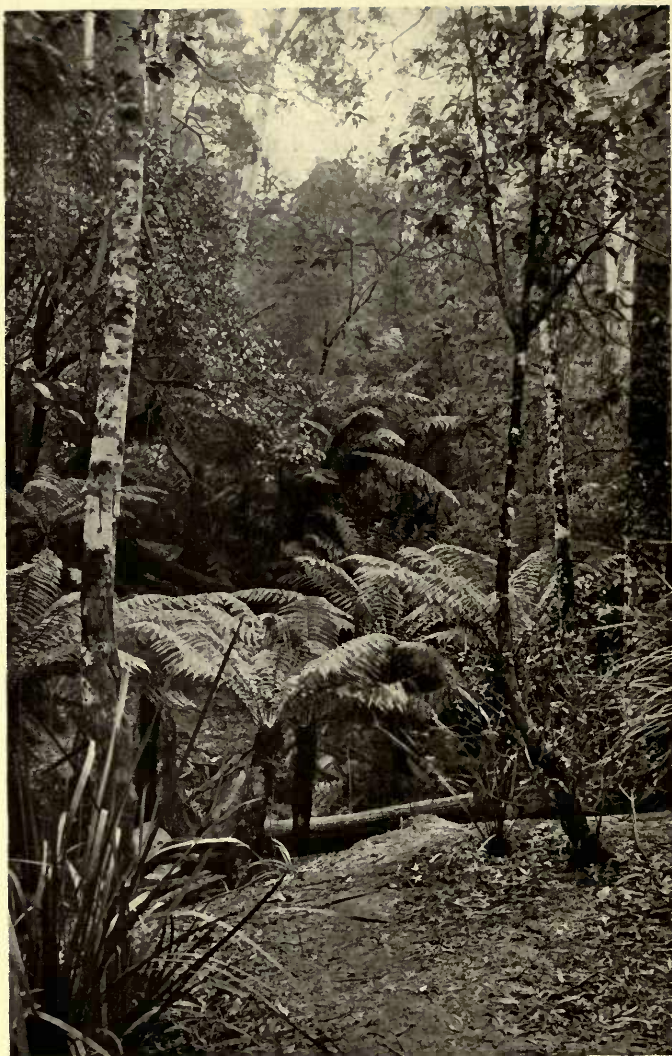
actually at the moment a live platypus in Melbourne. They do not survive in captivity, but this hapless platypus had been sacrificed in the interests of science, and was on exhibition at the zoological gardens. We therefore made our way thither, our hearts beating high with hope and excitement. The porter at the gate was calm, not to say indifferent; it was also approaching closing time. We entered vaguely, none of the animals could help us in our quest for the platypus, neither the mild and browsing kangaroos, the haughty eagles on their perch, or the slim cranes, like the answer of the winds brought by 'sage Hippotades,' "they knew not of his story."

We were at last directed to a large wire enclosure, in the midst of which lay a little muddy pool, it was planted with tall bamboos, amid which fluttered innumerable small birds. Here, said a passing official, the platypus was incarcerated. We eagerly watched and watched in vain the unruffled and opaque surface of the pond. The platypus had effectually concealed his outraged feelings in the mud. He is a shy animal and resents observation. By this time, however, we felt that our journey to Australia was vain unless we saw that platypus. Night was drawing on, it was long past closing time. In these desperate straits we penetrated with

sacrilegious feet a threshold inscribed "private" and unearthed the daughter of the keeper. She was very sympathetic, but not encouraging. Her high authority, however, produced a man with a key, and we squeezed in among the bamboos, which we found sharp and aggressive plants, and with ruthless cruelty warmly applauded the efforts to stir up the platypus out of the mud with a stick; but the despairing platypus had buried itself beyond the reach of human intervention. We were forced to give up and retreat, and it seemed to us, as we went out of the gates, that the large blue parrot, who sits sentinel on his perch at the entrance, winked at us derisively.

The same evening we were at least gratified by the sight of a stuffed platypus. It was at the museum, where there was a civic reception. The municipal buildings at Melbourne are on a most imposing scale. The museum, picture galleries, and free library are all under one roof. The museum is beautifully arranged. Most interesting to English visitors are the complete collections of native animals of all kinds. Every sort of kangaroo and wallaby is represented. From immense creatures sitting up with that air of surprise peculiar to them, as if they were wondering what had happened to their forelegs, to little things of the same species no bigger than a cat.





TREE-FERNS IN THE BUSH NEAR MELBOURNE.

We saw the curious sharp-nosed bandicoot, and at last our search was rewarded by a sight of the platypus. All these smaller animals were exhibited under their life conditions, with sandy burrows, or whatever they might be, carefully reproduced.

The picture gallery consists principally of modern paintings, many of them by Australian painters or of Australian scenes.

It seemed to us that the painter has yet to arise who will really capture the spirit of Australian scenery. It is so wholly individual a thing in colour and chiaroscuro. In a photograph it shows not unlike Europe, but the heavy opaque look of the gums seen massed together at a little distance does not resemble anything on this continent, nor does the rather sad, almost dun-coloured effect of the grey eucalyptus, near at hand, nor the translucent atmosphere, the clarity of light, the brilliancy of sun, that makes a London winter seem a thing of abysmal gloom following on those illumined days.

Leaving the picture gallery, a long corridor leads to the free library, and Melbourne is justly proud of its beautiful and luxurious reading-room, in every way worthy of the chief city of a great democratic country. Circular in shape, it is surmounted by a dome so high that it rather

dwarfs its proportions. But looked down upon from an upper gallery the effect of space and the soft radiance of the electric light falling on the white walls combine to give a charming architectural effect to the whole. Every member of the public over fourteen years of age has the right of free access to the library. The trustees have evolved an admirable system of a "travelling library," for circulation among country residents of the state.

It was a very pleasant evening. Every section of Victorian social and official life was represented, for in an Australian town if there is an evening party everyone goes to it, because there are not dozens of other things going on at the same time as in London. So that everyone goes to everything, and thus in the smaller societies of colonial towns a few days in a place suffice to make many acquaintances, and a visitor can never feel a stranger.

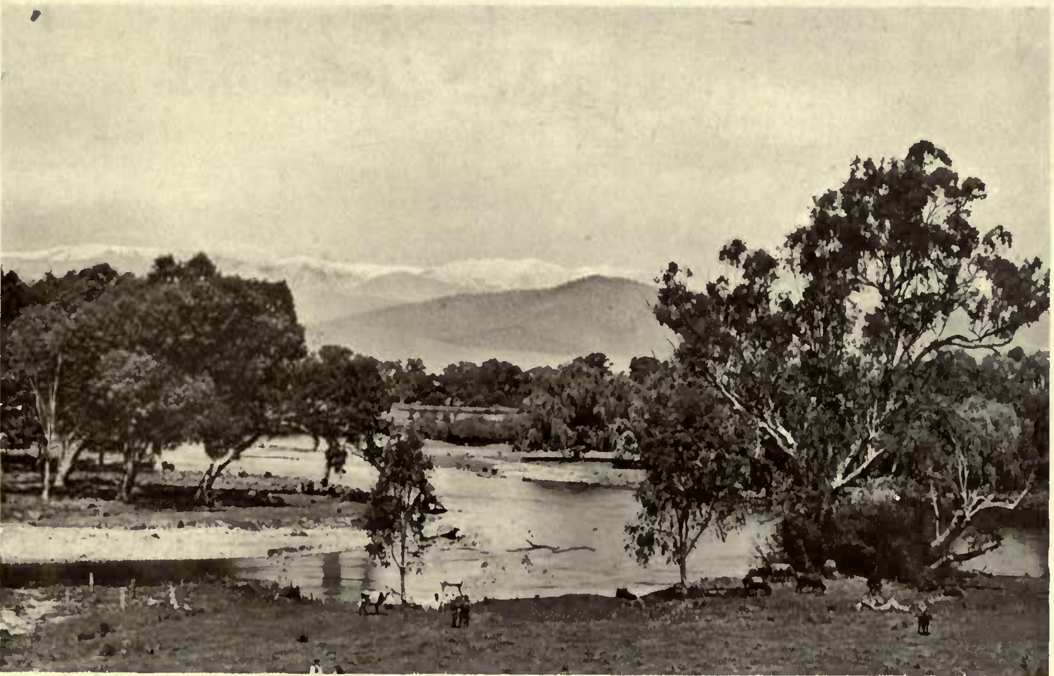
The authorities, however, always hopefully provide an amount of cloakroom accommodation, which is to the needs of the guests in the proportion of a sentry-box to an army. Having already experienced this idiosyncrasy at Adelaide, we prudently deposited our wraps behind a large stuffed kangaroo and asked him to keep an eye on them. He faithfully fulfilled his charge.

We lunched next day with one of the leading citizens of Melbourne, one of those active, public-spirited men that colonial life produces, whose patriotism has grown with the growth of the town he has done his part in building. It was interesting, because in the colonies everyone is doing something and is ready to talk about his business, whatever it is. One of the guests, for instance, had a thousand acres of dairy farm in the neighbourhood of Bacchus Marsh. He could grow seven or eight crops of lucerne a year, but it cost him 30s. an acre for irrigation. Our host had a fascinating hobby of keeping a small private menagerie. In a sloping paddock beyond the garden a number of kangaroos were nibbling the grass; they were quite tame, but their pace if they are startled is incredible; they don't appear to touch the ground, but seem to fly with their long hind-legs stretched out like a bird, skimming the ground with a curious effect of great speed.

This was the only occasion during our stay in Australia on which we saw a wombat. He is a thick-set, squat animal, about three feet long, and not unlike a large guinea-pig in build. He lives on grass and roots, and in his native state burrows a home for himself with his sharp claws. He is such an inveterate burrower that in captivity he can only be kept in an enclosure with

a concrete floor and corrugated iron sides without a door; in fact, his pen resembled those in which pigs are incarcerated for life at Las Palmas, except that it was quite clean. He seemed not unfriendly in a molluscous way; he lifted his flat head to take grass from our hands, and his odd bristly fur felt like the spines of a porcupine to the touch.

But the most engaging denizens of the garden were the little opossums. The opossum bears a rough sort of resemblance to a squirrel with a long prehensile tail, and, like squirrels, lives in trees. When we went to look at them only the little pink inside of an ear was showing through the open door of their hutch. Then one brown eye appeared, a little hand-like claw was cautiously advanced towards the biscuit held out to it, a bushy whisker emerged, and slowly the whole opossum came into the open. They are most charming little things, very gentle and well-mannered; they gingerly hold your hand in their tiny white claws while they delicately nibble at your biscuit, and if they inadvertently bite your finger by mistake they immediately draw back with an air of distressed apology. Little Australian animals have an exquisite urbanity that makes them the most endearing acquaintances.



VIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS, FROM THE MURRAY RIVER FLATS.

It was a bright afternoon of sunshine, and the Botanical Gardens to which we went on the way to an At Home were looking their best after an earlier rain. They are laid out on rising ground, with ornamental water, sloping lawns, and graceful groups of trees.

In the evening we dined very pleasantly with a university professor, when a fellow-guest at dinner described his experiences in shooting the rapids of an Australian river. He and the friend who went with him had to keep their food in watertight bags, as the canoes continually upset. The one thing, he said, was whatever happened never to let go of the canoe, or you would find yourself two hundred miles from anywhere, bereft of all means of existence. "Was it dangerous?" somebody asked. "You are never out of danger," was the reply. And it is this sense of the possibility of adventure that constitutes part of the charm of colonial life, where men come into contact and into conflict with a nature not yet all sleek and combed.

Our last day at Melbourne we spent in driving round the city and such of its environs as we had not already seen. We visited St. Kilda's, the watering-place of Melbourne. A low, grey, cloudy sky threw a pale light on the waters of the great inland sea, with its pretty opposite

shore. This is Melbourne's pleasure-place, with hotels along the front.

Returning through the older part of Melbourne we saw the old road along which men went out to the diggings, with some of its original galvanised iron buildings still standing. We passed by the cemetery, where the first settlers were buried, closed long ago. As we returned into the everyday busy streets of the great city we met the newly formed Australian contingent of troops marching out to their camping-ground. There can be few people so invertebrate that they can watch levies on the march without a responsive thrill, even in time of peace, and these men were going to fight not for their homes and families and country, but were relinquishing all for their distant kindred in a life-and-death struggle miles away. This great unpeopled country, where men are so urgently needed, was gladly sending of its best to "the Old Country"—"home," as they tenderly call it, with a depth of sentiment incomprehensible here, and incomprehensible to anyone who does not know and feel his own patriotism awake and flourish on alien soil.

Our last visit was to the Tourist Bureau, which in general management and organisation is incomparably the best in Australia. Here we were

given our choice of the admirable views of Victoria and small handbooks of local interest. That afternoon our visit concluded.

We left Melbourne feeling more Australian than the Australians. The afternoon sun was gilding the level plain as we sped across it, passing scattered villages, often little more than clusters of iron-roofed shanties, with a horse, its bridle hitched to a post, and children and dogs playing in the road. After the swift darkness had come, there was a clear night of stars lighting up the dim country, the great spreading empty plain with its scattered gum trees, while the lamps of the carriages sent out shafts of light, like searchlights, across brilliantly illuminated patches, momentarily visible in the darkness.

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PART IV

NEW SOUTH WALES

CHAPTER XIII

SYDNEY HARBOUR

WHEN we were sailing from Batavia in Java to Colombo there was a New Yorker on board, who was buying rubber in anticipation of the needs of belligerents, and who knew most of the places in the world where rubber was to be raised or bought. His views on Australia we have forgotten, and his denunciation of the Indies, as places where the white resident must deteriorate, do not matter here. What we do recall is the dislike he expressed, as an Eastern American, for the pretensions of the West, especially of California. "There's nothing they've got," he would say, "that they don't want to tell you about. Why, you take a Californian, and he'll stand there and blow out his chest, and talk to you about his climate and climate! There's Los Angeles. . . . I want to tell you right now, that Los Angeles is the one place on God's earth, where you can get a sunstroke and a frozen foot at the same time."

Other Americans, Californians, to whom we

have repeated this description, attempt to palliate it, but they admit its force; and the fact is that being a people with a sense of humour, they recognise the exaggeration as the recoil which we all experience when anything is over-praised to us. It is very hard for a young country not to praise its possessions, not out of conceit, but from a human desire to elicit praise from a superior critic. We "know you've got some great things," they say by inference to the visitor, "but you'll admit that this thing of ours is not so bad." Thus when the citizen of Ballarat points out to you the glories of his main street, he does not ask you to compare it with Piccadilly or the Champs Elysées, but he would like you to think that it is something for a mining community to have cut out of the Bush.

So now to Sydney Harbour. Long before we ever saw it we had heard of it. They think no end of Sydney Harbour, we had been told. They say it's better than the Bay of Naples. "If ever you meet an Australian, and tell him you're going to Australia," Phil May once said to the writer, "he'll be sure to say, 'Well, you look out for Sydney Harbour.' It's a fine place," added May reflectively; "but, you know, if you tell an Australian that the only thing you have to complain of in Australia is the toughness of its beef,

he'll say, 'Tough? Well, what of it? You have to have it tough to sole boots with it.'" With which cryptic observation he left the subject of Sydney Harbour, of which he was quite incapable of giving any further description.

We are in not much better case. But let us say at once that whatever one might expect of Sydney Harbour, whether having heard so much of its beauties, one came to it prepared to deny them, or whether merely eager to confirm one's expectations, Sydney Harbour would always be ready with its surprise. It reminds one of that Street in Tours to which Balzac paid so affectionate a tribute, the Street where there was always sunshine and shadow and a fountain playing, the Street that was like a coquette . . . in brief, the Street where he was born. For Sydney Harbour, too, is everchanging; the Pacific is at its gates; and it has a beauty which captures affection; in brief, it has charm. But it is quite unlike what one expects of it. Our first glimpse of it was from a heavy vehicle ferry, and when we rubbed the rain from the windows of our car, we looked through rain on a prospect that might have been Portsmouth, so little could we see. But if anyone should come to Sydney Harbour by sea, he might arrive at the right first impression. If you will lay your hand on the table with the fingers spread,

you will have some sort of a notion of the shape of this noble inlet. From the sea you would come into it at the wrist between Sydney Heads, which are jutting cliffs of sandstone, with the sea breaking at their base. Then far away inland, the fingers of the harbour stretch for miles, fingers very uneven in length and thickness and formation. On one of them stands Sydney and the suburb melodiously named Wooloomooloo, which was once a swamp, and is now as valuable as Brixton. On other fingers are springing up Dulwich's and Wimbledon's and Surbiton's; some fingers dig so far into the continent that their headwaters are lost among tree-clothed hills miles and miles away . . . and all this, town and suburb, and garden city and seaside and country village—all is Sydney Harbour. We saw it a bit at a time, as this or that excursion took us along its ramifications, now in a motor drive to Sydney Heads, or in a taxi through the park that runs to the edge of its waters. But it was most familiar to us, as to anyone who lives in Sydney, by its ferry-boats, which run to and from its many promontories and its growing suburbs, and find their terminus at the Charing Cross of the harbour—Circular Quay. At night with their lighted saloons and incessant movement, coming and going, the ferry-boats make Sydney Harbour

into a feast of lanterns. In the daytime no one could describe it and convey any impression of it; for it changes so, and has so many aspects:

The haze on the hills northward and westward.
The large and small steamers in motion. . . .
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl
of the wheels.
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset.
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight.
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the grey walls
of the houses by the quays.
On the neighbouring shore the fires from the foundry chim-
neys burning high in the night.

Or again:

I too, many and many a time crossed the harbour of old.
Watched the seagulls. . . .
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging in towards
the south.
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water.
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams.
Looked towards the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving.
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me.
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at
anchor. . . .

That was written by a poet of another harbour, but it catches better than any description I can give, the life, the humanity of Sydney Harbour.

It will be the same, perhaps not less beautiful, fifty years hence. But people who have lived there long, look at the encroaching villas of

Mosman's Bay, and all the suburbs on that side, and say rather sadly, "I can remember the time —ten years ago, twenty . . . when there wasn't a house there." And one cannot help an apprehension lest in years to come, the tree-clothed heights and headlands may not all be whity-brown with the houses of citizens. Doubtless on the side of the harbour opposite to Circular Quay another Sydney will spring up which will be to the old one what Brooklyn is to New York, and will have its own factories and its own Mayor. One can hope only that it will grow up maintaining some idea of public parks—which ought all to come down to the water, and fend off the encroachments of houses—and of town-planning. There is plenty of room now. Room will be dearer later on.

Sydney itself is an object-lesson. It is a fine town in parts. It has a fine park. Macquarie Street is fine; so is the enclosure of the University; and there are the Botanic Gardens, and the Domain. You cannot ask for better than that. At least I cannot, who am a Cockney, and found in Sydney a town which had grown up haphazard very much like London. Its best streets rather narrow and far from straight, just like London's; its Circular Quay bearing signs of reform that must have been very much needed;

its plebeian insertion of Wooloomooloo dropped in the middle of the town much as Clare Market and Drury Lane were, or are, left in between the Strand and Holborn. To a Londoner Sydney will always be a homelike place. Those who live there will seem to him like lifelong friends, and it will be his fault if they are any less.

The Glasgow Scot, it will be remembered, said that Glasgow was a gran' place to get out from; and New South Wales is very accessible from Sydney. During most of the year the inhabitants do not live very far from the city; for it is so much more easy to reach the spring woodlands, the summer and the sun than it is from London. Manly Beach and surf-bathing are just over the road; Broken Bay, where the simple life presents itself without affectation, is round the corner; Pitt Water and sounds and creeks and broads, where in September the wild swans come, are a cycle ride away. In the background hover the Blue Mountains; rather mysterious heights, because the light reflected from the glossy leaves of the trees which wrap these hills as closely as fur, gives always to them a bluish sheen. Even Melbourne admits the Blue Mountains, and says without grudging that nowhere is there anything quite like them. In the hot days of summer . . . it can be hot in Australia—once on

a scorching day at Lord's I remember that Jim Phillips, the umpire in many Test matches, responded to a remark on the heat: "Hot? Why, in Australia they'd call this 'a break in the heat-wave!'" . . . . in the hot days of summer people take bungalows in the Blue Mountains and come by morning train to town. It is worth it. In the winter, by way of contrast, the holiday-makers can go still farther up-country, and obtain ski-ing.

CHAPTER XIV

SYDNEY AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE approach to Sydney by rail lies through wooded hills with beautiful views of dark ranges in the distance. It had been raining overnight, and everything was glistening in the early morning sun that lighted up the red shoots of the gum trees. Along the line were small encampments of workmen, who have to live under canvas to be within reach of their employment on the railway.

We had been told that Sydney would be very hot, but our first impression was one of all-pervading moisture, for after the long spell of dusty, dry weather, the rain had caught us up at last; a fine driving rain that made everything sodden. Our host met us at the station, and took us to identify our luggage, which was lying in the mud on another platform. Our first view of Sydney was of tall houses crowded together in narrow streets, more like those of a European town; for the city has grown up anyhow, instead of being schemed on the rectangular,

spacious plan of the newer capitals. We caught passing glimpses of fine buildings and open spaces, "Hyde Park," and Macquarie Street, the Harley Street of Sydney, where all the doctors live, advertising their whereabouts with immense brass plates on the railings of their houses.

Descending this broad street, we were on the famous Sydney Harbour, the most beautiful in the world, Valparaiso its only rival. One always thinks of a harbour as a round place full of shipping, with crowded, dirty wharfs. Sydney Harbour is quite different from this; it is a series of creeks running up into the land, its different arms separated by wooded hills, whose trees are rapidly disappearing in a tide of villas. Wherever you are in Sydney, you are never far away from some fresh aspect of the harbour.

Our car ran on to a steam-ferry, already crowded with cars and carts, climbed the bank on the other side, and passing a terrace of houses, like an old-fashioned London suburb, drew up at a garden gate. We never saw anything prettier in Australia than that garden. A sloping tree-shaded lawn, bordered by grey, close-clipped salt bush, led down to an old house, chocolate-coloured, two-storied, gabled. On the right of the path was a large tree, still bare of leaves, but covered with long, scarlet blossoms. It was the

coral-tree (erythrina), common in the warm north-eastern latitudes of Australia. The house itself had an old-world charm, and a certain exquisite freshness that caused us some anxiety as to the effect of our very travel-stained luggage on its spotless interior; but the wise Australian hostess, whom long experience has acquainted with the treatment her guests' trunks will have received at the hands of railway officials, sets an uncarpeted room apart for their reception. Here the muddy, battered things are deposited, and their owner can gingerly approach them there, for it is not usual in Australian households for the maids to unpack visitors' luggage, and, generally speaking, one may say this is fortunate for the visitor.

The front of this charming old house was no less beautiful than the back. It had been built long ago by convict labour, and was heavily barred and shuttered against their possible depredations. The bedrooms looked out over the harbour, a beautiful view of never-ending kaleidoscopic fascination. Beneath the trees under the window large steamers came, and the busy traffic of smaller craft slipped soundlessly to and fro. It was a scene of continual colour, movement, and life, with its silent background of wooded hills.

Sydney, with the exception of two days of

heavenly blue skies, was unpropitious in its weather during our stay ; when it wasn't raining, which it did intermittently with great violence, it was blowing up clouds of dust, in preparation for the next shower, and no amount of rain seemed really effective in laying its stinging, swirling clouds. However, we set off after lunch to visit the University, and walked down a steep lane to the little pier where the steamers call for the Circular Quay, whence the different boats run to one and another point in the harbour. It is a charming little journey from Kirribilli Point, by which musical native name, with its characteristic reduplications of the vowel sounds, our temporary home was called ; Old Admiralty House lies picturesquely among its high gardens, and on the opposite shore, on a green mound with two sentinel trees stands the little fortress-like building where the first governors of the colony lived.

A tram from the Circular Quay runs up the principal street of Sydney, past the Town Hall and the Cathedral to the University grounds. We made a dash through the pouring rain to the University buildings, which stand on high ground, overlooking the town. The University was founded in 1850, though its scope has since been greatly enlarged. It comprises faculties of arts,

law, medicine, and science. As at Melbourne, denominational colleges, of which the principal ones are Church of England and Presbyterian, have been established and incorporated with it. A woman's college, undenominational, has also been built within the University grounds, as well as a hospital, where medical students and nurses are trained. The fees for tuition are fifteen guineas a year in the Faculty of Arts, and twenty-seven guineas a year in the professorial schools; but though these fees are hardly more than nominal, pupils from the Government High Schools or Registered Schools, can be awarded exhibitions on the result of the Leaving Certificate Examination of the Department of Public Instruction, which give the privilege of free education during the University course. These exhibitions are, however, limited in number.

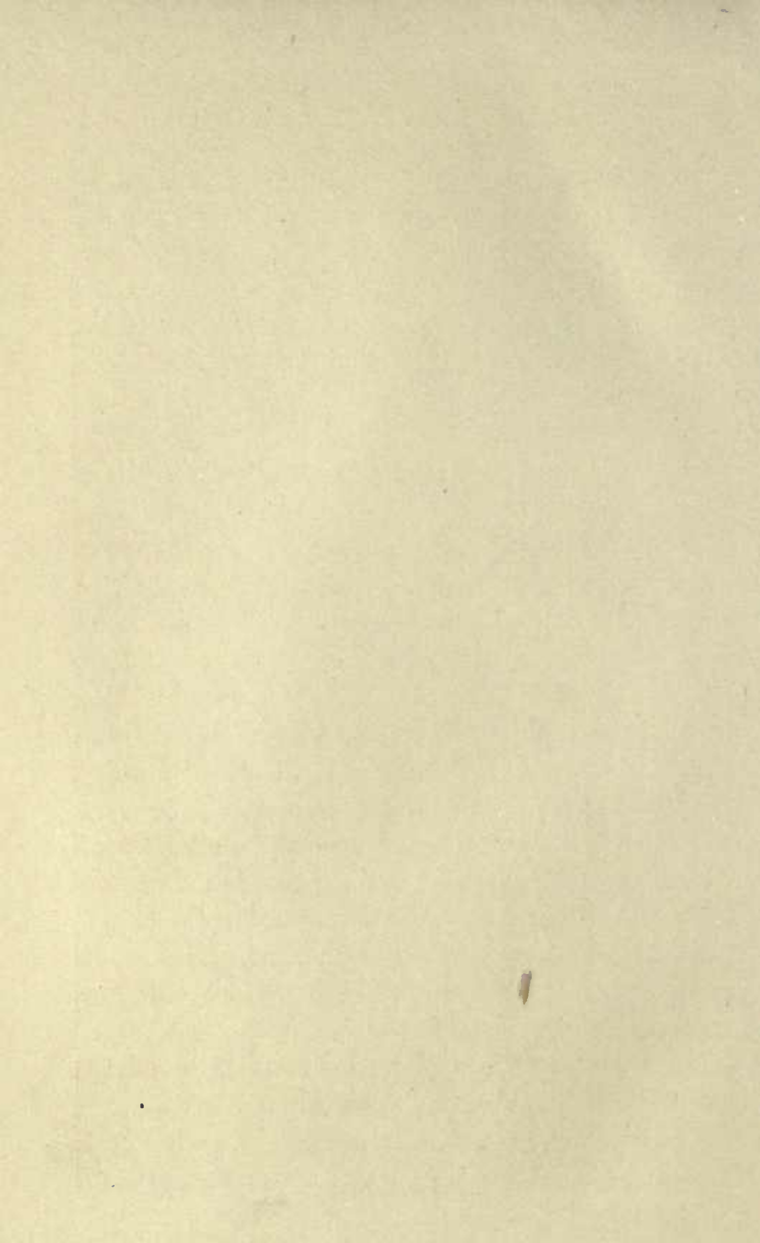
The handsome University main building will eventually form the front of a proposed quadrangle. There is a large hall for examinations and public meetings, and lecture-rooms for general subjects; but the Science and Medical Schools are separately housed. The general educational system of New South Wales, primary and secondary, is established on much the same lines as that already described in Western Australia. Only those children are

admitted to the secondary schools who have obtained a qualifying certificate. Every precaution has been taken to render the technical education of the colony as efficient as possible. Conferences, attended by both employers and workpeople, discussed and drew up a course of instruction. Trades schools were established that should lead up to the technical colleges, and by a wise provision, without which the whole fabric of technical education is rendered nugatory, an "entrance qualification" for the trades schools was made compulsory. In some trades, by arrangement with the employers, apprentices attend a trades school during working hours. Every precaution is taken that the children in scattered, outlying districts shall not elude the benefits the state provides. Wherever central schools are possible, children are taken to them free by coach, or in the coastal districts by launch. "Bush" children have "Provisional" or "Half-time" schools,* provided for them. "Caravan" schools visit scattered families. "Flying Camp" schools accompany railway construction.

It is claimed that New South Wales exhibits the most perfect existing system of centralised educational administration. All state education

* In the "Half-time" school the teacher divides his time between two centres.

CIRCULAR QUAY, SYDNEY.



is controlled by the Public Instruction Department, and the whole cost is paid out of consolidated revenue. There is no educational tax or local rate.

It seemed to us, as we assimilated all these facts, that first day in Sydney, that our colonies were doing things while we talk about them ; but it must be remembered that they have to form, while we have to reform, and the first is much the easier task.

We got back to Kirribilli Point, eluding the heavy showers as far as possible, but Sydney looked as miserable as all towns on a thoroughly wet day, producing a confused impression of chilly damp, streaming shop windows, jostling umbrellas, and liquid mud. The next day was better, fortunately, as the Governor of New South Wales was giving a garden party.

Government House, itself an unimportant structure, is charmingly placed on a point of the harbour, with gardens sloping down to the water. Towards evening the sun shone out, and gave us the first impression of the real Sydney, and our host seized the opportunity to show us something of the place as it ought to look. We motored to South Head along a road, where verandahed and balconied houses clustered in gardens on the hills above the harbour, clinging, as it were, to the

rocks, which crop out everywhere among the short grass, smoothed and weathered by time. Graceful grey pepper trees grow in many of the gardens, drooping over the fences. The road, which ran up and down hill, ended abruptly in a boulder. We got out, and walked along to the edge of the South Head, the southern extremity of the entrance to the harbour, where the purple Pacific booms in the cavities of the high sandstone cliffs. This view from the South Head is one of the most beautiful in Australia. The blue waters of the harbour are guarded by sentinel cliffs, and misty range on range of low hills stretch away inland.

Here we saw growing for the first time the lantana, a hardy shrub, not unlike the "meal tree" of our hedges at home, but with pink and yellow flowers. It is a very decorative thing, but is regarded in Australia, and especially in Queensland, as a noxious weed.

We returned home by way of the Domain, or public park, adjoining the Botanical Gardens, along a road lined by the stately Morton Bay Pine.

One day in Sydney was devoted to an excursion by boat round the harbour. It is a curious fact that Captain Cook, in his careful survey of the east coast of Australia,

SOUTH COAST, NEW SOUTH WALES.

should have missed Sydney Harbour. When exploring the east coast of Australia in the "Endeavour," a ship of 368 tons, he spent some time in Botany Bay in the spring of 1770, where he buried one of his men, took in wood and water, and made some ineffectual attempts at friendly negotiation with the natives. He gave the bay the name by which it was afterwards known because of the "great quantity of plants, that Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander collected in this place." He then sailed away to the North, passing Sydney Harbour at two or three miles' distance; merely noting that "there was there a good bay or harbour, in which there appeared to be good anchorage," which he called Port Jackson. Here, years later, after the revolt of the American colonies; when the English Government was faced with the difficulty of disposing of the convicts, who had been formerly shipped to America; a scheme was set on foot, partly through the initiation of Lord Sydney, for shipping them to Botany Bay, and founding a colony there. An expedition was sent out under Captain Philip, the first governor of the colony. The fleet sailed in May, seventeen years after Captain Cook's exploration of the coast of New South Wales, as he had named it, and took thirty-six weeks to reach Botany Bay by way of the Cape and Brazil;

but on his arrival Governor Philip came to the conclusion that Botany Bay was not suitable for a settlement, and, coasting north, entered the opening between the north and south heads of Port Jackson, and discovered the magnificent harbour inside.

He selected as a landing-place a bay four miles from the opening of the harbour, where there was a good spring of fresh water, and excellent anchorage for many of the largest ships of that day. He therefore made this his landing-place, and called it Sydney Cove, after the then Secretary of State for the Colonies. On January 26th, 1788, the date now commemorated as the anniversary day of the Foundation of the Colony, the rest of Captain Philip's fleet sailed round from Botany Bay, and anchored in Sydney Cove, near what is now known as the Circular Quay, though at that time the cove ran a good deal farther inland. It was Governor Philip who planned the principal streets of the new township of Sydney with a width of 200 feet, which was instead unfortunately, reduced to sixty feet by his successors, producing a narrow, crowded effect, instead of the generous sense of space characteristic of cities in the new world.

The quay was a process of slow development. As late as 1803 Governor King issued a general

order which stated that "The framing, lengthening, and planking of the wharf on the eastern side is complete, and the inhabitants are expected to cart material to fill it up and to make a way to it." An admirably simple method of accomplishing public works; equally salutary with the measures then in vogue for dealing with loafers: "All persons loitering about the wharves will be put to hard labour for the rest of the day." The wharves grew up, like the city, in gradual response to the needs of the increasing population.

But in 1900 an outbreak of plague produced stringent reforms. In order to prevent its recurrence the Government took over the whole of the wharves, regardless of cost, placing the business of their reconstruction in the hands of a Harbour Trust, who have swept away old wharves, provided new ones, and had the foreshores made rat-proof.

Sydney Harbour baffles description; pages would give no idea of its varied charm and beauty. It is difficult even to realise that its shores occupy a length of 188 miles, made up of innumerable bays and creeks running up among its wooded hills. Some of these, in the neighbourhood of the main centres of traffic, are fringed with busy wharves and lined with shipping.

On the opposite side from them the hills are thickly dotted with villas, but in the more remote arms of the harbour the bush remains still untouched and primeval, hiding quiet sandy beaches in its recesses.

Roughly speaking, one may say the harbour divides itself into two main sections; that on the northern side of the entrance called Middle Harbour, and the more extensive southern portion which, with all its many ramifications, runs west and ends in the Parramatta River. It is on the southern shores of this side of the harbour that the commercial life of Sydney is centred, the great and busy city with all its thronging wharves. On the northern shores are the picturesque houses of the well-to-do residents; for Sydney is also a pleasure city, and the land-locked waters of the upper reaches of the harbour are delightful for sailing, rowing, fishing, and bathing, while in the immediate neighbourhood are the popular surf-bathing beaches of Manly and Coogee.

We had already visited some of the northern shores of the harbour, but we had not penetrated to the west. The day was fine, the weather propitious. Our steamer started from Fort Macquarie, and we sailed first to the outer harbour, gaining varied impressions of the serrated, undulating shores; past the old Federal

Government House, and the beautiful Botanic Gardens, which adjoin the public park, known as the Domain, and run down to the shore; past Macquarie Point and Wooloomooloo; past Rush-cutter's Bay, and past the charming Rose Bay, to the steep escarpment of the North and South Heads, where the Pacific comes rolling up its breakers. On the return journey we went as far as Cockatoo Island in the Parramatta River, one of the most westerly of the many picturesque islands scattered within the harbour. Here are the Government docks, originally constructed by convicts; for Cockatoo Island was formerly a penal settlement. In the last year or two the docks have been very much extended, and shipbuilding is now carried on on a large scale.

At the colliery of Balmain coal-mining is carried on at a great depth below the harbour. It was growing late when we returned to our starting-point, but the evening light was loveliest of all on Kirribilli Point above which a crescent moon was hanging.

CHAPTER XV

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS AND A BUSH PICNIC

WE had heard much of the famous Blue Mountains during our progress from West Australia to New South Wales and were anxious to visit them. In the early days they formed an impenetrable barrier between Sydney and the rich country beyond. Many vain and unsuccessful attempts were made to cross these labyrinthine ranges. Each successive line of heights is so like another, its eucalyptus-covered shoulders with the deep, blind gorges between, for long baffled and defied all attempts at exploration. The first of these efforts was undertaken as early as 1793–4 by three naval officers; but it was not till 1813, in the time of Governor Macquarie, that some settlers interested in stock-breeding won their way through. For a time, like all their predecessors, they got entangled in the bewildering network of gorges that make travelling here so difficult, but at last, chancing

upon a dividing spur that ran westward, they pursued its ridge till, arriving at the summit, they saw below them a fairly open valley with a running stream and good pasture.

Governor Macquarie at once followed up the important discovery by sending out another expedition, which led to the discovery of a river flowing westward, the "Macquarie River," and subsequently opened up the country beyond. A road was constructed across the mountain in 1815. Early inland exploration in Australia forms an interesting and often tragic chapter in the history of the continent. Its story has been told in detail in Favenc's "Australian Exploration."

We got up very early in the morning. How delightful it was to throw open the shutters on to the green trees and lawns of the garden with the busy blue waters of the harbour below, the big ships lading and unlading their cargo on to tenders, the little local steamers bustling to and fro, looking as if there was not room for them all. Breakfast, including a very agreeable kind of marmalade jelly, made of sweet oranges, was brought to us at seven o'clock, and we started shortly afterwards. It was a still morning with a threat of rain, and heavy, drifting clouds. The water round the little wooden landing-stage of

Kirribilli Point is so clear that small shoals of fish can be seen distinctly swimming about the piles, and we watched for some time a little speckled thing that looked like a mouse in shape.

We passed out of the suburbs of Sydney, through the outlying red wooden houses, with corrugated iron roofs, surrounded by greenery and standing in cleared spaces. Then came green fields, sometimes with the dead trees or their stumps still remaining. We noticed numerous orange trees before we left the populated district. The hour was still very early; we slept peacefully for the greater part of the journey. Unless the faculty of sleeping in a train is cultivated, there is no enjoyment for the Australian traveller, for he must always journey scores of miles to get anywhere, and the country, generally speaking, varies little in character. On this occasion we awoke to find ourselves in a sort of Swiss scenery, with range on range of blue hills. This endless vista of gum-covered hill after gum-covered hill made it easy to see why for years the Blue Mountains were the despair of pioneers, who, surmounting one range, found another in front of them exactly the same. The view was only varied by red escarpments in places. The stopping-places, as we slowly mounted higher, were entirely conventional. We might have been

NATIONAL PASS, BLUE MOUNTAINS.

looking out on a suburb of London—Sydenham, for instance, as far as the aspect of the neat suburban houses was concerned. The illusion was deepened by the appearance of "Springfield Ladies' College," very trim and sedate among its neighbours, only the gardens bore camellia bushes for roses.

Leura, on the other hand, gives the illusion of a Swiss village, with its background of high dark hills, large flourishing hotels, and rows of fir trees. Our destination was Katoomba. These hill settlements are on the way to becoming thriving towns. A large and excellent hotel already dominated the one main street of shops. The Blue Mountains are a popular week-end, or holiday resort for Sydney, whose residents can easily attain the pure mountain air, after the steamy heat which is said to be the normal condition of the city in summer. Katoomba could only boast of one modest street, but it supported two chemists' shops, and a furnishing company, conducted by a man of unsurpassed initiative and a sense of the dramatic. One would not have supposed that there was scope for such a faculty in the furnishing trade. But in his shop window was represented not mere specimens of his wares, not merely pillow-slips and dining-tables to tempt the hardy pioneer from the backwoods, but that hardy

pioneer himself. The whole shop front had been converted into a scene representing a sumptuously furnished hotel bedroom, in which a young man, a wax figure, had retired for the night. His clothes were thrown carelessly about the room, his boots and socks kicked off by the bedside, his gun leant in one corner, the contents of his small tin trunk were neatly arranged on the dressing-table. A small table, on which were a pack of cards and an empty champagne bottle, bore testimony to his gay bachelor habits, but before he went to bed his last thought had been otherwise, for open upon the writing-table was a letter written in a large bold hand to his "Dearest Henriette," lamenting his loneliness, and asking when the happy day would come on which they should set up house together. The whole scene was so realistic that the youth of Katoomba could not linger long unmoved in contemplation of it.

We lunched at the large hotel of the little settlement, its verandah overlooking a fine vista of misty hills that must have been superb on a sunny day, but the rain clouds hung heavily over them, diffusing an exquisitely soft light under the low grey sky. After lunch we started on the top of a coach drawn by five horses to see some of the falls for which the neighbourhood is famous. It took skilled driving over the rough tracks that

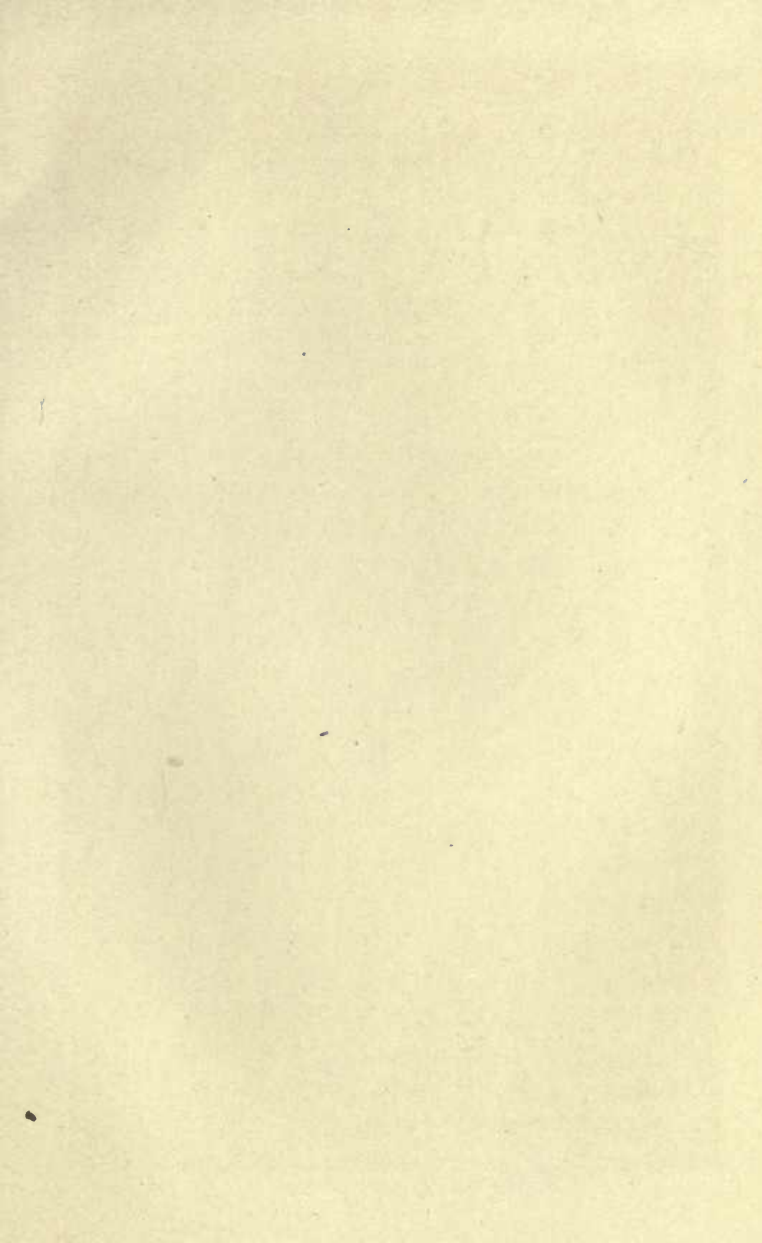
did duty for roads. We bumped up and down steep ascents and descents, swung round impossible corners with glimpses between the trees of range on range of misty blue mountains stretching away illimitable, mysterious, aloof, with no sign of life on their soft gum-clad slopes.

Occasionally the coach stopped, and we got down, while the guide who accompanied us pointed out some famous views or some especially beautiful fir-clad gully, with a little trickle of water falling from the rocks and tinkling away unseen. There seemed to be no birds or animals. The guide said that the foxes were killing off the small native animals in these gorges, and that of the koala bears, which were once numerous, there were very few left. A price is given for foxes' skins in the hope of exterminating them. We were told in Melbourne that they fetched 10s. On one of these occasions we heard a curious noise, something like the gobbling of a turkey, made by a large brown bird, which the guide affirmed to be a lyre bird.

The Katoomba Falls, which we visited last, were on a much more imposing scale. The water comes down from a great height in a succession of falls. As a matter of fact an extra supply of water was turned on for the benefit of ourselves and some other visitors, so that altogether our

impression of Katoomba was that of a very sophisticated spot. The excellent hotel and the soft sweet air, even in winter, though it is 3000 feet above sea level, would certainly make it an ideal place for rest, with an endless variety of delightful walks, which would reveal in their season all kinds of plants, animals, and insects, as well as the magnificent mountain views. It was dark when we started on the return journey, which seemed so interminable that we marvelled at the hardihood of the people who actually live at such places as Katoomba and go into Sydney for business, for such we were told there are. The lights of Sydney and a very belated dinner were more than welcome.

It is difficult in a new country to think in large enough terms—to realise, for instance, that New South Wales is more than two and a half times as large as the whole British Isles. In this vast expanse of country the climate varies greatly, from that of Mount Kosciusko in the south, where ski-ing and other Alpine sports are carried on in the winter, to the warm and humid districts of the north. There is thus a correspondingly great variety of products; from wheat, barley, and maize to sugar-canes and tobacco, cotton, and olives; from strawberries to that much over-rated tropical fruit, the mango.



SHEARING TIME, BURRAWONG STATION, NEW SOUTH WALES.

The state of New South Wales may be roughly divided, geographically, into three areas. A coastal district; plateaux or tablelands, of which the Blue Mountains form part; and the western or inland plains. Agricultural and pastoral production varies according to the character of these different areas.

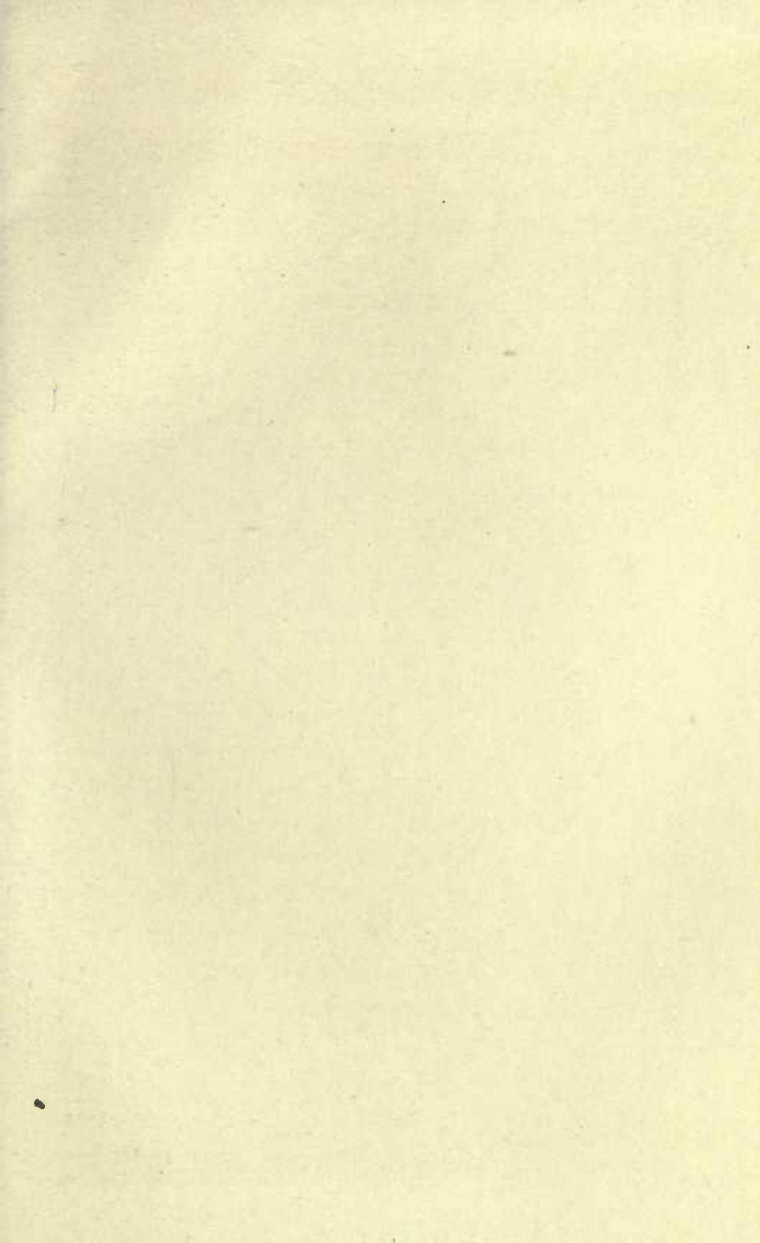
Dairying is making rapid progress in the coastal districts of the north; the tablelands afford admirable conditions for mixed farming, in which the raising of sheep and cattle is combined with the growth of cereals; the western slopes are the centre of the wheat industry; while the vast area of level grass land in the far west give pasturage to 40,000,000 merino sheep.

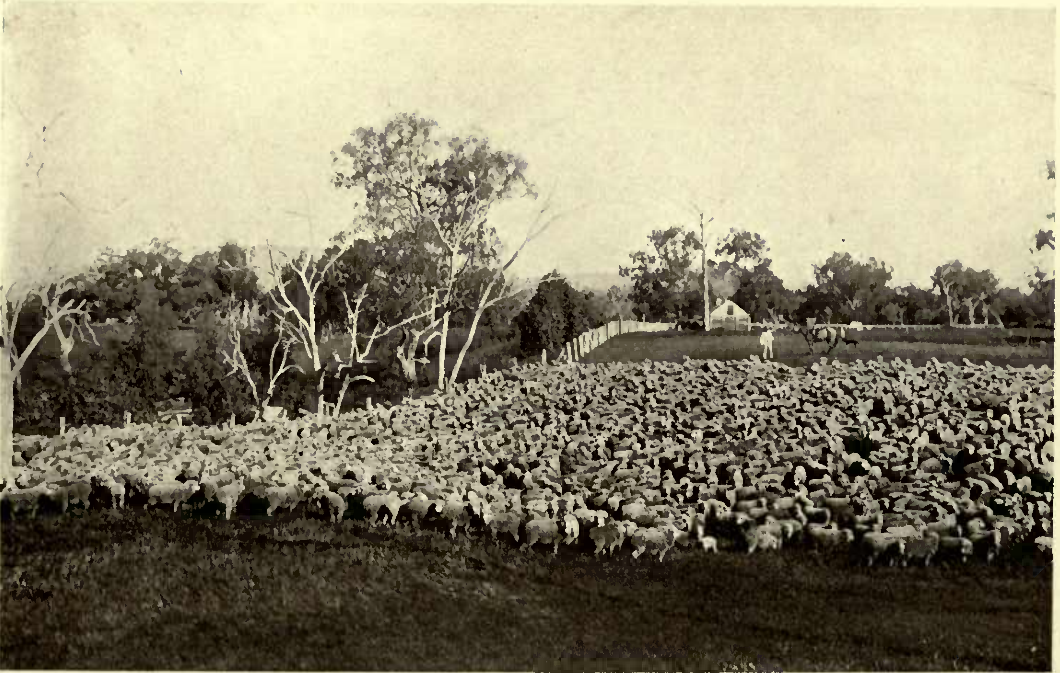
For the chief contributing factor to the pastoral wealth of Australia has been wool. By far the greater part is exported, for though local woollen mills have been started they do not absorb much more than 1¼% of the whole clip. It was the introduction of the merino sheep from South Africa, through the agency of a Captain MacArthur in 1797, that laid the foundation of the Australian wool trade, for the merino unites the faculty of producing the finest wool with the capacity of seeking its food over the most extended areas, and of resisting drought.

New South Wales is now the most important wool producing state in Australia, and exported in 1912 44·4% of the total export of wool from the continent. The Commonwealth Returns for 1911 show that Australia exported 44% of the total value of all wool imported into the United Kingdom alone, in round numbers more than fourteen million pounds' worth, as compared with seven millions from New Zealand, and two from Cape Colony.

By far the most important product after wool is wheat. In 1911–12 a little over 65% of the whole area under cultivation was devoted to wheat. At present less than 2% of the land in the state is under cultivation, though over 92% is occupied. "In the past New South Wales has filled a most important place as the premier wool-producing eountry in the world. But during later years the production of wheat and other cereals has been steadily increasing. . . . The land is the great source of wealth, and we cannot continue to let the great part of such wealth lie idle. . . . Australia, and more particularly New South Wales, may confidently accept "mixed farming" as the solution of the land problem."

The days of enormous runs, at all events on land suitable for agriculture, are numbered . . . the big run, having served its turn, is fated to





"A FLOCK OF SHEEP," KINROSS STATION, NEW SOUTH WALES.

undergo subdivision and closer settlement.* Under the Closer Settlement Act large areas of good land have been repurchased by the Government and disposed of at from 25s. to £5 an acre. The terms are very easy; a small deposit has to be made, and the remainder is paid off over a term of years. Many large private estates are being periodically cut up, and under the Closer Settlement Promotion Act three or more persons having agreed with the owners of land as to price and area, may apply to the Crown to purchase the lands.† The system of "Shares Farming" is being worked with great success in New South Wales at present. The landowner supplies the land, the tenant the labour, the produce of the combination is equally divided. By this means the farm labourer without capital soon acquires land of his own.‡

Among the many charms of Sydney and its neighbourhood are the flat sandy beaches that have made surf bathing popular. Our host had planned a delightful expedition by motor and

* See "Sheep and Wool for the Farmer," Part I., J. Wrenford Matthews. Published by the Department of Agriculture, N.S. Wales.

† For details of this system see "Wheat in New South Wales," by G. L. Sutton, Tourist Bureau, Sydney.

‡ "Farming on the Shares System," Government Tourist Bureau, Sydney.

motor-launch that was to culminate in a real Australian picnic in the bush with "billy" tea and damper, showing us on the way Manly Beach. The morning was drizzling and heavy, but Australian weather at its worst always has lucid intervals, and soon after our early start the rain had cleared off. Our way led through the extensive suburbs of Mosman, past many arms of the harbour, like lovely inland lakes with wooded banks, down to a narrow point called the Spit, from which a ferry crosses to the eastern side. Here we met many other motor-cars, all converging on the same point, and after crossing on the ferry and climbing a steep hill, we had left Sydney and its harbour behind, and presently began to have glimpses of the Pacific. The drive was one of endless charm and novelty: sometimes we passed what looked like a rushy inland lake, sometimes we were close to the shore. Several miles of the coast land here have been bequeathed to the Salvation Army, which has erected various buildings on this beautiful site. At one point a sandy bar separated a reach of still water from the great sunlit breakers beyond, and within it hundreds of black swans were swimming.

There were numerous week-end cottages among the gum trees. The road ended under a steep hill, its hedges covered with a sweet-scented

yellow flower. We had reached our destination of Pittwater, an arm of Broken Bay, so named by Captain Cook. It looks like a great lake, the low hilly shores covered with trees down to the water's edge. Our motor-boat was waiting at the end of a little jetty. The tide was low, and in the mud alongside were myriads of little crabs that disappeared with astonishing rapidity, scuttling into their holes. It was a pretty little voyage across this smooth arm of the sea, in which big yellowish-green jelly-fish floated beside us. At the landing on the opposite side of the creek the shore was fringed with small oysters.

In the bush spring flowers were already beginning to appear. Ferns and cotton palms grew among the gums, a yellow clematis was coming into flower, and the lovely pink starlike Queensland rose, that is not really a rose, but a kind of boronia. We lunched at one of the picnic places provided by the forethought of a paternal government, with a place to boil the billy all ready, and a wooden shelter with rough benches and table. There is always plenty of dry wood in Australia; a soft-water tank was part of the equipment, and the billy was soon boiling; so we had our billy tea and damper, a kind of unleavened bread that is very agreeable, and it was great fun, though the pioneer effect of it was rather

diminished by such accessories as hock and salmon sandwiches. Then we gathered a bunch of the lovely unfamiliar flowers and started on our return journey, which was varied by our running along Manly Beach, crowded with Sunday pleasure-seekers even in these early spring days.

Sydney is so split up and scattered over its hills that it takes some time for a stranger to realise its extent. All these Australian towns are so extraordinarily well-to-do; there is never anything like our working-class suburbs. "Where do the poor people live?" we used to ask. The obvious answer being that there are *no* poor.

For us Sydney will always mean Kirribilli Point, and the old house, whose owner called it by the pretty native name of Wyreepi—"Come and stay"—a name eloquent of the unfailing kindness and hospitality within its portals—an old house shuttered and barred against the depredations of the early lawless convict settlers who had helped to build it. The name evokes a mental picture of its red gables and chocolate-coloured walls, with the gravel paths to match; its hedge of grey, closely clipped salt bush, its sloping lawns and tall trees, its beds of sweet peas and stocks, sweetest of spring flowers, the coral-tree its bare boughs hanging with scarlet flowers; and in front the grass sloping to the

SURF BATHING, MANLY, NEAR SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

water's edge, and the endless panorama of the harbour.

* * * * *

Those who have unlimited time at their disposal can choose between taking ship at Sydney and coasting up to Brisbane in preference to the very long and exhausting railway journey of about thirty hours; though by so doing they would miss the magnificent scenery of the Hawkesbury River, and the smiling suburban country-side that the train passes through after leaving Sydney, with the red iron-roofed houses scattered among the gum trees. The Hawkesbury River runs into the northern extremity of Broken Bay, bordered here by a national reserve of great beauty called Kuring-gai-Chase. Formerly trains from Sydney were met on the shores of the river by a steamer, which took passengers across to the other side to continue their journey; a delightful experience on a fine day, for every traveller on its shores must long to make a closer acquaintance with this noble and mighty river. Now, however, it is spanned by a bridge, which crosses to Long Island, where it resembles an Italian lake. Along the shore the water showed through a fringe of coral-trees. Farther north the country grew more tropical;

we noticed a tiny house flanked on either side by two tall brugmancias in flower. And the undergrowth of the bush became more varied. We saw for the first time a curious kind of white bulrush, growing like the " black boys " of Western Australia. They looked just like very tall church candles, their black spikes forming the wick. The bush is always the same, that is, it is always a forest of gums; but it has nevertheless an individual character from the undergrowth in the different states and latitudes.

We stopped for some time at Newcastle, an inferno of smoking chimneys and coal-dust. The coal deposits of New South Wales are its most important source of mineral wealth, and her coalfields are greater in area, and produce a better quality of coal than those of any other state; it is hoped for that reason that New South Wales may become the principal centre of manufacture in the continent. Coal was first discovered in 1797 in the coalfield south of Sydney, and soon after coal was found in the cliffs at Newcastle, which has become an important centre of export.

After leaving Newcastle the line turns westward from the coast and crosses the fertile Hunter River valley, where the soil is so rich that it yields as many as eight crops in one year,

averaging between three and four tons to the acre. We stopped for dinner at what we supposed to be in the dark a small wayside station called Singleton. It is actually a town of considerable importance, with a population of 10,000, and the neighbourhood is famous for its breed of horses. We dined in the characteristic wooden, iron-roofed hall. An immense advertisement of the local hairdresser at one end inquired, "Is your hair ringbarked?" A selection of the population, boys in front and men behind, a serious, rough-looking group, watched us at our meal with silent and rapt attention from the open doorway.

Soon after passing Singleton the line ascends steeply, crosses the Liverpool Range and runs through the Liverpool Plains, where some of the best wheat is grown. We awoke next morning to find ourselves passing through forest, and changed trains at Wallangarra, the border station where the gauge changes from four feet eight and a half inches to three feet six, so that all passengers and luggage must be transferred.

PART V

QUEENSLAND

CHAPTER XVI

BANANA-LAND

Oh Land of Ours, hear the song we make for you—
Land of yellow wattle bloom, land of smiling Spring—
Hearken to the after words, land of pleasant memories.
Shea-oaks of the shady creeks, hear the song we sing.

THOSE lines were written by an Australian in exile, for he was with the Australian contingent in the war in South Africa. He is dead now, and he did not long survive the brave soldiers whose epitaph he wrote beginning with those words, which seem, to one who has known Australia only a little, to sum up in a wonderful way the clinging memories of the land. He spoke too of the "blue skies clear beyond the mountain-tops," and "the dear dun plains where we were bred," and there are no two sentences which more simply or clearly bring back Australia to the mind. But it is the Australia of the west and the south. When the Hawkesbury River is crossed eastwards, and the flats where the first Cornstalks were raised have been left behind, a new country comes into vision. It is tropic

Queensland, whose inhabitants are called Banana-landers, because the banana finds the climate very suitable to its growth.*

Naturally the change is not immediately apparent in the long, long journey by rail. The enchanting cool stretches of the Hawkesbury give place to the ascending grades of the hills; then there are interminable stretches of the dun plains, broken by lengths almost as long of gaunt forest, sometimes dead wood. Then the plateau of fine pasture of the Darling Downs, and the descent warmer and moister and greener as you go into the land of the banana and the pine. It is also, if you strike far enough north, the land of the prickly pear.

Railway journeying is not a bad way of seeing a country if you have no better. One can gain an impression of China such as nothing can obliterate by taking the North China Railway up to Harbin; and people have written books of impressions of Java on the strength of the five days' journey which can be made from the port

* In reference to the vast amount of sand in West Australia, the West Australians are called "Sand-gropers." Life was hard in early South Australia, and hence the South Australians remain "Crow-eaters": Victorians, proud of their giant gum trees in Gippsland, are called "Gum-suckers," and only the New South Wales people are genuine "Cornstalks."

of Sourabaya, through crumbling Djokjokarta and the wondrous Javanese highlands to Batavia. So something of the nature of Queensland can be arrived at by that long night and half-a-day journey by rail, though if we were asked what was the chief impression which, at this distance of time, is left on our minds, we should answer that it was one of wood and pasture lying waiting for men and money—vast resources which need the spade and the axe and the drill—and more railway.

Side by side would be quite another impression, one quite without significance. It was that of the little township, one of many, where we stopped for supper—a meal engulfed in all possible haste, and yet in the midst of it there suddenly appeared on the platform of the hall, which on ordinary occasions is probably used as a cinema theatre, the Mayor. We were, as we should again explain, members of a large travelling party, and the opportunity was one which the Mayor could not resist. He bade us welcome to —— (the name is forgotten), and added what delight it was to see among us so many happy faces. . . . Then having had our meal cut short by the oration, we hastened back to the waiting special.

Queensland is full of townships like that—townships which are springing into towns. Some-

times they seem to consist of a few boards knocked together with telegraph wire; at a later stage they have added a handsome Town Hall, a Catholic cathedral in red brick, a humbler Church of England one . . . but most of them retain the suburb of wooden-frame houses. They do not spring out of the bush in the same way that the towns of Western Australia do; perhaps because the clearings have been made larger. But everywhere you seem to see right back to the beginnings of the place, when a few people settled there and lived there; and gradually added this and that to it, till Townsville, or Maryborough, became to them the finest place in the world—because they called it home. Even Brisbane, with its broad bank-building-fronted Queen Street, retains something of the same aspect.

But Queensland is not its towns. Queensland, if you go but the smallest distance away from them, is the unconquered wild; the land where the blacks still signal with fires; where the forests smoulder and blaze for days in the burning sun; a land where it is possible still to be an explorer. Only a few days ago we were speaking to a professor in a laboratory in London, who lived ten years in Australia, and mentioned Queensland. His face lit up in a reminiscent gleam. "I once

went for a holiday on the Queensland coast," said he, "and we had rare sport. We used to go shark-spearing. It can only be done on a few nights in the year. The season is when the sharks come in to the coast; and it must be moonlight . . . and you race along the beach with nothing on, and you can see the sharks in the under curve of the big rollers as they break on the beach. And if you are quick and have the knack you can stab at them from underneath, and they can't get you. I got two or three, though I was only a learner . . . the finest sport . . ." His voice trailed away into silence. Our friend the distinguished physiologist had gone from dusty London to a place in a tropic land eleven thousand miles away.

That is Queensland as it seemed to us: a place in which the towns were still additions rather than a part of a land where enchantment and adventure still linger. There is an island on the coast which is quite near a thriving town of meat-packing warehouses, streets full of sun and dust and flies, and it is called Magnetic Island. You can reach the island by a steam launch, and the people of the town often make the trip, and when they get there presumably they have lunch at the boarding-house hotel. It is a wooden building with washing hanging out in the backyard

and a dissipated emu stalking among the fowls. A melancholy bird which seems to have come unstuffed. So there is nothing romantic at the outset of a journey to Magnetic Island.

But wait. Twenty paces away from the hotel is a stony path, and the trees have closed in behind you. A hundred yards, and if you strayed away from the path the way would be lost. Dense trees, rock cropping out at times, and no way out. A strange bird calls somewhere in the distance, but it is otherwise very still and stifling. There is a tree covered with yellow flowers, but it has a poisonous look; and if you venture to pluck it a regiment of stinging ants sallies out at you. So you drop it and go on. And here is a tree covered with butterflies, thousands upon thousands of them. And now you come to a mangrove swamp, and if you look down at the roots of the mangroves you will find the rare fish that live half in and half out of the water, and can hop about in the mud. So suddenly you realise that this is an island such as all the adventurers and pirates and wrecked sailors have been cast upon in the romances. Here they would have sought long for water, and perhaps have sought in vain. Here they would have had painful experiences with poisonous berries, and would for many days have had to live on shell-

fish. Perhaps one day they would have seen ascending smoke behind that rocky ridge, and realised that hostile natives were waiting to fall on them. Long, long they would have waited for help and rescue, and perhaps have left only their whitening bones to tell other mariners in other years that rescue came too late. . . .

If you would add verisimilitude to these fancies you can find it, for on a secluded beach of Magnetic Island lies the skeleton of a ship that was wrecked there. It will lie there for many years to come, for it is worth no one's while to salve it. But to one who saw it a year ago it was a priceless relic, for it proved to him that even now in Queensland the old romance, the old adventure, and the spirit of them still linger in the lands that lie within our reach beyond the seas.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BEGINNING OF THE TROPICS

SOON after crossing the Queensland border we entered a stony country in which intrepid settlers had built themselves houses among granite boulders. In spite of this the soil of the surrounding district is very rich, and consists largely of decomposed granite, which stretches for eight hundred miles round the township of Stanthorpe, and is specially good for fruit-growing and vineyards. "There," observes the guide-book poetically, "roses bloom all the year round on the cheek of the young, and vigour characterises the movements of the old."

The line then crossed open country cleared of gums; on the pastures numbers of horses were feeding. Mountain ranges stretched away to the far distance with deep grassy gorges. At one point we passed a large patch of prickly pear, one of the most terrible of Queensland pests which has had to be dealt with by special legislation, both in Queensland and new South Wales. Botanically it is known as a form of *Opuntia inermis*. It resembles

the cactus hedges common in Southern Italy, and was introduced by Governor Philip in 1789, who brought it from Rio de Janeiro as food for the cochineal insect. It is said that the first plant was regarded as so great a curiosity that a gardener was dismissed for neglecting to water it. This may be an apocryphal story, but at any rate the prickly pear took so kindly to the Australian soil, and climate, that vast areas have been overrun by it to an entirely disastrous extent. No entirely successful measures have been evolved for coping with its devastating increase. It is a most serious anxiety to agriculturists, for it is estimated that in Queensland alone thirty million acres have been affected by it, and that it spreads at the rate of one million acres a year. It has found its opportunity in the fact that the districts best suited to it are sparsely populated. No economical means of eradication have been devised. In New South Wales the cost of destroying this pest was calculated a year or two ago at ten or twelve million pounds. Its barbed spinules produce severe irritation in men and animals, and besides its habit of entrenching itself in gullies, on hilltops, and places difficult of access, it is propagated by birds and stock, which eat the seeds; and every joint, or piece of one, forms a new plant.

The township of Warwick lies in the foot hills of the Darling Downs, which the line now crosses. This is one of the most fertile areas in the state. There are over four million acres of rich black soil, formed of decomposed basalt and many feet in depth. It is well watered, has a plentiful rainfall and a temperate climate. Toowoomba is the capital of the district. It is a thriving, growing town, an important centre of agricultural, and especially dairy, produce. The line now turns sharply east, and descends again to the plains, where we saw fields of Indian corn or maize, the stalks left standing after the crops had been gathered.

Long before we arrived at Brisbane it was dark. The less said about Brisbane hotels the better—in all respects. There seemed to be a billiard-room somewhere below our uninviting quarters, for we heard the click of balls, and a man's voice thickly reproached a comrade for having "given his girl a rosary and made her a Roman Catholic"—an interesting sidelight on the ease with which conversion may be effected. It was so pleasant to be out of the train, that after dinner we strolled about the brightly lighted arcaded streets of the town, and found our way to a broad, swiftly flowing river that reflected the lights of the city.

THE BRISBANE RIVER.

We had now left the mild Australian winter behind us, and were in the height of an English summer, wearing the thinnest summer clothes, though Brisbane counted it as early spring. Brisbane is a most beautifully situated town, set among hills washed by the river, which runs into the sea eighteen miles away. Its many handsome public buildings are fronted by gardens full of tropical vegetation, its broad arcaded streets, filled with people, prosperous-looking like all Australians. In the charming suburbs on the slopes of the green hills, the houses are all built high on piles, each capped by its inverted saucer to ward off the depredations of white ants. The deep, verandahed houses are screened from the sun by straw blinds.

Politically, Queensland is the youngest of all the Colonies. A convict settlement was founded at Moreton Bay by Governor Brisbane in 1824, but it languished and was soon afterwards abandoned. In 1842 Moreton Bay was proclaimed a free settlement. Not till 1859 was the state separated from New South Wales by Letters Patent establishing Moreton Bay as a new colony under the name of Queensland. The constitution of the colony is modelled on that of New South Wales; that is to say, there is an Assembly or Lower House, whose members are salaried and elected

by manhood and womanhood suffrage. The Legislative Council or Upper Chamber has a continuous existence. It is interesting to note to what extent the Australian Second Chambers have acted as a retarding influence on the democratic legislation of the Assemblies. A well-known Australian writer observes that: "Designed as Conservative bodies, the Councils have certainly fulfilled the retarding function of a Second Chamber. Nearly every measure which is claimed as democratic and progressive has had to pass the ordeal of several rejections. . . . The resistance of the Councils to drastic schemes for breaking up the large pastoral holdings, and to land taxation, and the brake they apply to 'Socialistic legislation,' have driven many if not into the ranks, at any rate to the support of the Labour Party, and have been the main cause of the zeal of that Party for enlarging the powers of the Commonwealth Government, in whose constitution a forward policy has to encounter no such obstacle." *

The promoters of the Colony in these early days had little idea how rapid would be its growth or how great its material prosperity. Very little was known of that vast area, and its

* W. Harrison Moore, Professor of Law at the University of Melbourne.

resources were practically undiscovered. As for the coastal waters, little more was known of them than had been described by Captain Cook and Lieutenant Flinders. The stretch of smooth water that forms a natural harbour for a thousand miles inside the great barrier reef was unimagined. The northern coast land was believed to be uninhabitable by white men; the interior was supposed to be an almost waterless area of intolerable heat, while experts affirmed that if sheep survived at all beneath the tropical suns of Queensland, they would grow hair instead of wool.

Meanwhile the young Colony throve and prospered, and in 1909 held an exhibition of her products to celebrate the completion of the first half-century of her separate existence. Besides live stock, raised on the rich, indigenous grass crops, which cost nothing except wire fencing, Queensland products include cotton, sugar, butter, cheese, bacon, wheat, maize, potatoes, oranges, pineapples, and other tropical fruits. Her minerals consist of gold, copper, tin, coal, besides gems.

It is, however, Queensland's pastoral industries that are the main source of her wealth, and which form more than half the total value of her exports. The great sheep district is in the

"Western Interior," which occupies about half the area of the state. Here undulating downs extend to the horizon, almost treeless, except above the watercourses. In the summer season many of these become a mere series of water holes, but the discovery of the great supply of underground water, over a district reaching from the extreme north of Queensland into New South Wales and South Australia, has made it possible to transform them into running streams by means of artesian bores. It is a melancholy fact that many of the pioneers in the industry got poor returns for their hard and strenuous enterprise. In the early days labour was scarce and dear, and in the absence of railways or good roads it took from six to nine months to convey the wool to the coastal district by means of bullock drays. It was many years before the great agricultural possibilities of the Darling Downs were discovered and utilised, though this rich district supplies more than 70% of all the oats, wheat, and barley grown in Queensland. The Queensland farmer is at present in a most fortunate position; he has good stock, cheap land, first-rate pastures, and a climate which allows production to go on all the year round. As immigrants from Great Britain are under normal conditions admitted on payment of a nominal fee as

CHARLEVILLE BORE.

passage money, there is an unlimited scope for agricultural enterprise.

The morning after our arrival at Brisbane we went out to gain our first impression of the city and its immediate neighbourhood. The air was soft and humid, as it is all along the north-eastern Australian coast line, and our first walk left upon us a mingled impression of brilliant sunshine, dust, and palm trees. In Brisbane there is tropical vegetation everywhere ; the charm of the tropics, their glorious never-failing sunshine, and the picturesque and profuse vegetation is first felt here. If it were not for the fine, all-pervading dust, it would be Paradise. Here, too, we first encountered tropical fruits. The pawpaw looks like a dark green elongated melon. Its firm yellow fruit is rather tasteless, but eatable with sugar. On the whole, we came to the conclusion that it was not worth while, and the same may be said generally of all tropical fruits. The smell of a ripe mango is sufficient to deter all but the hardiest vegetarian. The pawpaw plant is handsome, tall, and palm-like in growth, closely resembling the small greenhouse auralia. It is common in the gardens of Brisbane suburbs.

All the public buildings are dignified and handsome, with white stone fronts. The University buildings are adapted from a former Govern-

ment House, and stand in beautiful grounds which run down to the river.

The Botanical Gardens, which flank the drive, are also washed by the broad, swiftly flowing river. They are enchanting to linger in more so even than the world-famous tropical gardens of Buitenzorg in Java. Perhaps it was the moisture and greenness after the arid look of most of the rest of Australia at the end of the dry season, that seemed to us so refreshing and delightful. At any rate, we never tired of wandering in these gardens, where hedges of sweet peas and stocks alternated with every kind of gorgeous tropical flowering shrub, now just coming into bloom. Here were palms and sloping lawns; by the river grew the curious bunya bunya trees, with their bare arms and mop-like ends; here were greenery and quiet; and, most blessed of all, freedom from dust. Above the river two large kingfishers often glanced to and fro; they must have had a nest close at hand.

CHAPTER XVIII

A DAY IN THE QUEENSLAND BUSH

THIS was one of the most delightful of all the many crowded days we spent in Australia, for it revealed to us the wonder and the beauty of the Queensland Bush.

We started early for the station through the streets that leave on one's mind, looking back, an impression of sharply defined black and white, from the contrasting sunlight and shadow in that brilliant atmosphere. The three hours' journey to Nambour, where we were to see a sugar manufactory, was full of interest. The line passes quite near the curious peaks, which Captain Cook called the Glass House mountains. The origin of the name is conjectural, but it is supposed that the conical shape of some of them resembled the glass-blowing factories in the England of his boyish days. These bare, isolated peaks push themselves up sharply and precipitately from the plain. They are formed of trachyte or some kindred igneous rock, and geologists are not agreed as to their origin among the surrounding

sandstone. We saw again many of the grass trees, as they call the Queensland variety of the West Australian "black boy." The tropical bush begins about fifty miles from Brisbane, where a Government Reserve has been created on either side of the line, which passes through a belt of forest with palms and ferns and richly varied undergrowth. Now and then a little party of men at work on the line would shout clamorously for "papers." Their only chance of getting news of the outside world is to attract the attention of passengers in the passing trains, and get them to throw out newspapers. The country round here is very rich and fertile, and for the first time we saw pineapple farms. In a good year pineapples can be bought in some parts of Queensland for threepence a dozen, so we were told. They are very good and juicy, and they make a very pleasant form of jam. The plants look like rows of low-growing rushes or very coarse grass.

Towards twelve o'clock the train pulled up between a field of sugar-canes and the Moreton Central Sugar Mill. Sugar is a very handsome crop, when the canes are bearing their tall, feathery flowers. The canes themselves are dark red, jointed like bamboo; the plant is not unlike a very large maize in general effect. Nambour is

a centre of the sugar-growing industry, and there are plantations on the slopes of the hills and the banks of the rivers. Two hundred and eighty tons a day are crushed at the Moreton Sugar Mills just outside the town. Its neighbourhood is pervaded by the peculiar sweet, thick, cloying smell of the canes, a smell that can never be forgotten; we recognised cargoes of raw sugar afar off on every wharf and landing-stage and railway station on which we encountered it, during the remainder of our stay in Australia.

The history of sugar-growing here is very interesting. It was started originally on the system of large plantations worked by coloured labour. No other system of working sugar plantations in the tropics was known. Natives were imported from the Pacific Islands. Planters erected their own mills, and conducted their business through managers and overseers. In the early seventies the industry was rapidly developing, but two circumstances intervened to hamper it. The price of cane sugar fell owing to the great increase in the manufacture of beet sugar in Europe; the Government prohibited the employment of coloured labour. These circumstances revolutionised the industry. The large plantations gave place to smaller farms worked by white labour; the farmers received

Government grants to enable them to erect co-operative factories; further, a Government bounty was imposed as a compensation for the withdrawal of coloured labour; this was subsequently abolished. The Central Mill System by which groups of farmers control the factories continues. The canes are crushed and the sugar sent to the refiners. The work of manufacture is carried out under scientific supervision, and state sugar experimental stations test the various species of cane, and determine which are most productive, and most immune from disease. Thus the Queensland Sugar Industry is specially interesting, because it has solved the problem of carrying on a tropical manufacture with white labour.

The Moreton Central Sugar Mill, which we visited, is close to the main line of railway, but light railways run in all directions through the district to bring the canes up on trucks to the mill. Masses of dark red cane were lying about round the mill, and coming in on little trucks. The raw cane tastes faintly sour. The sugar mill itself was filled with the all-pervading sickly, thick, sweet smell of the raw sugar, and streaming with moisture. The temperature is very high. We climbed under and over moving machinery, were asphyxiated with steam, nauseated with

sweetness, and covered with molasses, all in the pursuit of knowledge.

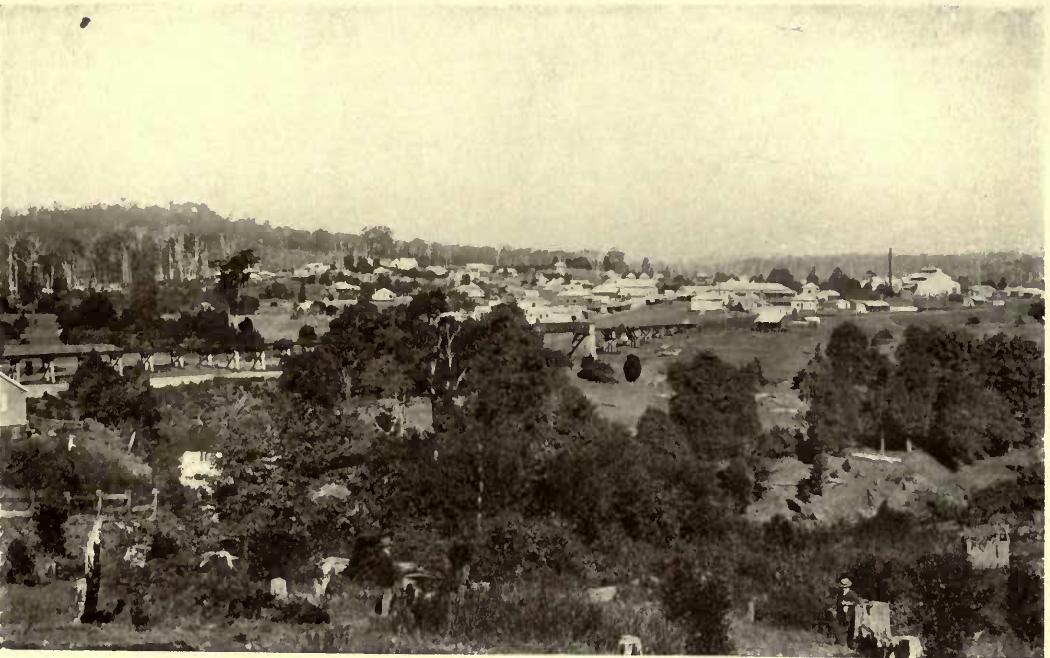
Still it was a very interesting experience. All processes of manufacture are interesting. The canes are shot in from outside, and crushed by a series of heavy rollers till a thick juice pours out. When this is all extracted the exhausted fibre is burnt in the furnaces. The juice of the cane is boiled in great vats. In its final stages of boiling it is thick and black as tar. It is then run into revolving cylinders, called centrifugalisers. These rotate at a very great rate, and are fascinating to watch, for in a few minutes the dark, sticky mass has disappeared, and the sides of the cylinder are coated with a coarse yellow sugar very much sweeter than that which appears on our tea tables.

We at last emerged from the mill, instructed, but very sticky, and cast about for some spot in which it would be possible to obtain soap and water. There were buildings of some kind close by, warehouses or something of the sort, connected with the station, with two men sitting on the verandah. We asked them if they could tell us the nearest way to soap and water. One of them indicated with his pipe a large galvanised iron tank with a tap in the bottom, and a broken tumbler, but they shook their heads over the

problem of soap. We turned on the tap hopefully, but the Australian rainfall was quite inadequate to remove molasses. So we went in search of the Nambour hotel. However new an Australian town may be, it always has an hotel or two, and a sort of communal hall. Nambour has in addition a few shops and some stray cows and horses. We watched a cow eating sugar cane with every manifestation of pleasure. It was not till we got to Queensland, by the way, that we began to see horses everywhere, just as we had imagined them in Australia, hitched up to gates by the bridle.

We made our way to the hotel, where everyone was very busy preparing lunch. There was no hot water upstairs, but, penetrating into the kitchen, where there was a great bustle, and anything extraneous was very much in the way, we succeeded in getting a pudding basin full of hot water and a teacloth, and attacked the molasses in the yard outside, before an audience of poultry. Molasses, however, appears to yield to nothing, not even chemical cleaning. It always re-emerges. So relinquishing the vain attempt, we repaired to lunch.

Whatever you *don't* have for lunch in Australia, you always seem to have turkey. It is like the inevitable *poulet* in Continental hotels. There



NAMBOUR.

must be enormous quantities of wild turkeys there; at any rate, they are always succulent. We also always had very good and elaborate trifles, and very weak tea, and, on this occasion, strawberries and cream and pineapple. After lunch there was a long interval, while we sat on a fence, and watched another ruminative cow eating sugar cane. We were waiting for the "loco." We were not very clear what it was, and when it arrived, it turned out to be a little engine drawing some trucks, across which rough planks had been thrown for seats, like those at Big Brook; but whereas the engine on that occasion was stoked with logs, and gave out a fragrant aromatic smoke, this dilatory "loco" burnt some kind of soft coal, and had a very short chimney, so that we were deluged with large and solid smuts, in comparison with which the molasses were the merest trifle. However, the country through which it took us was so beautiful and enchanting that nothing else mattered. It was our first experience of tropical bush. Elsewhere there had been little undergrowth, the tall gums soared upwards unimpeded. Here the vast white eucalyptus trees were festooned with thickly interlacing creepers hanging in great ropes. High up on the trees grew masses of staghorn ferns and orchids. Far out of reach the graceful, delicate

"rock lily" hung its pendulum of pale chablis-coloured bells, and still more exquisite were the fragile white blooms of another orchid. In places were stretches of sugar plantation, and banana fields, always with their background of hill and forest. The fresh greenness of everything was delightful, for the district is well watered.

The line, which was sometimes laid across rough logs thrown over a small gorge, with a stream running through it, ended abruptly in the Maroochy River, swift-flowing between low banks, with the tall trees of the forest on one side, and a sugar plantation waving feathery heads of bloom on the other. We walked back with two friends. It was much more silent than an English forest. There was no pattering of the small feet of birds on the dry, dead carpet of leaves, and no continual twitter. A profusion of ferns grew along the track, and a quantity of large scarlet raspberries. The gum trees were putting out their red spring shoots. Sometimes the clear, sharp call of the peewit sounded, or the infectious peal on peal of mocking giggles from the kookooburra, sometimes the frogs were crying all together, as they cried in Aristophanes' time, "Breckkek kek kek—koax koax," and now for the first time we heard the Australian

bull frog that clucks like a hen. Here and there was a clearing with a homestead with high verandahs. They made one long to spend a month in that lovely place, and feel day by day the great peace of the forest, with only the frogs and the trickle of a stream over its smooth, brown rocks to break the stillness.

We passed occasionally a little camp with a rough cooking place, but there was never any-one in them. As we emerged from that charmed country into the more prosaic, cultivated land, where pineapples were growing, and bananas with their great purple bells, we saw a beautiful brown bird with a long tail, silent and stately as the bush itself. It looked down on us from the high fork of a gum tree, but did not condescend to fly away. Hospitable Nambour had prepared tea for us on our return; not what we mean by tea at home, but the Australian tea, a meal calculated to stand a traveller in good stead till breakfast next morning. Of all our sunny Australian days that walk in the bush was one of the most charming episodes.

CHAPTER XIX

IN AND ABOUT BRISBANE

THE Brisbane River, flowing gently between its green banks, is a favourite resort of picnic parties, one of the most popular forms of entertainment in Australia, where dry wood is abundant and the weather can be depended upon; and the party pride themselves on their skill in producing "billy" tea in the shortest possible space of time. One sunny afternoon we started up the river in a motor launch. On either shore were pretty suburban houses, each with its shady verandah, and palm trees in the gardens. The river does not, however, always flow softly and invite pleasure-seekers to embark upon it. Brisbane people often allude in awestruck tones to "the Flood," when the river rose and swept away the peaceful bungalows on its banks and wrought much havoc. After a pleasant little voyage we landed with some difficulty on a rickety wooden pier, on the banks of an immense meadow of coarse rough grass stretching away for many acres, with other scattered picnic

parties in the far distance; evidently a favourite spot. Our billy was soon boiling, and when tea, which is on these occasions a sort of sacrificial rite, reminiscent of the early settlers, was over, we went up the bank to prospect, and heard for the first time the sound which so many Australians had described to us, "the moaning" of the shea-oak in a rising wind. We had heard it described as "weird" and "depressing," and it is certainly extraordinarily uncanny. The foliage of the shea-oak is like a lot of knotted whip-cord, and when all its strings are swept together by the wind it gives rise to a strange cry that seems to come from far and near, shrill, insistent, and full of foreboding. It is impossible to compare it to any other sound.

Among Queensland products are its precious stones, and Brisbane at first seems to support a quite disproportionate number of jewellers' shops. It is specially famous for its black opals, which are not black, but a sort of peacock blue, with wonderful high green lights. These beautiful stones are of infinite variety in depths of colouring, and their very novelty makes them attractive, but all the same the visitor should only make purchases in the presence of an expert adviser, for, even in the case of jewellers of high repute, he will find that what he pays for his stones in

Brisbane may bear no relation to the value attributed to them by a London firm. Almost every known precious stone is found in Queensland, including diamonds. Opals occur in the upper cretaceous rocks in the western districts of Queensland, and sapphire mining is carried on to a considerable extent in the Anakie district west of Rockhampton. The stones are blue, green, or yellow in colour. They occur in an alluvial lead, and their original matrix is a basalt found near the source of the alluvial deposit, the gems having been set free by the weathering of the rock.

We saw some opal cutting in Brisbane. It is done in the jewellers' workshops. They buy the rough-looking brown lumps from the miners, and they are cut open and polished with emery to test their value.

One characteristic Australian sight we were unable to see, the "wool sales." The trade in this principal source of the continent's wealth was at the time practically at a standstill. Owing to the war the annual wool sales could not be held. Before the war, the buyers, chiefly German and French, attended the wool sales in the principal Australian towns, so there was practically no market for the fine merino wools. September ought to have been a busy month in Brisbane,

for that is the season of the wool sales. But if we could not see the sales, we thought it would at least be interesting to see the wool, and as in Australia you need only express a wish to have it gratified, an acquaintance of our river picnic of the day before volunteered to show us the principal Brisbane wool store.

It was a morning of dazzling Queensland sunshine, with a light breeze off the sea, when we motored down to the wharf where the big storehouses are built. Here the wool comes in on trucks in bales of jute, and at first the visitor sees only endless rows of shelves stacked with brown bales. These bales, or jute sacks, which are made in India, are all marked with the name of the grower and the district and quality of the wool, in a kind of shorthand unintelligible to the layman. The "clips," as they are called, are separated into the fleeces proper and the other parts, packed in the jute sacks, labelled, and sent straight to the storehouse. Our expert friend could tell, by taking a handful of the wool out of any sack at random, the district from which it came, explaining to us that this handful was stained with the red earth peculiar to certain plains, while another contained the characteristic "trefoil burr," a little seed-vessel, which curls itself tightly among the wool. In the sales

samples of the wools of different growers are taken from the bales and spread upon tables in an immense upper room. The walls were painted a light blue, to soften the glare of the light and throw a becoming tinge on the wool, as pink lamp-shades are used for the complexion. Here the dealers inspect it, and it is afterwards sold by auction, though the seller puts a reserve price upon it. From the warehouse the bales can be run down a sort of shaft directly on to the cargo boats for Europe; but the wool packs, as they are called, are first squeezed in a press and bound with iron bands to facilitate their shipment and storage. Some deterioration takes place in the colour if it is kept longer than two years.

The most remarkable thing about the presence of this immense quantity of wool was that, though the sheep are not washed before they are sheared, the fleeces had none of the oily unpleasant smell of a flock of sheep, but the warehouse only smelt of the jute bales. As we were coming away we were shown some merino rams in a little pen yet in possession of their deep silky fleeces. The breed of merinos has been so greatly improved since its introduction in 1797 that merino rams fetch as much as five hundred guineas, while in 1913 two rams actually were sold for 1600 and 1700 guineas respectively. Merino sheep did not, however,

thrive on the coastal districts, and British sheep were therefore imported for breeding purposes.

It was later the same day that to escape from the dust, which is Brisbane's besetting curse, we went by tram out into the suburbs. Brisbane itself is on the sea level, but its suburbs climb the hills behind it. The suburbs are only scattered bungalows dotted among the green, with their flowers and paw-paw trees and palms. Patches of eucalyptus scrub remain here and there, and rough roads connect them with the main road, up which the tram climbs steeply. After its terminus the road still climbs the hill and we climbed with it, till we came to a green lane, where was a rare butterfly with wonderful metallic blue wings fluttering above a yellow-berried duranta bush, and where we heard a laughing jackass, and watched some untidy-looking magpies. All Australian birds are rather untidy-looking, as if they had lived so long in the bush by themselves, that their toilets could not be regarded as of consequence.

From these innocent diversions we were driven by a smart shower to take refuge in the nearest bungalow, which had an inviting verandah. The house belonged to a Scotch settler, who welcomed us like old friends, brought out cushions for the wicker chairs, and when the

shower was over begged us to prolong our visit—it was "so nice to see someone from home." Last summer, she told us, had been the hottest for thirty years, but with that exception she had not felt the tropical heat excessive. When we came away she gave us the handgrip of the exile.

The most beautiful point within easy reach of Brisbane, commanding a magnificent bird's-eye view of the city, the bay, and surrounding country, is Mount Coot-tha Reserve, or One Tree Hill. It is only a few miles out of the town, and a friend motored us up there one afternoon. On the way we stopped to have tea at her house. In the drawing-room was a heavily carved massive upright piano. We commented on its unusual case, and our hostess told us it had been in "the Flood," and the works were ruined, but it was impossible to get them replaced in Australia. Going on to talk of the drawbacks to life in Brisbane, she said that before a storm the house would be filled with flying cockroaches and other insects, and she showed us photograph frames and book bindings riddled with small holes by the ravages of silver fish. Under her carpets were quantities of crushed naphthaline to prevent their being eaten, and a winter coat that was left hanging up by some oversight, she said, was immediately ruined. We were considerably

perturbed after this on coming across a large whiskered silver fish among our clothes, when we were packing, but his wicked intentions were frustrated prematurely, and there were no ill-effects from his presence, though we actually brought a silver fish home to London, where he was found between a trunk and its cover, and instantly slaughtered as something exotic and uncanny by the maids who were unpacking. He probably, however, came from Java.

After tea we continued our journey to One Tree Hill, our hostess actually was wearing a stole made of the skin of a platypus. The fur was curiously wiry to the touch. Mount Coot-tha, like all reserves, is the original untouched gum forest with carriage drives running through it. At one point the trees had been cleared away to give a view of Lake Enoggera, the reservoir of Brisbane, cradled in green hills some miles away.

From the western extremity of the hill the view is very extensive and extremely beautiful. Brisbane is spread out below nestling in greenery, with its winding river, and Moreton Bay far off lying placid in the sunshine. The view is bounded by distant hills.

There is generally some one feature of a town that stands out afterwards more distinctly than the rest. In the mental picture that the name of

Brisbane evokes it will always be the Botanical Gardens, cool and quiet with their banks sloping to the river, that wake the pleasanter memories. Here we came often to escape from the all-pervading dust, and here we came on our last evening in the brief twilight that intervenes for some few minutes between sunset and the fading of the afterglow. The level rays of the sun silhouetted the grotesque bunya-bunya trees on the river-banks so that they looked like bunches of crooked housemaids' mops. The peace and calm of the quiet place were intensified by the rapidly falling dusk. Except for the scolding and chattering of a party of white Australian cockatoos in an aviary, there was no sound but the swishing of the wind in a grove of dry bamboos, and the little cropping noise of some kangaroos feeding and skittering about in a paddock. In a small round pond fringed by Cape lilies a bull-frog was beginning to cluck. Already the palm trees were black against the fading orange after-glow. A too peremptory custodian cut short the enchanting moment; it was closing time he said. So we made our way back through the busy clangour of the crowded streets, and for the last time sat out on the balcony after dinner in the dusty half-light of the street lamps and the stars, and watched the Southern Cross above the palms,

PALM AVENUE, BOTANIC GARDENS, BRISBANE.

and Venus shining with a lustre and a brilliancy unknown to northern skies.

Our last morning came filled with the bustle of packing and departure. And for the last time let us urge upon travellers to Australia to take far less luggage than they can possibly imagine they will want. Let them bear in mind, in the first place, the great inconvenience of transferring small luggage, when there are no porters, the hideous nuisance of packing and unpacking if they have to do it for themselves; the very much simpler standard of dress that prevails in a new country, where even in the capital people are contented to go out to dinners and theatres by tram; well-to-do people dressed in elaborate cloaks and satin shoes. The variation of climate compels a fairly large assortment of clothes of different weight. But cut it down rigorously. This digression is inspired by the recollection of the exhausting nature of our packing in the heat. When it was done we had to charter a cart and a man, and freightage in Australia is far from cheap, to take it the half-mile to the station, where its mountainous bulk was with difficulty packed into the very dusty little train that runs from Brisbane to Pinkenbar, lower down the river, whence the steamers sail for the Northern Territory.

We had already paid one visit to Pinkenbar to engage a porter, a lean, tall, weather-beaten old man, selected on the wharf, to bring a truck to the station and convey our luggage to the boat. When we arrived and got out of the train with a litter of small baggage, the first thing we saw was a large American trunk tightly jammed half in and half out of the window of the guard's van, the guard having got so much of our luggage between himself and the door that he could not get it open. Fortunately, however, our porter from the wharf was on the spot in every sense of the word. He first shouted encouraging directions to the guard, and then by the exercise of brute force thrust the trunk back through the window without doing any serious damage to that perturbed official. Eventually, with the help of another man, we got under way and proceeded to the landing-stage. The rough intervening ground was overgrown with tall blue thistles with flowers like pale yellow anemones; they looked as incongruous as if someone had stuck them on. After seeing our luggage over the ship's side and consigning it to the steward, we returned to Brisbane in search of lunch and recovered our calm, for the boat did not sail till towards evening.

It was after lunch on this last day that we saw

a thing we had always wanted very much to see and despaired of doing so. It was the little Australian tree bear, or koala bear, once very common, now becoming rare. We heard from a French waiter that there was one in the hotel, and presuming on our experience of Australian good nature, sent a message to its unknown owner to ask if we might see it before we left. He brought it down immediately, carried in the arms of his little girl, and it really was an adorable little thing. It was about the same size as the very largest child's "Teddy Bear," grey in colour. Its little hand-like fore paws were holding on to the lace of the little girl's pinafore, one on each side of her neck, and it turned its head and fixed a pair of wistful eyes upon us. She said it slept all day and woke up at night, when it cried for milk like a cat. It only ate gum leaves. "When we were boys," said its owner, "we used to hunt them. It took thirty or forty shots to bring one down, and then it would take eight or ten dogs to finish one, they are so tough." Even so, these charming and harmless little animals, which live in the gum trees and feed on their leaves, are becoming exterminated.

It was late afternoon when we made our third and last visit to Pinkenbar. The scene in the neighbourhood of the station was so typically

Australian that we lingered regretfully to take a last look at it. The rough dusty road that led away inland, the drove of horses in an enclosure waiting to be entrained for the War, with another horse hitched on to the fence by its bridle, the clear strong stereoscopic light, a paddock of burnt grass, the scattered row of houses beyond, with flat grey roofs, built high on piles, and beyond again gum trees and more gum trees. We turned away towards the wharf with a certain sadness, for this spacious country with its austere beauty and its handful of warm-hearted inhabitants is wonderfully endearing in spite of, or perhaps because of, all its crudeness. We distributed our newspapers among the men loafing and smoking on the wharf, who took them with that frank friendliness of a country, where class distinctions are almost unfelt; and went on board the boat that lay alongside, still busy with the bustle of departure.

PART VI

TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

CHAPTER XX

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

WE had already made acquaintance with the "Montoro" when she was unlading in Sydney Harbour, her final port of call, and we now spent on board three of the pleasantest weeks of our journey. There is a great sense of peace and cleanliness on a ship after long dusty travels. The "Montoro" was a small boat, less than 6000 tons, but remarkably well-appointed and arranged, our airy bedstead cabin was positively spacious, with the luxury of a large wardrobe and a full length looking-glass in its door. The staff were Chinese, efficient, ubiquitous, noiseless, and their gentle soft-voiced ways were particularly restful after the rough and ready Australian servant. On board we found awaiting us letters from home, the last we were to get for two long months, for our Java mail, delayed by the war, followed us to England. Presently we were slipping down to the sea between the low banks of the green river, with a light breeze. Venus was rising and the moon, and the shore lights began to glimmer.

Our first day out was choppy and rough, but a heavy shower smoothed out the sea like oil, and the next day saw us inside the Barrier Reef, in the Coral Sea that stretches away to the extreme north coast. Captain Cook had made the same voyage that we were making in the summer of 1770 in a boat of 368 tons, and we thought our boat small! He noted and named every headland and bay along "this dangerous coast, where the sea in all parts conceals shoals that suddenly project from the shore, and rocks that rise abruptly like a pyramid from the bottom, for more than 1300 miles." Even now, when every inch of the course has been charted, the voyage is dangerous for the same reason, the low flat islands are nearly indiscernible at night. The mountainous coast is almost uninhabited, except by natives, unfriendly now as then; and is almost entirely unlighted, as hitherto the Government has not been able to incur the expense of erecting and maintaining lighthouses, except in the neighbourhood of the few existing townships. No ship's library on this course should be without a copy of "Captain Cook's Voyages," or, at any rate, no traveller should fail to provide himself with one, as the record of this early navigator in these seas adds immensely to the interest of the journey to-day.

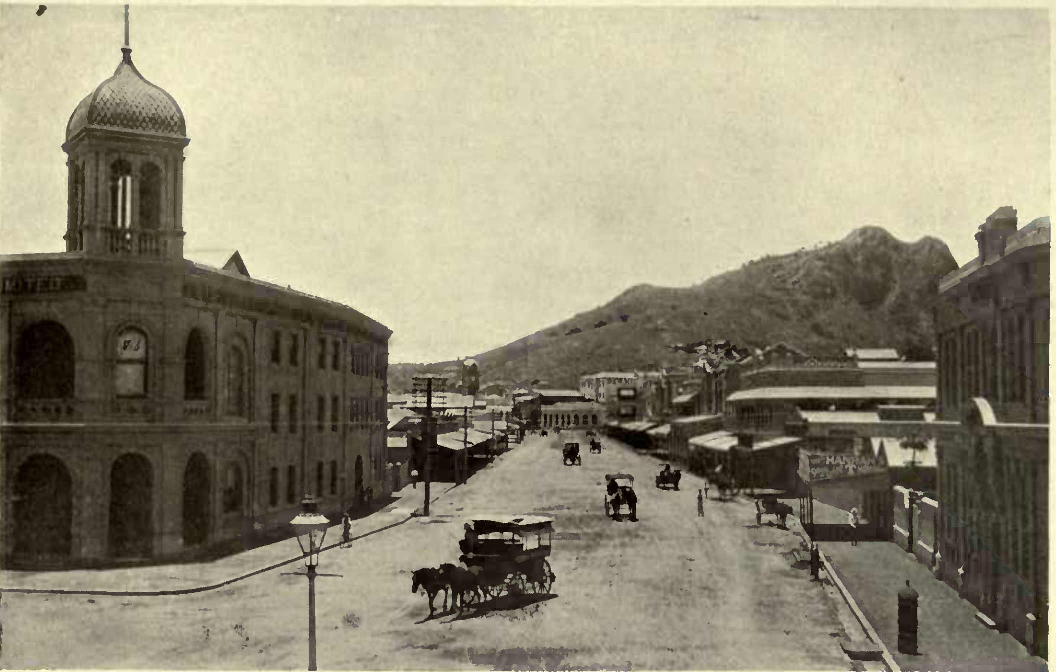
The voyage within the Barrier Reef will always be one of the most beautiful in the world. Once inside the Coral Sea, to awake in the morning and go on deck is to dream an exquisite dream. Here is halcyon weather, the heat of the sun tempered by light airs off the water, and seas of an indescribable translucent turquoise green rippling past among innumerable islands. One after another they appear in the distance, shadowy and vague as clouds; slowly they take shape like brown uncut opals; a nearer view discloses sandy coves, grassy slopes, pine trees and forest. They grew more and more numerous, and, as the day closed in beneath plum-coloured clouds, the soft light lay gently and hazily upon them, till the sun sank in a sky of vivid orange. The charm of this wonderful passage never palls, for its variety is endless. Sometimes the austere, dark mountainous shore is visible, with columns of smoke upon it, native fires as Captain Cook saw them two hundred years ago, for they are still used as signals.

The sea is rich in all kinds of life for those who care to look for it, and we were fortunate in having on board an accomplished naturalist, who, in shirt-sleeves for coolness, and a large-brimmed hat, looking like a sort of drawing-room pirate, sat all day in the bows searching the clear blue

water with a pair of field-glasses, and shouting to all, who were interested, to come and see what he had found. It was he who taught us how and where to look for, and what to call, the unfamiliar birds and sea beasts that we saw.

On the June days two hundred years ago on which Captain Cook cautiously essayed his dangerous journey in a rickety boat on uncharted seas, he often named the islands and headlands after days of the week or month. So it happens that one of the loveliest points on the voyage is known as "Whit-Sunday Passage," because it was on that day that Captain Cook navigated it.

Our fourth day out we reached Townsville early in the morning. Its absurd name is said to be due to the fact that the inhabitants wished to commemorate the benefactions of a fellow-citizen called Town, and did not know how to achieve their end less tautologically. We woke early to find ourselves in a beautiful land-locked bay, called Cleveland Bay by Captain Cook, who recorded that "the east point I named Cape Cleveland, and the west, which had the appearance of an island, Magnetical Isle, as we perceived that the compass did not traverse well when we were near it." "They are both high, and so is the mainland within them, the whole forming a surface the most rugged, rocky, and barren of



TOWNSVILLE.

any we had seen upon the coast." He also notes that they saw "several large smokes upon the main." To-day a picturesque little township lies under a sharply escarped granite hill, with stately, misty coastal ranges in the background. Probably Captain Cook, like ourselves, saw the beautiful yellow "white-headed eagles" flying across the harbour. We took some time getting in because the pilot ran on to a mud-bank, for the bay is very shallow. At last we came alongside a wharf, and at once went on shore and started on the long walk to the town. It was very, very hot on shore, and clouds of grey dust met us all along the road from the landing-stage. We hoped to reach the church on the hill, at all events before the Sunday service was quite over.

Townsville is a picturesque little place, a mining port growing continually in importance; and in that transitional stage, when rough wooden corrugated iron buildings are giving place to brick. There were some very showy hotels calculated to attract the miner with his pockets full of money, when he comes to town to taste the sweets of such civilisation as it affords, to spend all he has gained, and to live riotously as long as it lasts. This at least is the popular conception of the habits of miners, which was continually impressed upon us. We were never able

to verify these statements, because though we occasionally conversed with miners, they looked anything but dare-devils and spendthrifts, and it seemed scarcely delicate to ask them if it was true that they periodically repaired to the nearest town to paint it red as long as their money lasted. As for the shops on either side of the broad, dusty, empty streets over which the heat brooded, they seemed to consist principally of lettering. Every minute shanty had above it vast boards proclaiming in letters as large as itself the name of its owner and the superiority of its stock, whether bicycles or tents, both essential articles of merchandise in an outlying Australian town. The more ambitious shops had placards inside. One enterprising draper called on the passer-by to observe the rebuilding of his "palatial premises," while another drew attention to "Dame Fashion's latest caprices."

We passed a cotton tree with ripe pods, growing in a garden, and several coco palms, the coconuts hanging in yellow bunches like a cluster of immense bananas. After crossing a river bordered by mangrove swamps, and passing through the main street, we struck off up a steep hill in quest of the church. On climbing a granite mound we found ourselves at its doors, with a beautiful view of the bay and its green shores, but no ser-

vice, for probably to suit the habits of the people in a hot climate, it had ended about the time our churches at home are beginning. Following an admirable plan, pursued elsewhere in Australia, only a section of the church had been completed. There was an apse, and enough space beyond it to seat a fairly large congregation. It was very simply constructed, and had the dignity that simplicity gives to a building. It was of red brick with an ambulatory and a kingbeam roof, and had an air of being carefully tended. We lingered there a little wistfully, for in a country very far from home there is a sense of intimate nearness in hearing read that familiar liturgy, which contains the noblest prose in the English language. Leaving the church behind we wandered down towards the shore, and came to a wonderful tangled garden. Tall palms grew there, and masses of feathery crimson grasses; bananas drooped their immense purple bells, and the frangipani tree was bursting into bloom, holding out to us over the fence bunches of its dazzling, scented, creamy blossoms at the end of its bare, blunt boughs. Returning, we faced the strong breeze off the sea, which had been at our backs on the way up. We knew all about the dust on that walk, and were very glad to attain once more the haven of the ship.

In the afternoon the whole population came down to the wharf in cars and buggies to inspect the Australian hospital ship, which was lying alongside ready to sail. We strolled on the shore, where a large convolvulus with very succulent leaves grew profusely among the stones; and watched a forest fire on a mountain at the farther end of the bay; since the morning it had gradually worked its way right round the crest and was crawling down one side. Our stay at Townsville should have been a very brief one, but we were delayed there for three or four days by the Customs officials, as we were carrying a contraband cargo of meat. Nobody wanted to stay in Townsville, as there was nothing to be seen in the neighbourhood, and it would mean cutting short the duration of the ship's visit to the Northern Territory.

The second day of our stay there, we climbed the granite peak that rises behind the town, going across by a little ferry-boat that plies between the wharf and the opposite side of the harbour. A strong wind was blowing in from the sea, as we steamed across to Townsville, lying deep in dust in the hot sun. We made our way up to the Castle Hill, the red granite peak that dominates the town. A very steep path leads up to it, and on the rocks above some goats and

kids were silhouetted against the clear blue sky like a scrap of Swiss scenery. The town from this side is scattered along the shore, and the slopes above it half hidden in tropical foliage. Below us were the Botanical Gardens, the hospital embowered in trees, with the patients lying out on a shady balcony. Everywhere was the heavy scent and glorious bouquets of gold and white frangipani. We had been sent in the wrong direction, and missed the path, so that the ascent was very steep and rough, but we went on, slipping and scrambling up among falling stones, clinging on where we could, among big butterflies and lizards, and large brown grasshoppers with black spots. As we climbed higher Townsville spread itself out beneath us charmingly. Bungalows nestled among vivid green foliage, beyond were the blue bay, and its boats, ours amongst them, riding gaily at anchor, with the dark green wooded mass of "Magnetic Island" rising behind. Higher still we rested, while a fish hawk soared far above in the clear blue, and on the southern side Townsville looked like nothing but a vast mud flat with the river winding through it, and houses dotted among the mangrove swamps. One fancied that one big wave might submerge the whole.

On Wednesday we sailed early, keeping fairly

near the coast, and reaching Cairns the same night. Cairns is the port of Trinity Bay—"a large and deep bay which I called Trinity Bay after the day on which it was discovered," says Captain Cook, who had spent the intervening days in coasting up here from Whit-Sunday Passage. At Cairns we wished profoundly that the stringent Australian labour laws would prohibit night work, for our boat was lading or unlading with all the clangour and shouting incidental to these operations till 3 a.m. We had to be called early, because we were only to wait long enough in port to give the passengers an opportunity of making the return journey to the famous Barron Falls, about twenty miles inland from the coast, among some of the most celebrated Australian scenery. From the porthole of the ship's corridor we looked straight into a mangrove swamp, beyond was a background of misty dark hills with heavy clouds rolling down them.

Cairns, apart from its fame for the beauty of its falls and mountain scenery, is already an important place, and will become much more so, for it is the port for the rich inland districts, with which it is connected by railway. This fertile country is suitable for bananas, maize, for dairying, as well as for the timber trade. In the

BARRON FALLS SCENERY AT CAIRNS.

neighbourhood of Herberton, south-west of Cairns, fruit-growing is carried on, and apples, plums, pears, peaches, and vines are all successfully cultivated. The sugar industry is, besides, a most important factor in the prosperity of Cairns. Not far from the railway station of Redlynch, at the foot of the Barron Range, are the Kamerunga State Nurseries for growing coffee, bread-fruit, coconut, and rubber, and carrying out all kinds of experiments designed to solve the problems of tropical agriculture.

The country is also rich in minerals. Herberton is the principal centre for the production of tin, and the Herberton and Chillagoe districts contain deposits of tin, copper, silver, lead, bismuth, gold, and coal.

Our time, however, did not admit of our penetrating far enough into the interior to inspect the development of all these agricultural and mineral sources of wealth, which have so great a future before them ; nor did it admit of our extending our journey far enough for even a glimpse of the curious and beautiful volcanic Lake Eacham. We had to content ourselves with the Barron Falls. We went ashore early, but the boat was late, and the train had got tired of waiting and gone away, so there was a long interval while it was fetched back and put together again. We sat

about on sacks on a high covered platform, and conversed with some of the lean, long-limbed Australian workmen about the Australian labour question.

Immediately in front three ibises were feeding on a sort of salt marsh. The range of hills behind was half hidden in cloud. There was an all-pervading smell of raw sugar from bales awaiting shipment, and though it was not yet very warm the atmosphere was heavy with moisture like that of a hothouse. There did not seem to be very much of Cairns—one or two hotels and boarding-houses, a few wide grassy streets. The scattered houses on high piles had a more than usually unfinished air, with washing hanging out, kerosene tins lying about, and bare-legged children playing among them. There were a great many goats; two of them had discovered a bag of maize on the wharf and were having a happy time. At last our train arrived, consisting of one or two carriages, so arranged that the backs of the seats could be reversed, and as they all turned sideways you faced the whole length of the carriage, like a Pullman car, and we got the whole of the view during the journey, for most of the time the train has one side against the hill.

The line from the wharf runs among the houses

to the station, where the school children were just arriving from up country settlements. After passing some tea gardens, which looked oddly sophisticated in the bush, we found ourselves among banana fields and pineapples, but everything was more or less obscured by fine driving rain. There was still a fair number of scattered houses, built of wood and iron, with a deplorably drenched air, and handfuls of draggled English flowers in their little gardens among tropical fruits, paw-paws, and lemons. When the ascent begins the line soon enters the wonderful tropical forest—indescribable, unimaginable in the abounding luxuriance and the variety of its tangled, matted growth. The stately soaring eucalyptus is always the staple factor in Australian scenery, but here they are linked together and festooned with heavy ropes of giant creeper, "vines" they call them in the tropics.

In the thick undergrowth are ferns, paw-paw trees, bananas, mango trees, with dark glossy leaves and feathery flowers, and the poisonous "nettle tree," or "stinging tree" (*Laportea gigas*). The leaves are very large, of delicate pale green in colour, and covered with soft hairs. The stinging hairs, though not large, are so virulent that cattle have been known to die from the poison. An Australian botanist,

Mr. A. G. Hamilton, "once saw a cow which had rushed through a lot of small plants. She had lost all her hair and looked like an india-rubber cow." *

The construction of the line must have involved a considerable feat of engineering, for it winds up the hills like an Alpine railway. Presently we began to have glimpses of deep dark gorges with a broad green river flowing beneath us, then we crossed a waterfall slipping down an almost perpendicular rock, and in flood covering the railroad. The rain had ceased, and now the rolling clouds, soft loose masses resting gently on the tops of the tallest gums, suddenly drifted away and revealed a vast landscape of rare loveliness. Looking down the opening gorge, we saw the valley of the Barron River, for almost its whole course, winding to the sea, a pale streak below the dark slopes of the mountains. The train stopped within sound of the thunder of the Barron Falls. The swirling water takes its magnificent plunge in tumultuous clouds of white froth to the gorge below, where rare butterflies hover, and white cockatoos flutter among the tops of the gum trees. Above all the tumult two swallows were darting to and fro, they carried

* "Flora of the South Coast," "Handbook to New South Wales," p. 395.

BARRON, RIVER CAIRNS.

one's thoughts home. Higher up the river there were silent green backwaters, and soft sandy foreshores, where little pink bivalve shells were lying. A big hotel dominated the neighbourhood of the little station, and a young man and woman, faultlessly attired in bathing costumes that would have done credit to a French watering-place, were picking their way daintily down the steep slopes to the river, giving the oddest note of incongruity to the wildness of the place. We weighed anchor as soon as the tourist train brought us back to the wharf.

We now entered on what proved to be the most interesting part of our journey, for we kept farther inshore, and the coast became continually more enchantingly beautiful and more full of interest. It was a time of halcyon days and balmy nights. The ship's company were very young and gay and musical. In the starlit darkness of the tropical evenings they sang and played charmingly. The Marconi-man was a violinist, the supercargo had a fine baritone,—the very name of supercargo suggests the atmosphere of Captain Marryat's novels, an atmosphere of adventure. The night we left Cairns the captain had some of the deck lights turned out, because they made steering more difficult. He said that on a rainy night he was obliged to anchor, for the coral sea is here often

only six or seven fathoms deep; but that on a clear night, even when there was no moon, the officer on the watch could still "pick up the islands with glasses." The small coral islands are innumerable, and often quite flat, so that only a practised eye could discern their neighbourhood at night, even with glasses.

A great charm of travelling by sea is that it brings one into intimate relationship with all sorts and conditions of men. People who stay at home have a tendency to get into sets, to associate too exclusively with people of their own kind, whose points of view, standards of life and habits are all more or less the same as their own, and so they settle into grooves and get dull, and their minds become inelastic. On a ship, at sea, especially a small ship, the society may be as varied as the world. One of the most interesting people we met on our travels was a passenger on the "Montoro." His business was shipping. He knew all the islands that are scattered in enticing little groups from the Torres Straits to beyond New Guinea. He could distinguish at a glance the different types of natives—Kanaka boys from the Torres Straits islands, pale-skinned, shock-headed Papuans, yellow Melanesians, or sooty Cingalese. He knew every inch of the route we were travelling, having often made the journey. Formerly boats of this

line had gone across to Port Moresby, in New Guinea; and our original intention had been to visit the island and gain at least a passing glimpse of the curious native life there. But the boats had been taken off, because, as our fellow-passenger explained, the route was too dangerous and expensive in ships and lives. Outside the Barrier Reef there is always a swell, in which the small boats rolled heavily, and the passengers grumbled proportionately. On the return journey the prevailing strong winds heap up heavy seas, and are apt to drive a ship past the narrow opening in the Reef. Small boats of about 800 tons now run directly from Thursday Island to Port Moresby. But though we had all the inclination, we had no time to make this most interesting journey.

Our fellow-passenger had an interest in the Pearl-fishing Industry carried on in the neighbourhood of Thursday Island, by the "Island boys." These natives of the Torres Straits Islands, for that is what the term means, have a Government inspector to look after them, and see that they get a fair proportion of the profits of the trade. Whatever those profits may be, they are sometimes hardly earned, for there are many sharks. On one occasion a boy was diving and a shark seized his head in its mouth. The boy dug his

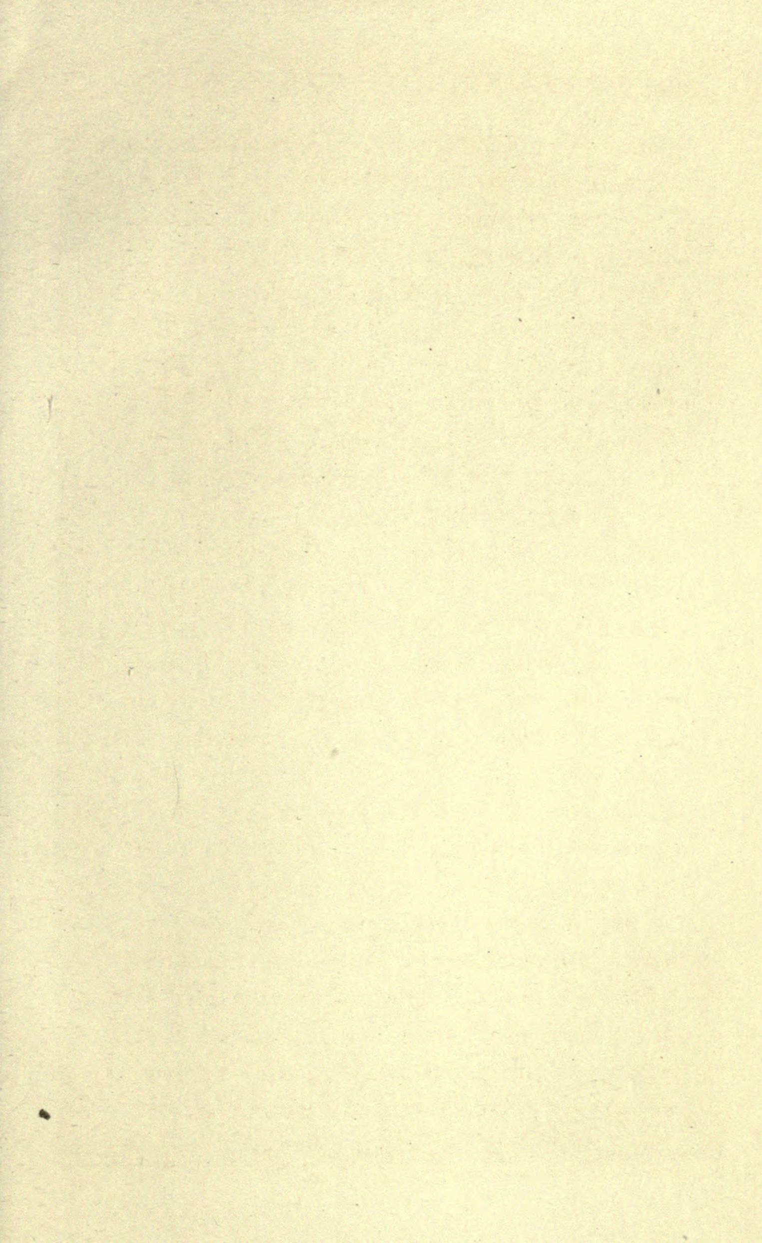
knees and nails into its throat, forcing it to let go, and was rescued by his friends, his whole chest horribly lacerated. He was taken ashore as quickly as possible, and eventually recovered; but the doctor, who was summoned to his aid, was so impressed with his marvellous escape from death, that in the interests of science rather than of his patient, he sent for a photographer and had the boy photographed as he was, before applying his medical ministrations. One photographer had the photographs made into picture post-cards. We could buy them, our informant said, when we reached Thursday Island. The proofs of this story are, unfortunately, incomplete. We hurried to the post-card shop, when we landed a few days later, but the photographer, who also sold stamps and string, sword-fish's fins, coral, and newspapers, said the post-cards were sold out. We asked to see the negative, but being busy with other customers, he excused himself from finding it. We were unable to inform the narrator of this missing link in his story, for he had left us to embark for New Guinea on a little boat, in which he would sleep on deck, and have his meals in the one cabin by the light of a swinging lamp. We were sorry to lose his amusing company.

It was during the passage between Cairns and

Thursday Island, that Captain Cook, after having so far successfully navigated these dangerous seas in his small sailing ship, "became," by running on to the Barrier Reef, "acquainted with misfortune." The name Cape Tribulation marks the headland to the north of the scene of his disaster. His boat had passed safely over a shoal, while the ship's company was at dinner, though the sudden shallowing of the water to eight fathoms had caused some temporary alarm. Nevertheless, all seeming once more safe, "the gentlemen left the deck in great tranquillity, and went to bed." A few minutes before eleven, however, they had struck upon the Barrier Reef, and remained immovable, except by the heaving of the surge that beat her against the edges of the rock upon which she lay. In a few minutes everyone was upon the deck, "with countenances which sufficiently expressed the horrors of the situation," for "we had too much reason to conclude that we were upon a rock of coral, which is more fatal than any other, because the points of it are sharp, and every part of the surface so rough as to grind away whatever is rubbed against it, even with the gentlest motion." It was not till a week after this disaster, a week of continual labour and acute anxiety, that they succeeded in getting the ship ashore at Endeavour Harbour.

The place of Captain Cook's landing is marked by a low brownish green mound jutting out from the coast, which along here has a most inhospitable air, the coastal ranges coming down to the water's edge. The days passed into weeks before the damage could be sufficiently repaired to set sail again. As we passed near inshore these same coastal ranges were deeply purple, with clouds rolling down their sides. There was no sign of life, not even the smoke of a native fire, the scene had great breadth and solemnity.

It was on the same day that we too saw the Barrier Reef, at first looking like a long sandy bar. Presently the coral itself showed with some pelicans on it. Here, too, were the blue lagoons of fiction, small coral islands, with little sandy coves, and pelicans, the only inhabitants, walking under the trees. The warm water of the sea was full of life. Yellow-banded snakes swam by, from two to four feet long. We counted twenty of them in one day. Dampier, exploring the west coast of Australia in 1699, notes these curious water snakes, which are said to be very poisonous. He was sailing out of Shark's Bay when he observed some "serpents swimming about in the sea, of a yellow colour spotted with dark brown spots. They were each about four feet long, and about the bigness of a man's wrist." On several



THURSDAY ISLAND. VIEW OF THE HARBOUR.

occasions we saw turtles swimming just below the surface of the water. Sometimes the sea was covered with a thick floating yellow substance not unlike the brown "scum" which coats stagnant pools at home. Some of it was collected by letting down a bath sponge on a string. The microscope revealed it as a low form of animal life.

Frigate birds were not uncommon, and one night there came on board two lovely bright green "bee-eaters."

So the long sunny days slipped away, and towards sunset the misty coastal ranges became dim and unsubstantial in the dove-coloured evening light, while inshore one little white sail could be seen, that might have been the ghostly vessel of Captain Cook himself. Wednesday Island was passed the next morning. The islands here mark the days on which Captain Cook sighted and named them, and we entered the narrow Thursday Island Passage.

Thursday Island lies at the extreme northerly point of Australia, Cape York Peninsula, that juts out, and narrows into a point forming the eastern side of the Gulf of Carpentaria. To the north of it are the Torres Straits, to the south Prince of Wales and other islands, among them that Possession Island on which Captain Cook

landed, and formally took possession of the whole eastern coast in the name of George III, calling it New South Wales." * It is a centre for pearl-fishing, and a Naval Base. It is a sort of native cosmopolis. Every shade and tone of colour can be seen here, Chinese, Island boys, Papuans, and Malays. We entered the harbour, where the water was again that wonderful greenish blue turquoise, and the little fleet of pearling boats rode at anchor, for the War had put a stop to the industry. Thursday Island itself was a gay-looking little place, its shores covered with scattered bungalows, and a tropical forest covering the hills beyond. Moored near to our own boat was the little New Guinea steamer, manned by native Papuans. They wore nothing, down to their waists any way, which was as much as we could see of them, and

* There has been considerable difference of opinion among writers on the early history of Australia, as to whether Captain Cook did or did not name the whole of this district New South Wales. It is true that the name New South Wales does not appear in Cook's journals, and Bladen, editor of the "Historical Record of New South Wales," says that "the name appears to have originated with Hawkesworth," who edited "Cook's Voyages." Kitson, however, cites a letter written by Cook, 1771 ("Life of Cook," p. 149), in which the words occur, "The east coast of New Holland, or what I call 'New South Wales.'" Hawkesworth therefore did obtain the name from Cook.

were a pale chocolate-au-lait colour, with great mops of black hair. They returned our enraptured staring by grinning at us with all their white teeth, aware that they were objects of interest and beauty. This was the first time we had seen all kinds of natives, of different shades. They manned the boats round the steamer, that brought on board plenipotentiaries of the official visits which always precede and delay a landing. At last we drew up alongside the jetty, and were allowed to go ashore.

On the shore were innumerable empty coconut shells, also all the derelict kerosene tins that had not been utilised by Australia were washed up on the beach. Many of the little shops sell pearls, but the uninitiated will find that they will do a better bargain with their own jeweller at home, though the blister pearls are extremely pretty, and can be bought for a few shillings. We also bought for threepence a copy of the Thursday Island daily paper, which measured a few inches, and was only printed on one side. It contained war news of a bewildering nature. All the shops had large printed notices up in the windows, warning the inhabitants what to do in case of a raid by a German cruiser, for the "Emden" and the "Scharnhorst" were then at large. At the ringing of a bell the women and

children were at once to repair to certain specified places of refuge. The little native children are extraordinarily tough, and must be nearly as difficult to finish off as a koala bear. We saw a small black naked baby of about two years old fall off a verandah. It rolled down a steep flight of steps like a football. We were hurrying forward to pick it up, but it immediately scrambled to its feet, whimpered a little, and trotted off, none the worse.

The post office to which we went to see if there were any telegrams, with news from home, had rows of private letter boxes with glass windows, as it was the custom for people to fetch their own letters. A notice warned the owners that they must do their own repairs to these boxes, as their messengers were in the habit of smashing the glass to extract the letters. Another notice proclaimed that a murderer was wanted. He was eighteen years old, the son of a half-caste Chinese mother and a Kanaka father, a parental combination which one could imagine was fraught with dire possibilities. We walked about the island in an almost intolerably hot sun, on loose cobbles, alternating with deep, soft sand. It is an arid, stony place, and bristled with khaki-clad men. Inside the provision stores, which stood wide open, Japanese were mending sails.

Following the path above the little town through a sort of rough scrub, the ground was overgrown with some strongly smelling aromatic herb, burnt brown in the sun. We saw here one of the rare ornithoptera, a gorgeous blue velvet butterfly, and numbers of grasshoppers with yellow wings that made an odd noise like little castanets as they came out of the dead herbage. There did not seem to be many living things except coconut palms and the beautiful heavily scented blooms of the frangipani. We met the gorgeous nuns belonging to some Roman Catholic sisterhood, dressed in dazzling blue raiment, which would have put the "lilies of the field" quite out of countenance; and we avoided the tropical forest that clothed the farther side of the island, tempting as it looked at a distance, and were glad that we had done so. Several of the passengers, who had made an expedition to it in search of entomological specimens, brought back more than they intended, as they got badly stung by green ants and ticks. The green ants are very pretty and interesting at a safe distance; they are green with bright red legs, and make their nests by sewing together the leaves of a tree, so as to form a sort of large bag, but their sting is very painful. The ticks are much more seriously unpleasant, as they burrow in the skin to lay

their eggs there, leaving their legs sticking out, and if the victim fails to extract all portions of them they produce a sore and painful scar.

Thursday Island has an interesting church—the "Quetta" Memorial Church. It stands in a green enclosure, with a blooming frangipani tree, and commemorates the loss of the S.S. "Quetta" of Glasgow, which some years ago sank on an uncharted rock one moonlight night, with the loss of nearly all hands. We went into the quiet and airy place. Just inside the door hangs in a frame, what seems to be a collection of coral and shells, but closer inspection showed it to be a porthole, that sixteen years later had been recovered, after having "suffered a sea change," and become so encrusted with the beautiful growth of the sea floor that it was hardly any longer recognisable.

Returning to the ship, glad to escape from the blinding heat, we found an oil boat moored alongside. On her some Japanese were eating their rice with chop sticks, while a brown boy of unknown nationality, and a picturesque absence of clothes, cleaned cooking pots.

We now had to cross the wide mouth of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and round the westerly headland, behind which is the bay, that shelters Port Darwin in the Northern Territory, our last

port of call in Australia. We sighted two frigate birds and quantities of large white jelly-fish. We often saw, too, bones of the cuttle-fish floating on the water, like bits of white paper. They were noted also by Dampier on approaching the Australian coast: "We began to see some scuttle bones floating on the water," he remarks, "and drawing still nearer we saw quantities of them." The voyage after getting free of the Barrier Reef was less entirely pleasant, as all deck and cabin lights had to be darkened, or left unlighted at night, to disguise or conceal the ship from prowling German cruisers. The port-holes were blackened and kept shut, the windows of the dining saloon boarded up each evening, so that dinner was a stifling affair, and our pleasant informal musical evenings came to an end, for no one could endure the atmosphere of the music-room. There was, however, compensation, for the darkened decks were very restful in the evening, and the stars were brilliant as they had never seemed before, Venus making a path along the water like moonshine.

CHAPTER XXI

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

THE Northern Territory is one of Australia's many problems. How can the immense tract of rich and fertile country with its tropical northern area be cultivated, and its great resources developed, without the importation of coloured labour? The native black population, though they are useful and efficient with stock, are found to be unadapted for agriculture, and incapable of the steady methodical work essential to its success. The immigration of Chinese, who formerly were the market gardeners of the neighbourhood of Port Darwin, supplying the small resident white population with fruit and vegetables, has now been discouraged, and we saw the plantations they had cultivated falling back into, and becoming merged with the wilderness of the bush. It is still an open question whether white men can perform manual labour under the tropical suns of the coastal belt. Yet the future of Port Darwin must be assured if it is eventually to become our nearest and most

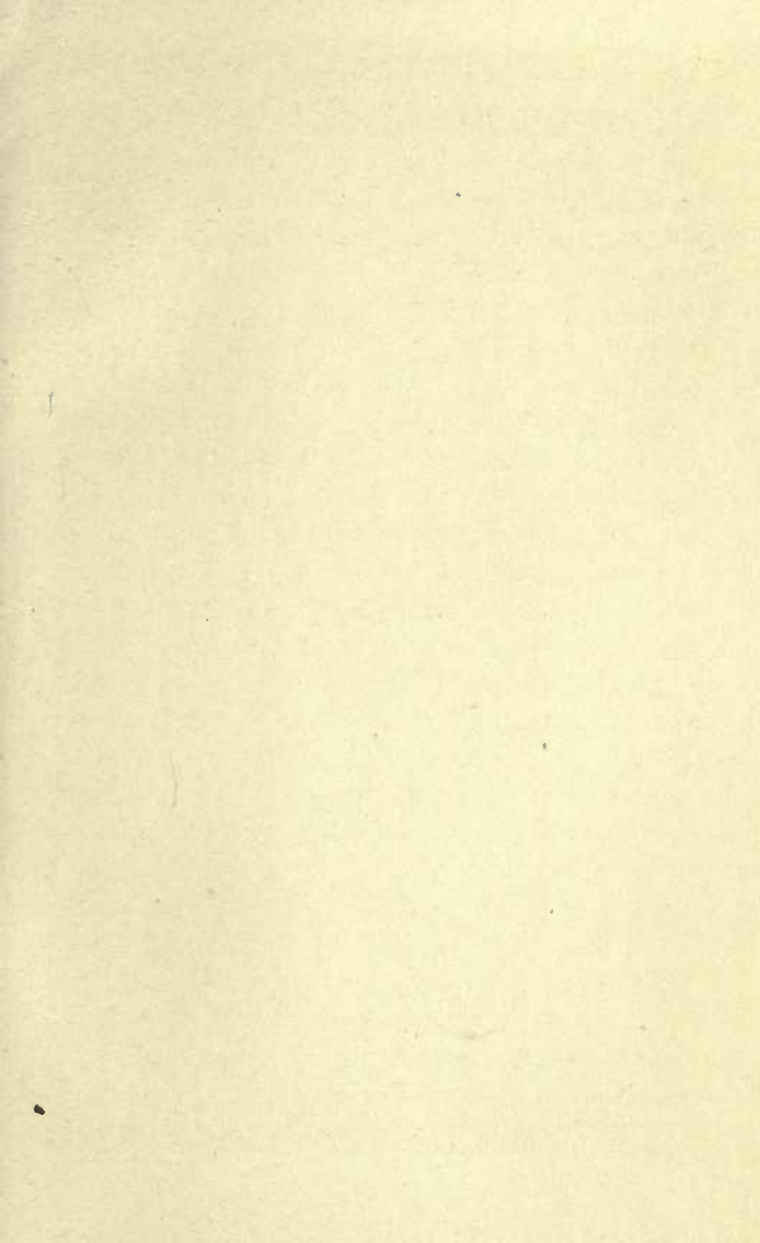
direct port of call in Australia. It will in time be connected by railroad with the southern states, as it now is by the telegraph service. In the interior nomadic tribes of blacks hunt and fish and wander; hardy settlers have pitched their homesteads in a clearing in the forest, and raise cattle there, with the nearest neighbour a hundred miles away; the lonely buffalo hunter plies his lucrative trade with the help of native hunters.

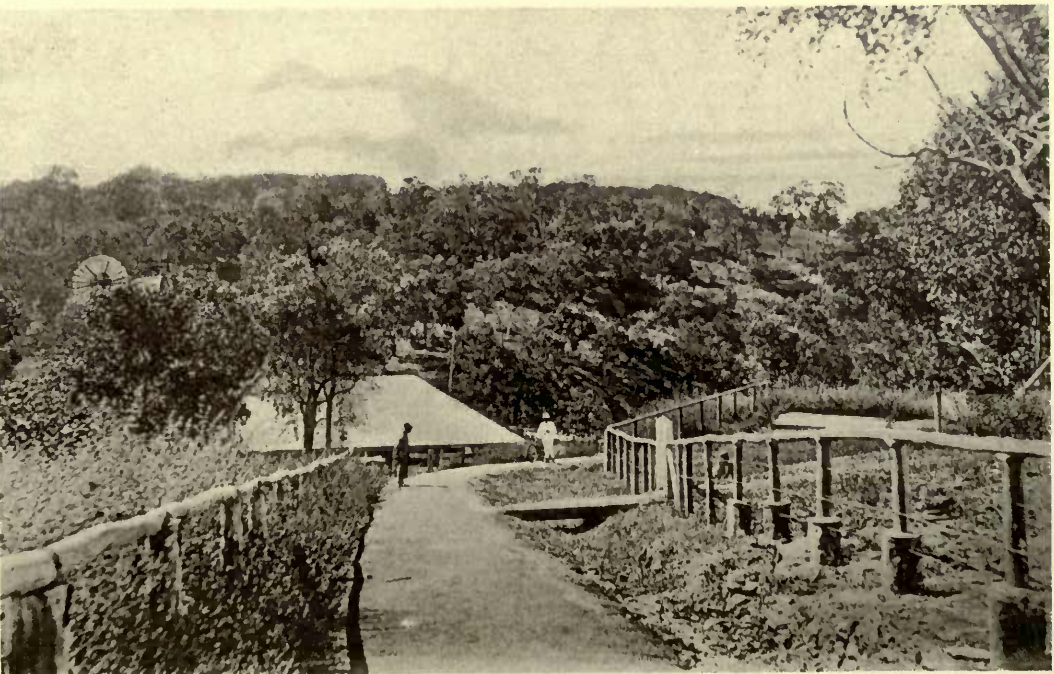
The Australians themselves do not seem to know very much more about the Northern Territory than the average Englishman. They speak of it as an arid wilderness, much in the same way as they regard Western Australia; yet, to the visitor from home, it is the beauty and the wildness of Western and Northern Australia, that make an appeal far more profound than that of the busy, civilised, and comparatively populous southern and eastern states. With all their differences they are still too much like home to stir the imagination. What is popularly known about the Northern Territory is largely learned from the writings of a clever Australian woman,* who has lived the isolated yet stimulating life of the settler's wife in the interior. The part to be played by women in the future of the Northern Territory is a very important one. It

* Mrs. Æneas Gunn, "We of the Never Never."

is a hard thing for a man to go into exile with his cattle and his black retainers, but if Australian or European women will consent to share the hardships, and the rough life, and the loneliness, in order to make a home for their men; bringing to it, as opportunity offers, the atmosphere and the comforts of civilisation, the problem of opening up the inland country is helped considerably on its way. That there are compensations in the life no one can doubt, who has talked with those who know it, or seen the lonely homesteads in the bush, that wonderful primeval forest with its manifold beauty and mystery.

For those who stay at home, no better idea of it can be derived than from reading Mrs. Gunn's "We of the Never Never," in which she describes the daily life of a cattle station up-country, and all her odd adventures with the native servants, honest warm-hearted creatures, with the artless cunning, and the caprices of children. The residents of Port Darwin talked of the light-hearted gaiety of their native servants, and their happy irresponsibility. Yet they seem to work well in their own erratic way; but from time to time they find the call of the wild irresistible, then they obey it, and steal away to their native island, or forest tribe, till the conditions of life there weary them, and the whim seizes them to return.





VIEW NEAR DARWIN.

Approaching Port Darwin from the east the navigation is difficult and dangerous. All the day before, we had steamed very slowly in order to avoid reaching the passage of the Vernon Isles after nightfall. The islands are inhabited, and the smoke of bush fires was frequently to be seen, either signal fires lighted by the natives, or by Europeans, to burn off the dead grass at the end of the winter.

The approach to Port Darwin is charmingly pretty. The tropical vegetation that comes down nearly to the water's edge is a vivid green, and the cliffs that fringe the shore a warm red. The tops of quite important-looking houses were showing among the trees.

This was Port Darwin, where we had been told there was "nothing to see," for it was only "an arid wilderness." There is no sensation quite like that of steaming slowly into an unknown port, the future is so fraught with delightful and unusual possibilities. The shores take shape and colour, houses just descried with glasses become clear and distinct, people are seen on the beach, the vegetation can now be identified, and finally the ship draws up alongside of the wharf, or the tender has come to fetch us, and we set foot on a strange shore in quest of new adventure.

At Port Darwin adventure had come to us.

It was the prettiest scene imaginable. The coming in of a boat is a gala day for Port Darwin. It brings letters, and newspapers, and butter, and contact with the outside world. So the rough wooden pier wore an air of some gay festival, for most of the European inhabitants had come down to welcome us on our arrival, and to claim those among us, who had had introductions to them from friends in the other states. The men were all in sun helmets and white ducks, the women in white linen, and the little pier, crowded with its throng of white figures in the strong sunshine, had for background the brilliant red and green of the shore. We were fortunate in falling to the share of an official who knew and cared for the district, and could tell us all we wanted to know about it. His wife was with him, and another lady, to whom we had had an introduction, and whose husband was kept busy by the incoming mail.

They are great organisers at Port Darwin. We were to be taken to a tea-party in the Botanical Gardens, and received there by the Administrator, as the Governor of the Northern Territory is called, and his wife; and an evening lecture was to be given by one of the passengers. With Australians you become friends in a very short space of time in their own country. Of

their generous kindness and hospitality too much cannot be said, and the very fact that you are ignorant of all they know is a bond. At home it is different. They are often a little on the defensive, because they have an idea that we shall assume superior airs and consider them "colonial"—a vague term of opprobrium. Then, too, our ways chill them; their open-handed, open-hearted hospitality is the natural thing there. In a country, where there is a perennial shortage of servants, nobody minds or regards it, if the hostess and daughter of the house change the plates, except in the richest and most sophisticated circles. We should put off a dinner-party if our servants were ill, because we are so hampered by hard-and-fast conventions, not so much because we are inhospitable, but because we must maintain an accepted standard—it must be impossible for an Australian quite to understand this.

A little stuffy lumbering train takes passengers and merchandise from the wharf to the foot of a steep hill that leads up to Darwin. But it was too beautiful to immure ourselves in it, so we walked to the shore, where a Government horse and cart had been commandeered on our behalf. Its reins were held by "Tommy," also in white ducks and all smiles. Tommy was the native

servant who, with his "lubra" and a Chinese cook, ran our friend's house. We got in and began the ascent of the steep red hill. The Government horse was tough but deliberate, and crawled leisurely through the thick red dust. The air was heavy with the sweet strong scent of a curiously twisted Japanese-looking tree, not unlike an olive. It was covered with small white flowers, and was called a milkwood tree. The natives say that the milky juice of the wood produces blindness.

At the entrance to Darwin is the Chinese quarter, all tumble-down tin shanties, unsightly and comfortless, and very poverty-stricken looking, with shrill children screaming and playing in the dust. Its appearance gave one an inkling why Australians would rather dispense with the cheap and efficient Chinese labour than leaven the population of their great clean land with people who could thrive contentedly in a little colony of pigsties. Here suddenly was a bullock cart laden with wood, the little Chinese driver in his immense flat hat, looking exactly as if he had just stepped off a valuable old tea-tray. It was the very soul of all Oriental picturesqueness. Leaving behind the comfortable verandahed houses of the European residents, we struck into a soft red road that led through

COCONUT GROVE, DARWIN.

the bush to the Botanical Gardens. It seems incongruous to talk of Botanical Gardens in a place that is yet hardly a town, but in a new country foresight is essential, and the Government has set apart here as elsewhere a reserve for the future, when Port Darwin shall be a great busy port crowded with shipping, and its lonely shores thronged with houses.

It was just at the end of the dry season when we were there, and as we drove along between eucalyptus and coco palms, and all kinds of unfamiliar tropical plants, their vivid green contrasted oddly with the absolutely bare red soil—there was not a blade of grass or green upon it. This is its normal condition in the dry season, which occurs with perfect regularity from May to October. The rains are ushered in by violent thunderstorms and hurricanes, increasing in frequency till the end of November, when about an inch of rain falls nearly every day. In January the wet season has penetrated to the heart of the continent.

Of course, these climatic conditions do not exactly apply to the whole of a tract of country, which covers more than 500,000 square miles. From north to south the Territory extends for about 900 miles, and it is roughly divided into three areas, according to its climatic conditions.

The northern coastal belt is well watered by numerous rivers, many of them navigable for some distance inland; the district is very fertile, especially in the neighbourhood of the rivers. It is described as "luxuriantly grassed" and well adapted for dairying, for intensive farming, which is, however, at present non-existent, and for the growth of many subtropical products.

Farther from the rivers the land is held to be suitable for agriculture and grazing. This tract of country stretches inland to the tablelands, where different conditions prevail, and which form the second climatic zone. The rainfall here is less than half that of the coastal area. The land rises to some fifteen hundred feet above the sea, and the sharp distinction between the wet and dry seasons is less strongly marked. In these tablelands, though there is a poor supply of surface water, subartesian water is available by shallow boring. The conditions here are admirable for stock raising. The third area stretches into the temperate latitudes of the South Australian border, where the rainfall is variable, but on the average low. Here are the McDonell Ranges, including fine tracts of country that compare favourably with any part of Southern Australia. But when all this has been said there remains at present the question of transport. The great

transcontinental railway has now been extended from Pine Creek to Katherine River, and the Government has decided to construct another section from Katherine to Bitter Springs.

Till lately, settlement has not progressed rapidly on the land in the immediate neighbourhood of the railway. It is hoped that the Northern Territory lands will be better developed as the trade in frozen beef develops. At present the mainstay of the state is beef-production. In an article on the Northern Territory in "Australia To-day," December, 1914, Mr. W. H. Clarke, late Director of Agriculture, states it as his opinion that: "The possibilities in this direction are not far behind those of Queensland, where the meat export industry is taxing already to the utmost the output of cattle." He goes on to say, however, "That many holdings have been stocked and abandoned, hundreds of leases have been taken up and forfeited. Men of sound experience and substantial means have tried the industry in different parts of the Territory, and given it up in despair. To-day some of the foremost cattlemen condemn the country outright, yet there are many stations carrying between them about half a million head of cattle." He explains the causes of this anomalous state of affairs by the distance from markets, "the waste

and anxiety of inadequately watered stock routes, an industry in most cases on lines of crudest pioneering," a lack of fences or musterers, and, in the dry season, drinking-places that become "boggy death-traps," which hundreds, sometimes thousands of cattle frequent, "till their numbers are decimated." The opening of the Freezing Works at Darwin, and the extension of the railway are the first steps towards making it worth the while of the Territory pastoralist to remedy these defects. Freezing Works are being erected.

Agricultural lands are granted in the Territory on perpetual leases as long as the holder complies with certain conditions, such as the erection of a house within two years on his lands, and residence there for a certain number of months in each year. Pastoral leases are granted on still more easy terms, and advances are made to settlers for the purchase of building materials, plant, fencing, and stock.

The mineral wealth of the Northern Territory is as yet unexplored, and is still awaiting a more complete geological survey, before it can be estimated accurately. Gold, tin, and copper have been found in considerable quantities, but have not as yet been adequately worked.

When we visited Port Darwin the rains were

expected. In about another week, said our host, they would begin, and in less than a week from that time the bare red soil would be covered with springing vegetation, three or four feet high. Here the mango trees, that we had seen in flower at Cairns, were already bearing the yellow globes of their fruit. Among a grove of coco palms we saw the picturesque corkscrew palm, with its odd spiral stem, but we saw no animal life, except a few peeweets of the smaller kind, though our host said the flocks of wild geese, that herald the coming of the rain, had already begun to pass overhead. He also pointed out a spot on the road, in which a short time before, a large kangaroo had run out of the bush and, startled at seeing him, cleared his horse's head at one bound.

At the entrance to the Botanical Gardens we saw our first banyan tree, bare of leaves, and showing the curious formation of the branches. Later we passed one that had already burst into leaf. The drive afforded lovely glimpses of the harbour, its bright blue waters lapping the green, wooded shores. In the Botanical Gardens there were as yet few flowers. The scarlet coral-tree was there, and another scarlet flowering tree, and some waxy, red hibiscus. The Administrator and his wife received their guests upon a lawn, that had somehow retained its grass, and we then sat

about at little tables, and were waited on by the young daughters of the residents; and anyone seeing their pretty bright faces and healthy colour, would feel that the much-abused climate of Port Darwin had been greatly vilified. The scent of a wood fire was wafted over to us, from where the billy tea was boiling on some logs. The air was delicious; but we had not started till the heat of the day was over, for, owing to the unfortunate detention at Townsville, our stay at Darwin, a place of a hundredfold its interest, had been lamentably curtailed. We had hoped to see something of the native life. Here the native population has retained its primitive simplicity. The natives of the interior do not come into contact with other races. They are, unfortunately, dying out, like the native Australian animals, for what reason is not definitely known. The Commonwealth Year Book for 1912 gives the total number of the native population of the Northern Territory as 20,000, and adds that it is believed they are rapidly dying out. Of these, 1223 were semi-civilised, through coming into contact with, or being in the employment of, European residents.

The Australian native has always been in a different position from other primitive peoples. He has not had to contend either with races

superior to himself in intelligence, or with savage wild animals. Consequently he has had nothing to sharpen his wits, and remains the most backward race now existing. Professor Baldwin Spencer, the most recent authority on this subject, points out that though the natives make use habitually of numerous kinds of grass seed, which they grind, and make into cakes, it has never occurred to them to sow these seeds and secure a regular crop. And he adds: "In many tribes, at least, this is because he knows nothing of the relation between the seed and the adult plant, and thinks that the latter grows because he makes it so do by magic." The habits and character, the strange customs and ingenious superstitions of these interesting people have been charmingly delineated in a series of unpretending sketches called "The Little Black Princess," by Mrs. Gunn. It is a sort of popular Fraser's "Golden Bough," and is valuable as preserving a record of the everyday life of the Europeans in the Northern Territory under conditions that must of necessity soon pass away.

We could not hope to see the "myals," or wild blacks, and it was already drawing towards nightfall. Our host, with delightful resourcefulness, proposed to take us to the local gaol, as it afforded the only opportunity of our making acquaintance

with the natives. It was a question whether we could get there before it was dark. A Government motor-car had just driven up, arrived back from the Daly River. Its driver was having a hurried sandwich, which he must have badly wanted, but he at once consented to take us. It was a powerfully built car, covered with dust, and with no doors, so that we had to scramble in over the sides, which we did with great alacrity. As we were starting one of the ladies who had taken charge of us said, "Of course you will dine with us to-night. Our servants have gone off, and we have got workmen in the house, but that will make no difference, if you will come." There was the typical Australian hospitality, which is so unlike what we mean by the word. If we had accepted, we should no doubt have had an excellent dinner served on the verandah; but we declined, as we had to dress for the evening lecture, and accepted instead an invitation to supper afterwards.

This point satisfactorily settled, we proceeded to the gaol. The gaol looked very clean and new and official. Its gates were closed, and some scarlet hibiscus was in flower by the fence. On a look-out station a sooty black man was keeping watch with a telescope for incoming vessels. The prisoners had all gone to bed for the night,

but they were fetched out to make our acquaintance, and lined up in the grounds. Inside it was cool and airy, with black cement floors, to match the inmates. Out they came, the poor gaol-birds, wild things of the woods, with the limitless forest to roam over, cooped up in a cell for following the natural bent of any wild animal to fight and kill. They have little sense of time, and their sentences are not for long; they spend nearly all their day in the open air. They stood in a pathetic little row in their dark blue prison dress, with their sooty, shaven heads. One was in chains, as being held to be dangerous and likely to give trouble. There seemed to be different types, some of them were much flatter-nosed than others. Most of them were in for murder; in two cases it had been provoked by cruelty. In one of these a white man had justly earned the hatred of his black neighbours. The case, said our friend, had been very well got up.* It was proved that the dead man was fishing for bêche-de-mer † one moonlight night; the natives whom he had injured lay in wait for him, and speared him to death. Morally they were

* An account of this interesting trial has been brilliantly given in "An Untamed Territory," Macmillan and Co., by Miss Elsie Masson.

† In Malay called tripang.

justified by their own code, but the forces of order were obliged to assert themselves.

Life sentences are imposed for murder, but the prisoners are always released, the period of their detention depending on their good behaviour, for often they pine away in captivity.

Looking at these simple, childlike, confiding creatures, who play marbles for amusement, one felt that any white who could treat them cruelly deserved all he got. Only one of them looked at us with the gloomy, smouldering eyes of a caged animal. The others all greeted our host with beaming confidence. One man's skull was deeply cleft horizontally for about two inches. "By a black fellow," he remarked without resentment. Another from Pine Creek was asked what he was in for. "Longa fight Chinaman," he responded with a reminiscent chuckle of satisfaction. It was the last amusing thing the poor fellow had done. Another was in "longa kill Chinaman," as he unconcernedly explained. Our friend with the cleft skull had committed a very cruel murder. After acting as guide to a white man in the bush, he followed him secretly for days, and finally murdered him in his sleep for the little food he had got left, and he was almost starving at the time. We had come from England and must return, our host told them. "No

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savvy," they replied vaguely. So we said good-bye to our poor little dusky brothers, and turned back to the Botanical Gardens to recover the Government cart and horse. At parting, our driver took out of a native basket a little collar of coloured beads made by the natives up the Daly River, and gave it to us as a memento of our brief acquaintance.

There were only three cars in Darwin, and the snorting noise made by the one in which we returned awoke our horse to such terrified and mettlesome curvetting, that we could only remount the seat with considerable difficulty. We drove back through the gathering dusk with flying foxes soundlessly flitting across our path. By the time we reached the jetty darkness had come on. We had to make a hasty change, and after a hurried dinner, we started back again in the heavy, moist, scented darkness to find the hall in which the evening's lecture was to be delivered. It was very funny to find that early closing was compulsory in Darwin. Chinatown must hate it. The little shops were half lighted, and in the dusk seated figures like small Buddhas were dimly discernible outside. A strong, Oriental smell hung over it all.

We shall always remember the scene of the lecture in the Town Hall. The moist heat, the

little red ants that swarmed on the floor, above the voice of the lecturer, the frail rattle of the grasshoppers outside insistent and unceasing; and the white-clad rows of men, gravely, unwaveringly attentive.

After the lecture the kindly lady, who is the wife of the Administrator, proposed a delightful scheme of giving us an early breakfast at seven, and driving us out to the nearest native compound. How exquisite the freshness of morning would have been in that tropical country, and how full of interest and novelty the whole expedition. We were only too eager to go, but there were depressing rumours of our departure at dawn. We were now to visit our hostess of the afternoon, and, guided by our host, we stumbled across what they called a paddock, which seemed to be full of tussocks of some dead weed that smelt like horehound.

The stars were brilliant, the Southern Cross pointing our way as it hung just above the dark roof of the house. At the entrance to the garden was a banyan tree, and there were green ants' nests among the leaves of the other trees, neatly sewn up like long, narrow bags, and green ants with red legs were running about everywhere, even on the window-sills. We sat on the verandah, and were given buffalo tongue sandwiches, which

have an agreeable, esoteric flavour, quite incomparable to anything else. It was all very pretty and comfortable, despite the absence of servants. The Port Darwin housewife has to wage an active and unceasing warfare against insect pests. Food cannot be left on the table for a short time without ants swarming on it. Large cockroaches three or four inches long lurk behind furniture; the destructive silver fish conceal themselves in unopened drawers, and mosquitoes make life a continual irritation, unless ceaseless precautions are taken. Still, active vigilance will reduce all these pests to a minimum.

The pleasant evening slipped away too soon. It was time to return to the port. We strolled back through the mysterious night, moist and warm and scented by flowering frangipani in the gardens of the dimly seen bungalows. Our boat lying below in the harbour was a blazing patch of light; the glow of a distant bush fire lit up the opposite coast; and that was all—all that we saw of the Northern Territory, mysterious fascinating, and beautiful, with its vast and intricate problems of labour and climate waiting solution. For with early morning we slipped away from its red and green shores, just as the rising sun had crimsoned all the glassy sea. That

is our last memory of Australia, and of all the places we visited it was Port Darwin that we were most loth to leave, for we somehow felt that Australia had kept her best till last.

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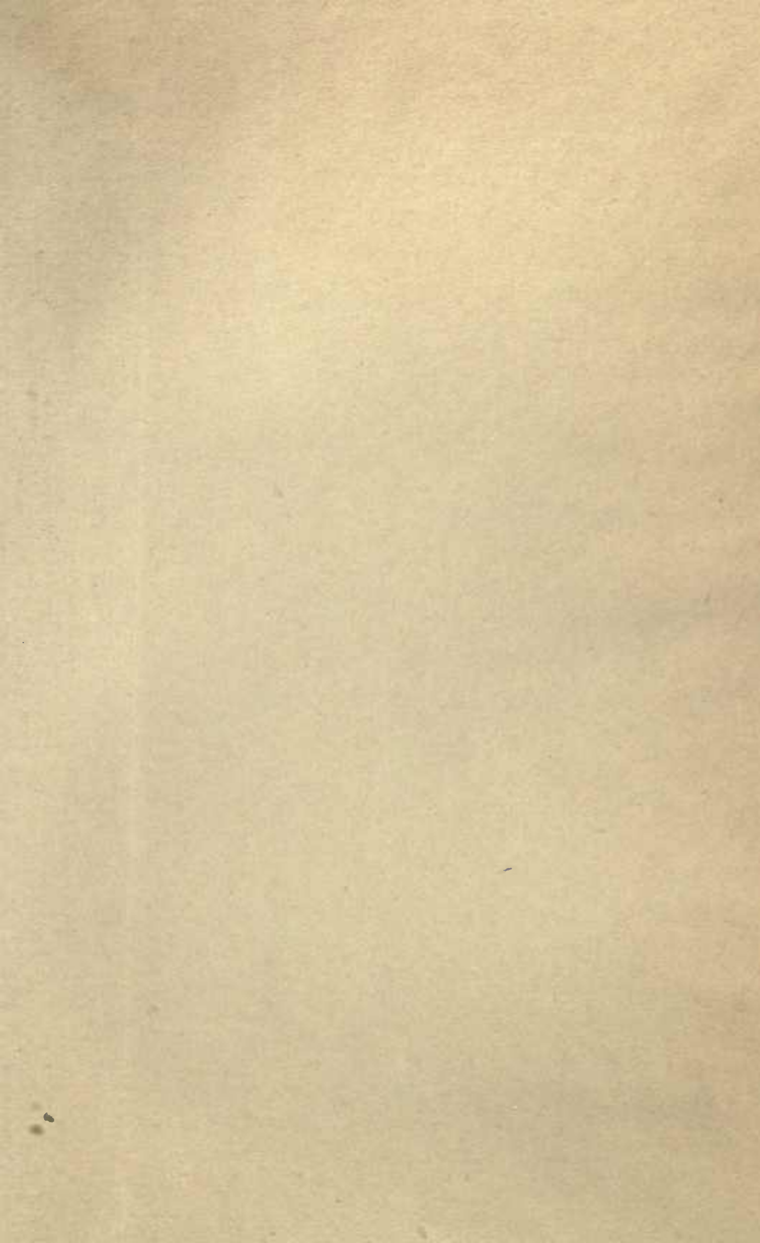

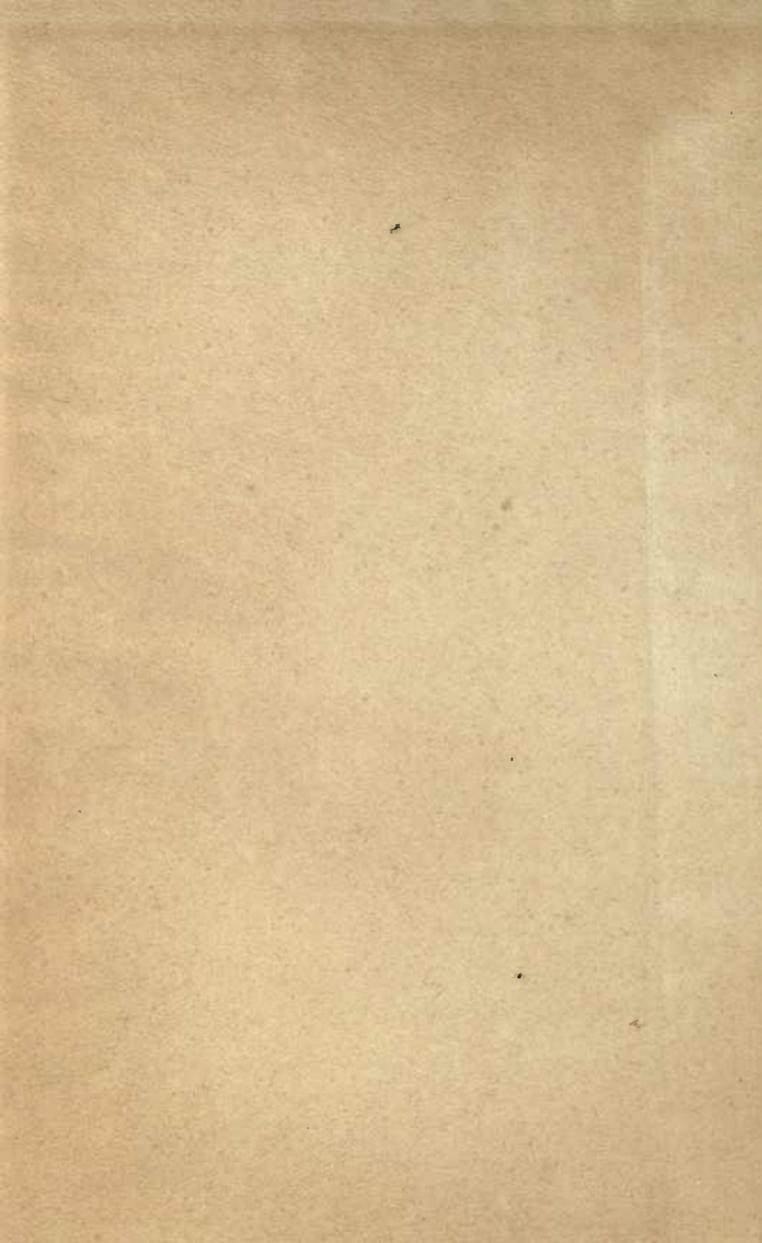

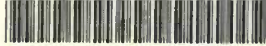
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