

Our Return Journey:

BEING

A DIARY OF A VOYAGE FROM MELBOURNE,
AUSTRALIA, TO SOUTHAMPTON,

In the ss. "Friedrich der Grosse."

(Leaving Melbourne December 6th, 1898, and arriving at Southampton
January 18th, 1899.)

BY S. J. ROBERTS.

[PRINTED BY REQUEST FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.]

Our Return Journey :

BEING

A DIARY OF A VOYAGE FROM MELBOURNE,
AUSTRALIA, TO SOUTHAMPTON,

In the ss. "Friedrich der Grosse."

(Leaving Melbourne December 6th, 1898, and arriving at Southampton
January 18th, 1899.)

BY S. J. ROBERTS.

[PRINTED BY REQUEST FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.]

Diary of Return Journey

FROM MELBOURNE TO LONDON.

WE left Port Melbourne in the *Friedrich der Grosse* on Tuesday, December 6th, 1898. The vessel was due to sail at 1 p.m., but as so often happens, there was a delay of several hours, so that many of those who came to see us off must have grown tired of waiting, and indeed most were unable to stay until the actual time of sailing, and one by one reluctantly took their departure.

A few there were who stayed on to see the very last of us,—my sister and brother-in-law (brother and sister Firth), our faithful little Amy, brother and sister Ladson, and several more. Mother had to retire from the scene some time before, taking refuge in her cabin, as she was quite unequal to any further strain, but just at the last she appeared on deck to wave the last farewells to the dear friends from whom we were so sorry to part, and indeed the sorrow was mutual.

It was beautiful weather as we left Melbourne, but soon grew overcast, and by night there was quite a heavy swell setting in. Our cabin is not at all the one we would have chosen, being quite a long journey from the dining saloon, and without a porthole, which makes it decidedly stuffy, unless we submit to a fierce gale of air pouring down upon us through the ventilator, which is highly objectionable when one has a heavy cold, as I unfortunately have. The stewards professed to shut off the draught, but there was but little perceptible difference, so finally as a last resort, a pillow was stuffed into the objectionable aperture, and such, with variations, continues to be our method of regulating the ventilation. It appears that a large number of the passengers will be getting off at Freemantle, West Australia, so there may be a chance of our getting a more comfortable cabin then.

The *Friedrich* is a very large boat of about 10,000 tons,—nearly twice the size of the *Darmstadt*, in which we came out. This is an improvement in many respects. The motion is not so perceptible, indeed it is a beautifully steady-going vessel, quite a floating city, and

if it were not a *German* boat, we could admire it still more unreservedly, but it is a great drawback having foreigners to deal with, more especially when you are ill and *cannot* succeed in making them understand what you want. If you are well, as mother says, you can afford to laugh at it. Still we must persistently look at the *advantages*, and these are not far to seek.

There is a splendid promenade deck for the second salooners, to which class we belong. The first saloon promenade deck is over our heads, and of equal extent. It is quite a journey from end to end of the ship, and there is the usual queer assortment of passengers on the steerage deck, "all sorts and conditions of men," prominent among whom are the swarthy Hindoos, with their white turbans and flowing garments. Our dining saloon is fairly well filled at present, I suppose it seats between fifty and sixty.

We have not as yet come across anyone about whom there is anything very special to relate, but of course it is early to speak yet. Our own table seats eight—three on each side and one at each end. On one side there is a portly young Jew, who looks as if he got more than his share of the good things of life, and enjoyed them unquestioningly; next to him is mother, then myself. Opposite, first comes Edgar, who is gradually getting initiated, with considerable amusement (and occasionally something nearer disgust), into the mysteries of German diet, and mysterious it certainly is, and often unpalatable to simple English taste. His next neighbour is a little girl of remarkable independence for her years, travelling all alone from Melbourne to Fremantle, and quite well able to carry herself. Next is a wiry youth, who, it transpires, is a jockey, and looks the character to perfection. He appears to have a keen sense of the humorous, and keeps up a pretty lively conversation with the young fellow at the other end of the table, who has a "wicked eye," and by his quiet drolleries frequently keeps that end of the table in a ferment of hilarity, which mother does not altogether appreciate. She finds, however, that they *will* talk seriously, but it does not seem to come naturally, and evidently requires an unwelcome effort.

I must not omit to mention, by way of contrast, the young law-student at *my* end of the table. He looks grave and unemotional, and as if he took life seriously—not to say lugubriously. I am glad to find he is to be Edgar's room-mate, as he will be a kind of steady influence for that enterprising youth. As regards those at the other tables, there is the usual "pleasing variety"—numbers of characteristic-looking Germans bearing a striking resemblance to those whose acquaintance we made on board the *Darmstadt*; one or two benevolent-looking and portly widows; some young mothers with babies who cannot quite make up their minds whether to be amiable or not, fathers who dance attendance on same, trying to look as if they enjoyed the task; and finally, sundry young ladies, who, now that the sea-sickness is past, are blossoming out into quite different beings, and apparently enjoying, with altogether uncalled-for enthu-

siasm, the vapid inanities of a young fellow with a lordly air and a cast in the eye.

It is quite delightful to have a lull in the tempestuous weather, for between Melbourne and Adelaide we had a most wretched experience. There was quite a storm, so that it was almost impossible to cross the deck to the dining-saloon; the rain was falling heavily, and the wind blowing "great guns." As might be expected, a large proportion of the passengers were sick—the sterner sex not excepted. I stayed ignominiously in my berth for the whole of one day, feeling very far from well. Mother was not actually sick, but quite miserable enough; she did manage to get down to dinner, which was the last thing I should have cared to do.

Next morning (Thursday), it was perfectly delicious to feel that we had come to a standstill, and to know that we had safely arrived at Port Adelaide, and were to stay there until Saturday. Shortly after breakfast two brethren—Wauchope and Wenner—came on board, with suggestions that we should go ashore, and stay there until sailing-time, thus getting an opportunity, which we might never have again, of meeting with the Adelaide ecclesia. We were only too pleased to avail ourselves of this offer, and clambered down into the little launch which was to take us ashore, feeling quite pleased at the prospect of being on *terra firma* again. It is rather an awkward process, especially when the sea is at all rough; but we managed it without accident, mother being decidedly glad when it was over. We had about half-an-hour's journey by rail before finally reaching Adelaide, and were then escorted to a Coffee Palace, as the brethren kindly suggested that mother might prefer this arrangement to staying at a brother's house, because of her weak state. She was thankful to fall in with their thoughtful suggestion, and we found the Coffee Palace very comfortable indeed.

In the afternoon brother Wauchope called for us, as it had been arranged that we were to go to his house to tea, and spend the evening there. On the way we much admired the beautiful hills which are so near to Adelaide, and which looked so pretty in the afternoon sunlight. If we had had just a little more time, we might have made an expedition to them, but we were afraid it would be too laborious an undertaking for mother, considering the short time at our disposal. We left brother Wauchope's early in the evening, having had a pleasant conversation, and spent an enjoyable time there, but as there was the prospect of a social gathering of the brethren the following evening, it was advisable for mother to conserve her strength as far as possible.

The next day was one of brilliant sunshine, and in the morning mother and I found our way to the Zoological Gardens, and spent a very pleasant hour there. The gardens are most prettily laid out, and the collection of animals seems almost equal to the one in Melbourne; it was beautifully quiet there, but almost tropically hot. Returning home, Adelaide struck us as really a very pretty and picturesque place, the quantity of verdure everywhere presenting such a pleasing contrast

to the dried-up and barren-looking tracts of country around Coburg, with which we had recently become so familiar. King William Street, of which we had heard so much, quite came up to our expectations. I suppose it is wider even than any street in Melbourne, but the buildings not being so high, nor of such magnificent style, the result is not so imposing as Collins Street, which surely everyone *must* admire.

The meeting-place at which the social gathering was held in the evening is in a street off King William Street, and near the Post Office. We met at a quarter to eight, and spent a pleasant time until 10 p.m. There were speeches by different brethren, and hymns, and half-way through there was an interval for conversation, which was a good way of breaking town the "stiffness," and becoming acquainted with the various brethren and sisters, to most of whom we had been introduced by brother Wauchope before the commencement of the meeting.

Early next morning we had to take the train for Largs Bay, sister Wenner going down with us from the hotel, and brethren Wenner and Macdonald meeting us at the station. The latter brother came with us in the launch back to our steamer, and we said farewell to him on board, feeling sorry to leave the pleasant acquaintances in the truth so newly formed, and at the same time very thankful for having been permitted to have such a pleasant time of respite on our journey. The weather continued most pleasant after sailing, which we did at mid-day.

Saturday, December 10th.—My cold by this time had developed so oppressively that I thought it best not to leave my cabin on the Sunday; so but for the solemn strains of the "Old Hundredth" which ushered in the dawn of the First Day, there was but little to mark it from the other days of the week. We began to find our cabin becoming very oppressive, and looked forward hopefully to getting better quarters at Freemantle, which we were told we should reach the following Wednesday, but the reports as to how long we should stay there were amusingly conflicting. From "all day," it came down to "three hours," and then gradually crept up to "six," when to crown all it was finally suggested that we might reach there at nightfall, and sail again in the early morning, without getting an opportunity of landing at all.

One of the "portly widows" is leaving us at Freemantle,—she breaks her journey there en route for England. This is the lady who, as mother discovered upon conversation, is interested in the "conversion of ragged boys" or some such charitable enterprise; but "doesn't know much about the millennium," thereby appearing to imply that the former is by far the most important matter. It is strange how people can be so oblivious to the advent of the most auspicious epoch in the world's history, and yet be consumingly taken up with the limited problems of the hour. But one really gets accustomed to this popular attitude, and to feel grateful when here and there one is found, in humble and rational attitude enquiring "What is Truth?" and willing to accept it, when found, at whatever risk.

The problem of landing at Freemantle, finally resolved itself into "landing at noon, sail again at six," and so, about twelve o'clock, we began to get quite near land, a long stretch of low-lying sandhills, and were told "This is Freemantle." The first launch that arrived brought brother Birk, sister Bates, and sister Matthews to meet us, and also a letter to me from sister Hansen, saying if possible she and her sister would, at any rate, be down to see us off. We learnt with surprise that brother and sister Webb had left for Melbourne the Sunday before, so that the scattered little company in the west is now considerably reduced, brother and sister Firth having returned to Melbourne some time ago. Brother Webb will be greatly missed as a lecturing brother and in active service generally. In the West there seems to be a very fluctuating population, such a going to and fro that one is never sure how long any particular state of things will last. The evening lectures, it seems, have had to be given up again, which seems a pity, as strangers cannot so well be invited to the breaking of bread, which is a meeting essentially for the edification of the brethren. However, perhaps an opportunity for resumption may arrive presently; sometimes the most unlikely fields afterwards prove quite active centres. One never knows where the seed may fall, and at least, there is great satisfaction in the sowing of it, apart from results, for it is the doing of *our* part, whatever comes of it as far as others are concerned.

We were very sorry to find there would not be time for us to visit Perth. We had wished to see it, having heard a great deal about its beauties from my sister, who lived there for more than six months. It is about three-quarters of an hour's journey, at least, by train from Freemantle (railway travelling is a *very* slow affair out here), and then the trains run but seldom, and the launch that would take us back to the *Friedrich* returned rather early, so altogether it seemed there would be a little risk in attempting it. By the advice of friends (several more of whom joined our party on landing, by launch, at Freemantle) we gave up the idea, and determined to just make the best of the time at Freemantle, which is quite a considerable township. The sun was by this time beating down with quite a fierce heat, and when our little party adjourned into a cool shady room to get a refreshing cup of tea, it was quite a delicious relief. Especially so after the doubtful kind of tea we get on board ship; the Germans don't seem to be adepts at the art of making it. We had quite a pleasant time over our "afternoon tea." Brother Birk had by this time left us, so we were just a company of sisters—sisters Bates and Matthews, whom I mentioned before; sister Mignot, with her picturesque little boy; and sister Scott, who afterwards took us into the dainty confectionary establishment, of which she is the presiding genius. Here mother rested for a time, while sister Scott escorted me round to try if we could find any shops open, as there were sundry little things I wanted to get. It being Wednesday afternoon, nearly all the emporiums were closed, except those of some enterprising Chinamen, who smilingly assured us they hadn't got what we wanted

At last, however, we were fairly successful, and now it was nearly time to be getting back to the ship.

There is nothing *very* particular to be noted about Freemantle—its chief characteristics would appear to be sand, and lack of vegetables and fruit—though that is rather a negative quality, certainly. From certain signs, it would seem that “hard times” are prevalent here, as at other places, and the Government does not seem to be able to afford a sufficient outlay for the improvements which are really necessary, although building is evidently going on. One bit of information was rather amusing, but suggestive of rather serious reflections, too. It seems the streets—or the main street, anyway—used to be much wider and more important looking, but the Government decided that it cost too much to keep in repair, so the houses were requested to “move on,” that is, the sides of the street moved nearer together, and the result, of course, is that the appearance is insignificant looking by comparison.

I am sorry I cannot describe Perth from personal impressions, because I believe it to be a really attractive place, with its pretty river, and other admirable features. But the great drawback in the West is the lack of rain, so that what might otherwise be charming scenery, takes on a dried-up barren looking appearance, after the first freshness of spring is gone. We looked in vain here, too, for the lovely horses that we admired so much in Adelaide; there seemed to be nothing but old hacks, which had been sent over here to draw out a lingering old age. So we had to trust to memory for something beautiful to admire in the way of horses—and I shall never forget these Australian beauties. Adelaide, I ought to have said, took the palm for *funny* conveyances—lumbering long-drawn-out old things which looked like the remote ancestors of the “motor-car.” These latter, by the way, don’t seem to have penetrated Australia, except as curiosities.

Well, I think I was observing that it was getting near sailing-time, so our bevy of sisters escorted us as far as the station, and then we bade farewell to two of them, the others, sister Matthews and sister Scott, coming with us down to the launch. Here we were delighted to come across sister Hansen, who was there on the pier, according to promise, with her sister. She was looking remarkably well, and seems contented and happy at Perth. Her sister was not looking quite so well. They both accompanied us on to the steamer, as also did sister Matthews. They all came and had a look at our cabin, and the ship generally, and wished they were coming to England, as, needless to say, we did, too. However, a voyage has its drawbacks, and *great* ones, and is not one long delight, as sometimes people are apt to think. Of course it makes a very great deal of difference if one is a good sailor, but even then, in time, one longs with a *great* longing to be ashore again.

We bade farewell, with much regret, to our dear sisters, hardly being able to realize that this might be, and probably *would* be, the

last time, in the present, that we should see our dear bright sister Hansen. It was a charming evening, after the hot, oppressive day; a beautiful cool breeze was springing up, as we were told is generally the case in the hottest of weather at Freemantle. Very pretty the little launch looked, departing in the calm evening sunlight, with its cargo of dim forms and waving handkerchiefs. Soon, as night drew on, a row of twinkling lights was all that we could discern of the vanishing shores of Australia, and we began to realize that we were indeed leaving that vast continent behind, and going forward to a new chapter in life.

Saturday, December 17th.—It is a week to-day since we left Adelaide, and three days since landing at Freemantle, and we have not had the least suspicion of rough weather again yet. Consequently, a full muster appears at table, and the passengers are lively. I believe these German boats are generally voted “slow,” because there is not much going on in the way of concerts, dancing, &c., though down on the steerage deck they have a pretty merry time of it in the evenings, one way and another. We were amused to find the washerwoman giving an example of the “light fantastic toe,” in company with a somewhat lumbering-looking partner. On the deck just below us,—the other end from the steerage deck,—it seems to be *always* washing-day, and there are perpetual strings of things floating gaily in the breeze, while plump good-natured looking German washerwomen with short sleeves and most capable-looking arms, are apparently always on duty—*Sundays not excepted*; which surprised us considerably. We are getting accustomed to the perpetual jabber of the Germans. But few of the stewards know any English, and communications mostly have to be made by the language of sign. They seem a very good-natured lot, mostly well-favoured and thick-set, which seems to be the usual German type. There are a great many birds on board, mostly cockatoos—droll creatures, parrots of all hues and kinds, and canaries. Some are the stewards’ pets, and some belong to passengers. I have one diminutive parrot in a cage, presented by a brother just before leaving Melbourne. It is quite young, only seven or eight weeks old, and has hitherto had to be fed assiduously and frequently, but now is getting more independent, and increasing in size and brilliance of plumage every day. It gets a great deal of attention, as it is placed on the deck, with numbers of others, who seem very happy all together—except one poor cockatoo which broke its wing yesterday, and now sits in a box, with its wing set, putting its head out in a pathetic, appealing sort of way. These cockatoos are all wonderfully tame, and like to be stroked and petted like a cat. (As I write, an overgrown youth of fifteen or so, sits at the piano playing scales and exercises in a wooden sort of manner, and presently the inevitable German band will strike up, so I write under certain difficulties, as will be seen.)

I must not omit to say that, thanks to the kindness of the head steward, we now have a most commodious, well-appointed cabin, instead of the restricted, inconvenient one we had to submit to pre-

viously. But, as every good thing has its drawbacks, so this beautiful cabin turns out to be in a very noisy part of the ship, near the tiller, which keeps up a chronic thumping noise, like stairs being swept down all the time with a gigantic broomstick. Fortunately, however, we do not feel the motion of the screw much here, although the cabin shakes a good deal in the calmest weather. But it is so beautifully large, and has plenty of space for our very miscellaneous belongings, and also has *two* port-holes,—such a pleasant change from having none at all, especially now that the weather is getting steadily warmer as we get nearer to the Equator. (The youth at the piano is now beginning to play some really pretty things, which make me want to stop and listen—but I will not yield to the impulse.)

One week from to-day we hope to be arriving at Colombo, that is on Christmas Eve. We may spend our Christmas on shore there. I expect it will not be so hot as when we were last there, as it is winter time at present in these latitudes.

Wednesday, December 21st.—We are now getting well through the most monotonous period of our voyage, for all through the vast Indian Ocean there is absolutely nothing to be seen from day to day but one continuous stretch of sea and sky, and not even a single sail, or island has been visible, only little flocks of flying-fish darting in and out of the water occasionally. The passengers resort to various devices to pass the time away, and have organised a programme of sports, which causes a general air of animation and hilarity meanwhile. There was also a concert one evening, and the strains of music sounded very pretty in the distance, only, of course, as usual, they had to descend to the inevitable comic element, which wins rounds of ill-deserved applause. There are a few in our saloon who play really well, and the two young ladies who are decidedly the *belles* of the community, and know it, sing duets together very prettily. There are two other young ladies, who, with their mother, now sit opposite to us at table, who are decidedly interesting. They appear to be very well educated (were at school in Switzerland, I discover) and have travelled a great deal, so that they are really very good company. They are leaving us, however, at Colombo, as they are to break their journey there. The map by the door of the dining-saloon shows the little flags marking our progress steadily advancing north-west, across the Indian Ocean, to Colombo, and I hear that we are to pass “the line” this evening, so that we may hope to have it a little cooler soon; at present the thermometer stands at considerably over 80 degrees in our cabin. We are into the third week of our voyage, and just to think that when we enter the sixth, it will be the depth of winter!

Tuesday, December 27th.—The diary has had to be neglected a little the last few days, not, as might be surmised, on account of the engrossing nature of Christmas festivities, which have been nil, but because I have not been at all well, and not the least bit inclined to write, or indeed do anything else. It is much the same experience

that I had coming out on the *Darmstadt*, after about the third week, and when the hot weather fairly sets in, the “German-ness” of the situation gets pretty well intolerable, and one longs inexpressibly for a good old English *menu* once more. When feeling rather out of sorts, the very remarkable flavourings, and “dishings-up” altogether, are rather calculated to drive away what little of appetite there may be. But I must not dwell only on the unpleasant side. The weather remains perfect, and indeed we are favoured to have such a long spell of calm and sunshine. When we arrived at Colombo last Friday afternoon, December 23rd, it was very different weather from what we had there nearly eighteen months ago, August, 1897, when the heat was very oppressive. This time, of course, it was winter, but far from what *we* understand by winter, being very close and muggy, and a slight drizzling rain was falling. We did not go ashore till Saturday morning, though many of the passengers did, and remained ashore all night, to escape the horrors of the very unpleasant coaling process, which necessitates all port holes and doors being closed, with a very stifling result. We managed to live through it, however, but it was very refreshing to get out to the sea breezes in a small boat in the morning, and go ashore.

Colombo, on landing, quite justifies the expectations which are raised by its appearance from the steamer, when first it comes in sight. This being the rainy season, the verdure is dazzlingly green, and contrasts in a most pleasing way with the brilliantly red soil. Many of the streets are hilly, and it is like one long succession of bowers and avenues, in some parts abounding in banana-trees, cocoanut palms, and luxuriant tropical foliage, and the funniest little native dwellings on either side, with something to excite comments of amusement or admiration every minute as you go along. It is, in fact, just like a living picture, as was often remarked, the varied and almost ludicrous effect of the costumes of the natives alone, with the inevitable umbrella, no matter what else is lacking, being quite sufficient to afford entertainment for hours. The poor little patient bullocks were plodding along just as when we were there last, with loads, sometimes apparently quite disproportionate to their size, but I suppose they must be very strong, and they would need to be very patient to stand the treatment they get sometimes. We hired a carriage to drive round to the principal places of interest within reach, for we only had three or four hours to stay.

Climbing a rather steep hill, we almost came into collision with one of the native wagons, as the bullock drawing it was obstinate, and would not move out of our way. Its driver, however, soon mended matters by sticking a sharp stick right into the poor thing's ribs, and proceeding to enforce his authority by attacking its tail in a manner more forcible than humane, so at last it dragged on, evidently against its will.

There is an incessant chattering amongst the natives, they are really almost like a lot of intelligent monkeys, and after a time it

becomes quite wearying. The guide, who insisted on accompanying us, managed to keep the children at bay. They follow all carriages of visitors in swarms, begging all the time in a very pretty manner. We gave them a few native coins we had, but of course that only made them more vociferous, and at last the guide had to fairly beat them off, and they retired regretfully. We saw one thing this time which we did not examine when we were here before, that was a Buddhist temple, and several natives in attendance showed us through with not the least approach to reverence, the beggar children following all the time. They told us a lot of absurd stories about Buddha and Brahma, explaining the pictures with which the walls were covered, and showed us one picture of the Messiah who was yet to come, which seemed to be the only glimmering of truth in all their superstitions. Mother asked them if they prayed to Buddha and these other gods, and they said, "Oh yes."—"Does he answer you?"—"Certainly," very emphatically with broad smiles, broader ones still presently when the money-box was pointed out to us, and we were gracefully invited to contribute. Poor things, we felt sorry for their benighted state, but their intelligence is of a very limited order, and superstition seems to come natural to them. It would not be the slightest use trying to *reason* with them, they require changing radically. It is a comfort to reflect that there *will* be a time when all shall "know the Lord."

The architecture, both of the temples (Mohammedan and Buddhist) and also of the private houses, is very ornamental indeed, and looks very pretty, surrounded as it is by palm trees and all sorts of tropical growth. The close damp sort of heat—I don't know quite how to express it—was rather oppressive, and one could quite imagine fevers and malarias hanging about, as I suppose is often the case in these climates. We began to feel very tired by-and-bye, the incessant liveliness of scene, in conjunction with the closeness of the atmosphere, producing this effect. Of course the driver, when we dismissed him, wanted to make out we were not paying him nearly enough, but one gets hardened to this sort of thing in travelling, and after an agreement has been made beforehand, there can be no injustice in abiding by it. Finally, he was satisfied, and we concluded the guide was too, as he smiled brilliantly (they all have beautiful teeth) on receipt of the trifle we gave him—he really had given us a lot of information in the course of the drive. After getting a cup of indifferent tea at a so-called hotel, we walked about a little just to get a closer view of some of the curious-looking shops, all open-fronted, the proprietors darting out eagerly to secure customers when they think they see a chance. The shaving operations are carried on very publicly—one might imagine it was a kind of show—they are such uncanny-looking creatures; in one case it looked like a shrouded ghoul shaving a skeleton, with imps standing around, and a background of befitting gloominess. In some cases the black heads are shaved perfectly smooth, like cannon-balls, and the effect is very curious. This was one of the first things we noticed in the occupants of the native boats (cattamarangs) who

came out to meet the ship and quickly infested the deck, and in fact, the whole ship, selling curios, and the children offering to "dive, dive, dive" for small coins. They all seem very lithe and active, the men who draw the rick-shaws are able to run for great distances, like horses. One of our fellow-passeagers, a lady, with her little girl, rode in one of these and accompanied us during our drive, almost out-distancing us at times, but the poor man seemed almost melted; we felt very sorry for him.

There seemed to be some slight preparations for Christmas, on shore. We could not realise it to be Christmas Eve, with such a mid-summer temperature, but had to reason ourselves into the fact that it really was so. An "English Bakery" paraded some very festive-looking iced Christmas-cakes, but the rest of their commodities looked very *un-English*, and I invested rather hesitatingly in a doubtful-looking brown loaf, which, however, turned out to be many degrees better than the ship's bread, which it is often almost penance to eat. The lady opposite to us at table thinks the German *black bread* "delicious." Well, I suppose it is all a question of taste, but *that* surely must be a taste very difficult to acquire. The *Friedrich* was due to start at two o'clock on Saturday afternoon, so about one, we, in company with several of our fellow-passengers, embarked on the little launch to get back to our floating home. It was very close and stifling, and when the steamer had actually started, which she did punctually, for a wonder, the beautiful breeze blowing in through the port holes was delicious, after so much sultriness and coal-dust. The band played a few hymns in honour of Christmas Eve, and the steerage passengers honoured it in *their way* by playing all sorts of uproarious games. We did not expect to have been sailing again so soon. I suppose the lovely weather has something to do with the rapid progress we are making. There was absolutely nothing to mark Christmas Day on board from any other day, not even the dinner, which was as solidly and uncompromisingly German as ever. There *was* "roast goose," certainly, but I should think a tougher specimen of its race never (dis)graced a festal board, and then the Germans eat stewed apricots with it! And while on this subject, I may just mention that last evening *asparagus* was sent round apparently with the ice-cream! And the soup lately has been made of cherries and prunes, and pancakes of bananas.

A great many more beautiful birds have been brought on board, so that the lower deck is almost like a department of some Zoological Gardens, especially now there is a funny little mongoose and some tortoises. The former is something like a weasel, but quite tame. My little parrot (a rosella, popularly called "Joey") was investigating its tail with his strong little beak, which the little animal did not appreciate.

It grows dark in the evening very suddenly now, but I am disappointed that there have been no beautiful sunsets so far; however, the moon is very brilliant, and it is interesting to watch the gradual altering in position of the stars, as we enter other latitudes.

Saturday, December 31st.—We have actually arrived at the last day of the year, which but a short time back seemed quite a long way in the future. Each week seems to go more quickly than its predecessor, and we shall be at the end of our journey almost before we realize it. Mrs. Green, the lady who accompanied us in our drive at Colombo, has become quite interested in the truth, and is now reading *Christendom Astray*, which is quite a revelation to her. She has been living in Western Australia, where religion is a pretty scarce article, and in time this becomes quite distressing to one who has not lost all aspiration after higher things. Her husband, it appears, is a Jew, but rather ashamed of the fact. So have things changed since it was counted an honour to be one of the "chosen people"! It is so still, however, if they could but realize it, and the day will come when all the world will give witness to the fact.

We have an acquaintance on the steerage deck who called upon us in Melbourne shortly before we left, having just come from the United States. He is not a brother, but brought a message from the ecclesia at Denver, Colorado, and was surprised to hear that we were just leaving for England, and by the same boat that he intended to go by himself. He has not yet decided in favour of the truth, but we have lent him *Christendom Astray*, and also the *Trial*, and he is going thoroughly into the matter, as I rather think he was inclined to have some scientific doubts. He says he is more impressed than ever before. It seems the truth came under his notice in America, but many objections presented themselves to his mind. Of course this generally is so at first, but the beauty of the truth is that it solves all difficulties in time, and offers a complete and beautiful plan, that satisfies as no other system of theology does or can do.

We have wished, oh, so often, that my dear father were with us, to do something to enlighten the community by his powerful speaking, in a way that our limited efforts, of course, cannot accomplish. I believe there are many here who would gladly listen—sensible, intelligent people—only, unfortunately, in most cases the interest only progresses *so far*, and then they discover that the truth is *too narrow* for them, and fall back upon the improbability of "so few being right," quite forgetting that this always has been the case, and that in the purpose of God it necessarily *must* be so. It is a comfort to reflect that everything is overruled by a wise hand, and that some day the wisdom will be apparent of much that now seems undesirable and even unnecessary.

Yesterday we came in sight of land again, which was pleasant after the long run from Colombo, with nothing to see on the way but an occasional ship passing in the distance, which always creates quite an excitement among the passengers, and discussion as to what boat it may be. We anchored outside Aden about half-past ten in the morning, but no one was allowed to land as there was said to be infection of some sort ashore. However, the boat-loads of natives, ever on the alert, soon swarmed round the vessel, and a brisk trade was done for two or three hours in calabashes (native-made baskets), ostrich eggs,

feathers, &c., amid a deafening din and chatter of the active creatures, with their black-lead complexions, lustrous eyes, and shining teeth. A few young ones came on board and performed native dances to an admiring crowd; there were also some vendors of ostrich feathers permitted to come, although we had understood this was not to be allowed. The appearance of Aden and the neighbourhood is most uninviting and barren. There is a range of very lofty hills, but they seem absolutely devoid of vegetation and have an extremely rugged outline, as if of volcanic origin.

There seemed likely to be some delay in starting, as we were told something had gone wrong with the engines, but evidently this was rectified without any difficulty, as we started again soon after the expected time.

The weather keeps very hot, and I suppose will be so until we are out of the Red Sea, when we may expect it to set in very cold. This will be a great but not unwelcome change.

New Year's Day.—A great many to-day are feeling the worse for last night's revelries, the seeing of the "old year out and the new year in," being deemed a fitting pretext for more indulgence than usual (which is saying a good deal). Being Sunday, I suppose those who are able will attend the "divine service" in becomingly solemn mood. I observed that the notice of this was made out last week on the back of the "wine-carte," which suggested that the two things were not found to be incompatible.

Yesterday, during the morning, we passed the group of islands called the "Twelve Apostles," which appeared to be of similar formation to the hills at Aden. The "ladies' parlour" has been looking quite like a small hospital or convalescent home lately, ladies reclining on the lounges looking as if life were a burden too heavy to be borne, while their husbands hovered assiduously about, trying to mitigate the various sufferings of their dejected partners.

One particularly low-spirited lady was regretting openly that she had "left her husband behind," because he would have been "just like that." A large majority of the gentlemen spend a great deal of time playing cards in the smoke-room, with the inevitable bottle and glass at their side, dimly discernible through the clouds of smoke. It would appear that both the temper and complexion suffer as a consequence.

One young fellow (a tea-planter in Ceylon) carefully explained to me that his doctor had advised him to take beer, but that "he really didn't like it." The same young gentleman was asking my opinion as to whether it was wrong to play tennis and cricket on Sundays, as when in Ceylon there had been considerable discussion over this—the Missionaries saying that their teaching about "keeping the Sabbath" went for nothing while the natives observed that the Europeans were not particular about it. This seems to be about the extent of the general idea of "being religious," whereas really a matter of this sort is very secondary, considering that Sunday is not really "the Sabbath"

after all; but it seems a pity if *one day* cannot be given up to the consideration of higher matters, and I said so. The youth remarked that his grandfather was a Dean, and very particular about such things. We drifted into talking about the religion of the natives in Ceylon, and their faculty of worshipping almost anything, going to the other extreme from the popular tendency, which is to reverence nothing at all. So far we got on very well; also in speaking of the enormities of the Roman Catholic Church, whose votaries, it seems, are exceedingly enterprising as Missionaries; but my remark that even the Church of England was far astray from the original doctrines held by the early Christians was not so well received, and we have had no further conversation on the subject. As one lady on board said, "I *love* the Church of England—it *satisfies* me, somehow;" which is probably expressive of the vague state of mind of most of its adherents.

Tuesday, January 3rd.—I had still another experience last night in the way of conversation with a Scotchman, this time a Mr. Harvick, who, I was disappointed to find, is an agnostic of the most hopeless type. As we were in the Red Sea, I was speaking of the crossing of the children of Israel, and Mr. Harvick said it was a very "doubtful story," and also seemed sceptical as to miracles altogether. I asked him if the resurrection of Christ was not a great miracle, but he owned that he could not say he believed in that either, and said that the scriptural records were of no value as regards authenticity, and contradicted themselves. He also said there was no reference to a future life in the *Old Testament*, but retracted this remark when I mentioned several, notably Job's hope of seeing God at "the latter day" although his body perished, and also Daniel's statement that "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Of course, if the Bible is no authority with a man, and he rejects the idea of the character of God as revealed in it, preferring heathen ideas, as more pleasing to the natural man, there is little use in enforcing the claims of true reason, and finally Mr. Harvick said I should have to give him up as "a bad job," and really I thought so too.

It was rather depressing, and made the fact of our just being about to pass Mount Sinai the more impressive, by contrast. To think of this being the spot where man first received the precious gift of a complete law from divine hands, and yet now not only is His authority ignored, but it is even doubted whether He revealed Himself at all. If we did not know that "darkness should cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," we should be at a loss to account for such a state of things, which, however, it is our greatest comfort to know, cannot last much longer.

We were disappointed to find that this time, as when we were coming out from England, we should pass Mount Sinai at night, by moonlight, certainly; but we could only dimly discern the range, and had to imagine the actual peak. There are several Jews among the passengers, one a Mr. Rubenstein, with his wife, is going for a tour

through Palestine, and gets off to-morrow at Port Said. Mother has had several talks with him, and finds he is a believer in the "Messiah," but not sure either whether He is to be a king, or at what period He may be expected, and in any case, of course, cannot accept the idea of his being identical with Jesus of Nazareth. However, we were at one in believing that the Temple is to be re-built, worship restored in the land, and all nations blessed in Abraham's seed, but, *we* add, "Not as of many, but as of one, *thy* seed, which is Christ." Mother thought it would be a good opportunity of getting to know the progress of the Jewish colonies in Palestine, so Mr. Rubenstein has promised to write and give us his impressions. He is coming to England afterwards. We entered the Gulf of Suez last night, and this morning soon after breakfast arrived at Suez, but no one went ashore as we did not stay very long. It was a very beautiful morning, and delightfully cool, so pleasant and bracing after the heat. The surrounding hills, though desolate and barren-looking, looked very beautiful in the perfect clearness of the atmosphere, and bright morning sunlight. The outlines were all so very clear-cut, and the lighting and shading was really picturesque, the sea and sky a deep brilliant blue, against which the white sails of numerous little boats and the snowy wings of myriads of sea-gulls showed in striking contrast. A few boats collected around the ship, containing various articles for sale, principally shells and coral, but I don't think a very brisk trade was done here.

We started again just before lunch-time, and everyone was sorry to have to go down to it, as it is so interesting to watch the entrance into the Suez Canal. A few camels appeared on the shore, which caused intense excitement, especially amongst the children, of whom there are a considerable number on board. I suppose we shall see plenty of camels at Port Said. We expect to find ourselves there on awaking to-morrow morning.

Thursday, January 5th.—Again there has had to be a little "interval" in the diary, on account of rough weather, which we rather expected on getting to this part of the journey. We duly arrived at Port Said on Tuesday morning, after a most excruciating night, during which no-one was able to sleep on account of the dreadful and varied noises. These were said to be accounted for by the different steering apparatus which is used in going through the Suez Canal. Anyway, it seemed to be rumbling and thundering immediately over our heads, and all night long, so of course sleep was out of the question, and we got up in the morning with headaches, and feeling anything but refreshed.

Immediately after breakfast we went ashore, as we were expected to sail again at 11 o'clock, which did not leave us much time. It was beautifully cool, almost cold, until the sun rose high. Of course it was winter here, and as cold as they ever get it. We were pleased to meet Mr. Norcross, Edgar's friend, who is still employed at the Eastern Exchange, Port Said, where Edgar also was before he came to Australia. He came on board with Edgar, who had been ashore very early,

and accompanied us in a drive round, which had to be rather limited, on account of the short time we had. However, as we had made the acquaintance of the place on our previous visit, we did not so much mind, and after all, Port Said is anything but a desirable place, and not a locality that one would care to stay in when once it has been explored. However, we did pay a visit to a Mohammedan mosque this time, when we were all required to put on immense shoes before entering, as our profane feet must not touch the hallowed floor of these sacred precincts, so we shuffled about on our visit of exploration feeling rather amused. There was not much to see inside, and we could not understand all that was told us. We should have been able to witness a "service" if we could have stayed a little longer, but as it was we did not "behold their devotions," which might have been rather interesting. We were told the women go up in the gallery, quite apart from the men, which is like the Jewish custom. Married women here wear an immense brass--ornament I can scarcely call it—on their foreheads, and after they have attained to this dignity, they are not supposed to look at any man but their husband. There is a very dirty, neglected look about the whole town, which appears to have a very bad reputation. The surroundings are exceedingly barren, and although there is a small park, it is hardly worthy the name. No matter how much rain they may have, and they have had a good deal lately, nothing ever grows there in the shape of vegetation. The soil is just sand, and what the poor camels and goats live on I don't know; they certainly look as if they didn't get much of anything, and the few cats and dogs we saw were miserable specimens.

The Eastern Exchange is a very fine building of six stories, with wide verandahs round each storey; from the topmost one, to which we ascended in the lift, a splendid view is obtained right over the harbour, Suez Canal, and Mediterranean Sea. The "Exchange" is a first-class store for all kinds of things, and we made several purchases there, being glad to be able to get some biscuits, as they actually provide nothing of the kind on German boats. Many of the steamers passing through Port Said are provisioned by the "Exchange," so of course they do a very extensive business, and keep a large and constant supply of all necessaries. We began to be anxious as to getting back to the boat in time, remembering how punctually the start was made from Colombo, but however we managed it comfortably, and were escorted back to the *Friedrich* by Mr. Norcross, under whose generous guidance our visit had been rendered much more pleasant than it would otherwise have been. He expects to come to England for his holidays during next summer, so we may meet him again.

There was a slight misfortune connected with our departure—indeed more than slight for the party concerned, inasmuch as he was left behind, in spite of frantic wavings from a small boat, just as the steamer was starting. He was a steerage passenger, and I suppose will have to wait for the next steamer, which will be some weeks hence. It will be very awkward for him, to say the least of it, and was

a lesson to all the passengers to get back in time; perhaps the captain thought so, when he refused to stop. We sailed shortly after 11, and it was now beginning to be quite chilly on deck, so that the passengers took to walking about briskly, instead of lounging about as heretofore. But alas, towards nightfall, the vessel was lurching about to such an extent that walking was almost impossible, and all through the night she rolled and pitched very much, making sleeping a very difficult matter. I must confess that I was very sick during the night, and along with many other passengers was invisible at the breakfast table next morning. Mother felt "queer," but not actually sick, and as she managed to get on deck and appear at meal times, she felt better than if she had been obliged to stay in the cabin, where the motion is so very perceptible. The sea became calmer during the day, and the bravest of the passengers strove valiantly to pace the deck in an energetic manner. It seems that two Missionaries got on board at Port Said, having both been in the Holy Land, but quite unconnected: one, a gentleman, is in the first saloon, and one in our saloon, a lady of very self-possessed demeanour. She comes from Jaffa, and has also been to Haifa, where brother and sister Gee are living, so of course Edgar was interested to talk to her, but found she did not know his mother and father. It seems strange that "missionaries" should be required in "the Holy Land," and strange indeed that they are necessary anywhere, if people are saved by acting "according to their light." It seems a pity to bring further responsibility if they are all right without, but I suppose "Christians" are not quite certain of this (or sundry other matters).

At a distant table in the saloon where I am writing, some of the ladies and gentlemen are engaged in entertaining the children, which is very kind of them, but the noise they are making is almost deafening. I don't know how mother is standing it—she is endeavouring to "rest" on one of the lounges—but I suppose she thinks of *their* side of it, and, of course, it is hard for lively children to keep quiet for long together. And now they are making a move and preparing to play at "musical chairs," which means a frantic rushing and screaming which will surely make writing impossible. I am wondering what papa would have done under the circumstances; he used to persevere valiantly as long as it was at all possible, but occasionally had to beat a retreat in despair, when his writing was such as to require great application of mind.

Saturday, January 7th.—We are feeling thankful for a period of calmness again, after the tossings and tumblings of the last few days, half fearing, however, that it cannot last very long. This morning, very early, we found ourselves approaching the Straits of Messina, and those who were enterprising enough to rise with the sun, were rewarded by the beautiful sight of snow-clad Etna in all the glory of a most gorgeous sunrise. We saw it a little later, and even then it was very beautiful indeed, and so was the coast all along, all the mountains being tipped with snow, and having a very different aspect from those

we had not long left behind. We passed through the Straits of Messina between 10 and 11 o'clock, and everyone was full of admiration of the scenery; we seemed to pass quite close to the little towns nestling at the foot of the great hills. This afternoon we passed the island of Stromboli, with its smoking volcano.

Sunday, January 8th.—We had a very disturbed night's rest last night, owing to getting into Naples just before midnight, and there was again the now too familiar rumbling and thundering overhead which makes sleep so impossible. However, we managed to get through the night somehow, and in the dim light of early morning saw Vesuvius, with its fiery crown and wreath of smoke. Breakfast was to be half-an-hour earlier than usual, and before leaving our cabin, we were more than delighted to receive letters from England, containing such good and cheering news that we felt quite set up for the rest of the voyage. We had thought of going ashore for a short time, but it now hardly seemed worth while to pay the high prices asked by the boatmen, as the steamer was announced to sail again at 10 o'clock. Some enterprising passengers went, and inspected some of the fine churches in Naples; they reported that business was going on in the city just as on a week-day, even the post offices are open in continental towns. It seemed quite difficult to realize that it was Sunday, with the crowds of swarthy Italians on board, vending their miscellaneous wares and pestering the poor passengers to buy most persistently. Naples did not at all look like the "sunny south" on this occasion, first thing in the morning it was quite enveloped in mist, and the sky was dark and cloudy, but gradually the mists cleared away, and we could see the houses on shore (so lofty and unlike the East) and the hills beyond quite plainly. There was none of the gorgeous colouring one expects to see in the Bay of Naples, but, of course, we had to remember it was winter, and the sharp coldness of the air made it quite easy to believe this. We were pleased to learn from our letters that the winter in England has been a mild one so far; if it had been very severe I am afraid we should have felt it terribly after all the heat we have experienced. The passengers who went ashore, all hurried back by 10 o'clock, and then it transpired that we were not to sail until 12, which rather disgusted them as they had hurried through their visit. However, such troubles have often to be submitted to on board ship. We wished we could have landed and taken a little trip to Rome. All these localities have such very interesting associations in the light of the truth; but they will afford still more pleasure to visit when all traces of the hand of the "desolator" shall have been removed. We shall hope to see them then.

We seemed to be hanging about for a long time before we actually started: we were told that they were waiting for some papers which had to pass through the Customs. However, at last all the voluble Italians were bundled off the ship, and the boats which surrounded it reluctantly took their departure; one, we noticed particularly, containing the same vivacious little girl-singer whose pretty ways impressed

us when we were here before. She danced very prettily in the boat (although decidedly under difficulties); and then, with a coquettish smile, held up an open umbrella to receive coins, throwing kisses to the passengers, who looked over the side of the ship with amusement.

We are now fairly on the way again, and are expected to reach Genoa to-morrow afternoon—absolutely our *last* port of call. We begin to feel that we are almost *home*.

Monday, January 9th.—We arrived at Genoa a little before mid-day, and were disappointed to find the weather hopelessly wet and miserable there, the damp mists clinging about the hills in the most distressing manner. This afternoon, which we expected to spend on shore, we are occupying in trying to keep warm, for it is really getting very cold now, and they don't seem to have begun to warm the ship as yet. A few enthusiasts have landed; some are intending to stay ashore all night, as we do not sail again until to-morrow afternoon. Genoa is a very pretty place, but appears to the very worst advantage to-day. The decks are wet and slippery, and a gloom seems to hang over everything, except for the joyous fact that we have got home-letters again, also copies of the *Christadelphian*, so that we can afford to be oblivious to our present surroundings. We may go ashore to-morrow, if the weather is more favourable.

Wednesday, January 11th.—We are still anchored in Genoa, and likely to be for another day, owing to the continued rainfall, which prevents the discharge of cargo—mostly consisting of wool, which would be damaged by lying about in the wet. We did not go ashore at all yesterday, but I ventured just for a short time on Monday afternoon with Mrs. Green and her little girl, thinking the rain was clearing off, but it came on again heavily, and we got very wet. We went in a boat rowed by an Italian, and it took us about ten minutes to get to the landing-stage. The scenery all round is beautiful—high hills with plenty of verdure and pretty houses one above the other, but it was mostly obscured by mist and thick drizzling rain. We went along one of the principal streets to the Market Place, which I remembered seeing when we were here before; but how different it all looked in this dreary weather. The town is very old and picturesque, and the houses exceedingly high—some seven and eight stories—and the streets and passages are terribly narrow, so that the whole effect is very peculiar and foreign. There are a lot of horrid-looking places—almost worse, in a way, than the London slums—and so many evil-looking characters about, and such a profusion of drinking-saloons of all kinds, as I think I remarked in my former diary.

There is a beautiful arcade, however, and some very fine shops, and I suppose the churches here are considered simply magnificent, but we felt no great interest in these. Many of our passengers wandered about on shore a long time, and got thoroughly drenched, but for all that they seemed to enjoy themselves. Yesterday nearly everyone went ashore. The ship seemed very silent and deserted, and every-

thing looked dismal with the rain falling persistently and heavily. Towards dinner-time the people began to come straggling back, all more or less drenched and draggled, but full of enthusiasm about the sights they had seen, notably the very fine cemetery, the Campo Santo, which is, I suppose, one of the sights of the world, both as regards its situation and the superb statuary it contains. Some of the passengers stayed on shore to go to the opera—caring nothing that they were wet through—so that they might afterwards say they had “been to an Italian opera in Genoa,”—a noble ambition, truly!

Some of them look this morning as if they had been “seeing life,” and it was not such an elevating and refining process after all!

It looks a little brighter this morning, though still raining. It is very miserable having to cross the deck to our cabin, as we do; the water seems to lie on the deck and our feet get quite wet even in that short distance. It is said that we shall have it *very* rough between here and England; some heartless ones are “piling on the agony” and trying to frighten sundry nervous ladies by terrible pictures of what we are likely to have to undergo. I sincerely trust it will turn out there is no foundation for all this. It seems we are not to sail until 8 o'clock to-morrow morning, and I should not wonder if there is not even a further delay, but we do hope not. We grudge the time spent here (to-morrow will be the *fourth* day) when we might have been well on the way to England. We hear that those who have gone overland will be arriving in England this morning. We do not feel the cold so much now as the ship is at last heated by the steam-pipes, so that it is quite comfortable and cosy.

Thursday, January 12th, 9-30 a.m.—We are actually on the way again, and very glad everyone is. The weather cleared up so nicely yesterday that we ventured to go on shore, and had quite a pleasant and interesting time. Genoa is such a quaint, picturesque and highly ornamental city that there is quite a feast for the eyes all the time. There would be endless subjects for sketches and paintings here. One of the chief things which strikes one as peculiar and characteristic is the way that things are universally hung out to dry, whole strings of them, across the narrow streets high up from window to window, like a lot of flags on a gala day, for they are all colours, the Italians being so fond of bright-hued clothing. Anyone seeing pictures of this would fancy them exaggerated, but it is exactly as the streets really look. Of course in the very best parts it is not so, but as “civilized” as an ordinary city. The streets are all nicely paved, with footpaths and horse-roads in many places with granite, so they have a very clean, nice appearance, the only drawback is they are so narrow, and the trams run so close to the footpath that it is really quite dangerous. There is an electric tram which goes as far as the famous cemetery, and there are omnibuses as well, in one of which (curious foreign-looking things) we went to the neighbourhood of the Arcade, which is a very fine one, though not equalling the magnificent one in Naples. Here we managed to do a little shopping, as they are supposed to *parler Anglais et*

Français in most of the establishments, and got a little of the white marble which is such a speciality here, in the form of small ornaments, very beautiful and very cheap. Also one or two little mementoes of olive-wood, which abounds in this neighbourhood. We got a glimpse into one or two of the wonderful old palaces of which there are so many in Genoa, and can hardly describe how magnificent and ornamental everything is. The Italians certainly are a very beauty-loving people. One is struck with this at every turn. We had been warned that it was very difficult to get good tea in Genoa, but we were fortunate in getting a really delicious cup in the Arcade, and after considerable calculation succeeded in satisfying the proprietor of the café in English money. It is quite a laborious affair, shopping in a foreign city, unless you take the precaution to change some money first. We changed some afterwards, as we heard that some of the tram conductors positively refused to take English money, and we should be liable to be bundled out if we had no Italian coins. It was rather funny in the Arcade, in the olive-wood shop the lady *would not* take half-a-crown, but was quite satisfied with two shillings and sixpence; the half-crown was a “George,” which is not “valid” in Italy for some reason or other, but they would take a “Victorian” one.

As we were preparing to return in the evening, we came across some of our fellow-passengers who were going to the opera, and enquired if we were going, too. They seemed somewhat surprised at mother's emphatic answer in the negative, and cannot understand why theatre-going should be incompatible with “the Christian life,” which is only natural, seeing that it is now tolerated and even recommended by the so-called spiritual leaders of the people. Mother said, “We are living for the future, and it will take us all our time to get ready for it,” which remark elicited but a light laugh and look of indifference, though why it should be a foreign idea to a “Christian” to “live for the future” it is hard to say, considering they are *supposed* to have given up the “poms and vanities of this wicked world.” But they now look at things in a “broader” way, thus unwittingly confessing beforehand that they are choosing the way that “leadeth to destruction,” Christ's “way” being too narrow for them. I understand they arrived home in the “small hours,” and they are therefore lying about to-day in various attitudes of dejection, waiting for the next diversion to come along. I fear it may come in the form of a heavy storm, for it looks very threatening all round, and we hear accounts of very stormy weather. People are all hurrying up to get their packing done, in case rough weather soon makes it impossible to do so with any degree of comfort.

This morning, when we left Genoa, the weather was quite ideal. Everyone was on deck admiring the pretty but vanishing picture of beautiful Genoa in the morning sunlight, with the snowy peaks of the distant Apennines forming such a lovely feature in the background. The scenery from Genoa, all along the Riviera, is ideally beautiful. The hills in the foreground are thickly wooded and dotted with white

villas all the way up, while with the aid of the glasses we could make out the terraces and beautiful white marble buildings quite clearly. Behind these varied-tinted hills we could see plainly the snow-clad peaks of the higher range beyond—the Maritime Alps, I think it is. I have never seen anything quite so lovely before, except in pictures of Swiss scenery, but the reality far exceeds these. We passed quite near to San Remo, Mentone, Nice and Monte Carlo. The latter is a most charming place, only marred by its associations.

Friday, January 13th.—The rough weather which threatened last evening has all vanished again to-day, and it has been a beautiful day for the time of year, and not so cold as it was at Genoa. We have passed Majorca and several other islands this afternoon, their rugged but green hills looking very pretty in the sunlight. We should have liked to land and have a good climb. We get so little exercise on board, which is one of the drawbacks.

Sunday, January 15th.—The day when we thought we *might* have landed at Southampton, but the delay at Genoa will make it Tuesday night at least now before we get in. The event of the day yesterday was the passing of the Straits of Gibraltar, about three o'clock in the afternoon. We passed fairly near the huge rock, and were glad to get a glimpse of it, as it was night when we passed it before. The steamers on the Orient Line call there, so they have the advantage of us in one way; but then, they do not call at Genoa, and that is well worth seeing. There was a little incident yesterday, causing great distress to a lady-passenger who owns several little rosella-parrots like mine. Somehow the door of one of the cages got open, and the three little parrots escaped; and would be "drowned at sea," poor little things, as they would not be strong enough to fly to land. They were rather valuable, and she had not long purchased them, so it was quite a misfortune. I hope nothing of the kind will happen to my little "Joey," but he does try hard to get out whenever the door of the cage is opened. It certainly is a very cramped kind of life for the poor little thing; perhaps we shall be able to let him have more liberty at home. The poor cockatoos have all had to be taken in off the deck now, as it is too cold for them there, and they are stowed away in various dark corners. One of the stewards has one in his cabin, and plays the mandolin for its benefit, as he says "Cocky did like it so." He played the "Maiden's Prayer" to it with much feeling, "Cocky" giving an occasional squawk of appreciation. I saw him during the period of recovery from his bath, "sitting" on the edge of the berth, swathed in towels, with just his head out: it was very funny.

I have been venturing to play on the saloon piano a little lately, only the worst of it is, it attracts a larger audience than I care about, and then they talk about "hiding my light under a bushel" when I decline to play hymns for them on a Sunday night. This, of course, they could not understand at all, as I suppose they thought "Moody and Sankey" could not fail to appeal to the two "missionary ladies,"

as I hear we are called on board. This is on account of our lending books to several, and talking of the matters in which we are so much interested, whenever we get an opportunity. One lady expressed her mind on the subject by saying she thought it was quite possible to be "good" without "always talking about the Bible," thus embodying the popular idea that "goodness" may be something quite separate from "religion." Mother lent to the brother of this same lady a copy of *Eternal Life*, and I saw him open it and just glance at the first page for about a quarter of a minute and then saunter off. *Eternal Life* not a subject to be interested in, evidently. How differently will people regard it *some* day, when they will find it for ever beyond their reach and realise how mad they have been. Another lady said to me, "Dear me, you seem to talk of these things as quite every-day matters, just as people would talk of their business or ordinary affairs!" It seemed just as strange to me that they should *not* do so; as mother remarked, they would not be so indifferent as to the state of their banking account, which can only concern them for a few short years, and yet the matter of *eternal* importance they are content never to think about. The great flaw seems to be the lack of faith, and as this "cometh by hearing," and they refuse to "hear" when the word is presented, they are never in the position to "add to faith virtue," and "godliness" is nearly an extinct quality. The "brotherly kindness" is all-sufficient in the popular estimation, and the "charity," which may *not*, however, be extended to Christadelphians, unless they own their position to be a false one by admitting the claims of every other way of thinking.

Monday, January 16th.—We are now fairly in the celebrated "Bay of Biscay," and can hardly realize that we are only a few hundred miles from home: it seems too good to be true. We have been in the throes of packing to-day; it was quite a work of art to get everything in, but it is just about finished now. It was the more awkward to accomplish as it was a very wet morning, and we had to cross the slippery deck to get to the baggage-room. Yesterday the weather was delightful—quite warm and sunny in the middle of the day, but this morning there was quite a different scene, a tossing, tumbling grey sea, and hopeless-looking sky, with rain falling heavily. It has cleared off again this afternoon, however, and there is a little blue sky to be seen; we cannot say the weather is really rough, considering this is "the Bay," where storms so often rage, although there certainly is a decided roll on, and it is difficult to walk about with any degree of dignity! People go about stumbling into each other, and there have been several cases of nasty falls. It would be quite easy to slip and get a sprained ankle when the decks are so wet, but I hope nothing of that kind will happen.

Tuesday, January 17th.—I suppose this will be the last time I shall write on board the *Friedrich der Grosse*. It is six weeks to-day

since we left Melbourne, and we expect to get into Southampton about midnight to-night, and shall have to land long before it is daylight, which will not be very pleasant, especially if it is raining fast, as it is just now, but possibly it may be all cleared away by morning. It has been much calmer since this morning; that distressing roll has quite vanished, so perhaps we may get a chance of a little sleep to-night; last night we rolled about far too much to sleep, and we heard in the morning there had been several accidents, due to the bad weather. The hydraulic crane was broken, causing a tremendous crash during the night, and a door had been swung off its hinges—the one at the end of the passage leading from the deck to our cabins. One tremendous wave, coming overboard, had washed right in, and some of the boxes were floating about, but I don't think any serious damage was done. We have just received tickets to take us through from Southampton to London, so I suppose we shall arrive there some time to-morrow morning.

We found ourselves within sight of Southampton very early on the morning of Wednesday, January 18th; and the tender came alongside to take us ashore immediately after breakfast, just as the first glimmer of dawn appeared in the sky. We watched carefully to be sure that all our heavy cases were brought up from the hold, and saw them safely transferred to the tender; and then followed ourselves, after sundry good-byes to those still left on board, who did not number many, however, as nearly everyone was getting off at Southampton. We were so glad to find the weather comparatively mild, for January, as we had been rather fearing the severe cold we might have to experience. It was pretty cold during the little journey from the *Friedrich der Grosse* to the landing-stage, but we were so full of pleasant anticipations that we almost forgot to think about it. We were very glad, too, to leave the monotonous ship-life behind, and could hardly realize that the six weary weeks were at last over.

As we approached the wharf, we could discern the two familiar figures we were expecting to see—namely, Mary, my sister-in-law, and our dear brother Walker, who looked as he might be expected to do after the sad experiences of the past few months. It was very delightful to meet again in spite of the sadness connected with our return; and we felt very thankful to have been permitted thus to accomplish our journey in safety. It appears many had been very anxious about us, as the weather has been extremely rough in some parts, but we seem to have escaped wonderfully. My brother was not able to come to Southampton, owing to being so exceedingly busy; but we were glad to hear he was very well, also his two little boys. We had to wait a considerable time to see the luggage through the Customs before proceeding to London; but at last the tedious process was over, and we found ourselves in an English railway-carriage once more. A great

number of the passengers by that train were from the *Friedrich der Grosse*; some were Colonials who had never been in England before, and were very curious to see what sort of a place it was. We admired the country as we travelled along: it looked very nice even in January, after Australia, with its barren, hedgeless tracts of land.

I am afraid we have retained a rather exaggerated impression of Colonial "scenery" through living in an undesirable part of the country, for, of course, some parts of Australia must be lovely. Still, the intense heat and lack of water in the summer must always cause a certain dried-up appearance, so different to beautiful wooded England, like a little garden by comparison.

As we approached London, the sun actually struggled through the clouds, and it was really quite a beautiful afternoon. We were especially glad, as it seems there has been a long spell of wet weather here lately, which is always rather depressing. The winter so far has been very mild, with hardly any frost, which is, of course, all in our favour. When we arrived at Waterloo we found sister Matthews and her husband there to meet us, and we received a very warm welcome.

Here Edgar finally left us, to go to his relatives in Cheshire, where he expects to find employment, unless, as is possible from the latest news from the Holy Land, he hears that the Haifa-Damascus Railway is to be continued, in which case he will return there, as there would be occupation for him at once.

We proceeded in a railway omnibus to my brother's house, near Sloane Square, and found my little nephews grown into quite big bonny boys, one four years old and the other two-and-a-half. They were quite excited and interested by our advent, but were curious to know why their "other auntie" hadn't come, and couldn't quite understand why she had stayed behind in Australia. My brother soon came in, and we were glad to see him looking so well, in spite of his intensely busy life. They all thought mother looking remarkably well, which, I am glad to say, she continues to do. We did not see much change in any of them except the children. Of course we have only been away eighteen months after all, but it seems longer, so much has been crowded into it.

We only stayed one night in London, as brother Walker was to return to Birmingham the next day, Thursday, and was anxious that we should go with him, if possible, as there were many things to be arranged, and much work which was quite overwhelming for him single-handed. He had left sister Lincoln Hall in charge of the office. She has been very kindly rendering help from time to time during our absence, but, of course, my return will make that no longer necessary.

We left Euston about mid-day on Thursday, arriving in Birmingham between three and four o'clock, with very mingled feelings, as may be imagined. We drove straight to brother Walker's house, where we are installed for the present, until we can find a suitable little house, somewhere in the old neighbourhood, if possible. Sister Hall was here when we arrived, and was quite overjoyed to see us again; it certainly is delightful to see all the dear familiar faces again and receive such a warm welcome. Sister Walker and sister Sutcliffe look just the same as ever, but of course the children have altered and developed considerably since last we saw them; there are five—the eldest fourteen and the youngest six, quite a houseful, but they all go to school now.

After arriving here, and having a cosy tea, we decided to go in to the meeting (Thursday is the meeting night here), although we were told we should not be expected, as everyone supposed we should be staying in London, at least for a few days. However, we thought we would give them a surprise, and so it actually turned out. Brother Shuttleworth was so surprised to see mother that he could hardly speak, and there was a sort of "electric shock" all round. It was delightful to be in the dear old Temperance Hall again, and see all the well-remembered faces, and hear the familiar speakers, but there was a sad blank in the company which everyone felt—a place empty which no one can ever fill in the same way. But we must not dwell too much on the sad side of this, nor confine our thoughts to the present, but look forward with confidence to the future, when every place will be filled, and no element of joy will be wanting; it is, indeed, an unspeakable privilege to be in the position we are, as brethren and sisters of Christ; sharers, indeed, in His sufferings now, but in His glory at that day.

On the next day we went to visit the old home in Belgrave Road, and found grandma looking decidedly older and more feeble than when we last saw her, but still wonderful considering her 92 years. She has been very comfortable in the care of brother and sister Todd, and could not have been better cared for than she has been by them and their daughter Katie, who performs loving services for her daily. Brother Todd always tells her all the items of news after the Sunday meetings, and she looks forward to her little interview with him, as she can hear him better than many others; she is getting terribly deaf now, and mother found it very hard work talking to her. But her interest in the truth and all its concerns is as keen as ever, and her one desire is for the Lord to come; she has always hoped to live until that joyful event, but now thinks it likely she may have to fall asleep first, and is quite prepared. She spoke quite calmly of my father's death, and said his work was done and he was at rest, awaiting the Master's voice. She can even be glad that all his troubles are over, for she knew that he laboured under very heavy burdens, from which the Lord has now released him, never to feel the weary pressure again.

We did not stay very long with her, as she cannot now stand the strain of long interviews, and she was not able to get up when we went, as she always used to do. Life is not very desirable at that great age; as she said, "The days are come when there is no pleasure in them"; and, indeed, it must be so. The consolation is that "those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," and, as mother said to her when she spoke of being stiff and old, "We shall see you bounding for joy yet," and the poor old eyes lighted up at the thought, and she said, "If I am worthy: but the Lord *knows* that I love Him!"

We found our way back to Hendon Road to tea, after having a look round the town, which looked much the same as ever, but quite insignificant after the handsome Melbourne streets. Brother and sister Lincoln Hall called in the evening, *en route* for brother and sister Barnett's. Some will remember that these were friends of Eusebia's; she was instructing them in the truth up to the time we left for Australia, and was much gladdened by hearing of their obedience soon after. They are experiencing difficulties inseparable from their social position, but are earnestly devoted to the truth, and desirous of spreading it in their circle. They find, however, in common with so many brethren and sisters, that it is not received with the eagerness they would have expected; but on the contrary, is opposed and despised; but this they will understand better in time.

We spent our first Sunday with brother and sister Lincoln Hall, and a very pleasant day it was. The morning meeting was very full—it seemed especially so to us, after so long an absence; and it was with deep gladness and gratitude that we united with so large and fervent a company, assembled to remember our absent Lord. Brother Shuttleworth gave the exhortation, dwelling especially on the beauty of love as a feature of the divine character, and an eternal characteristic of the future age. He seemed to lack none of his old "fire," but looks older, and is very uncertain in health, compared with what he used to be. He lectured at night on "Future Glory," and there was a very full attendance. The singing was an especially enjoyable feature, and it was so beautiful and hearty that we felt quite overcome. The Anthem "How beautiful upon the Mountains" was sung after the lecture, and was almost like a foretaste of the glorious song of the future. It was an example of what can be done, even now, and was quite an addition to the edification of the meeting. Practices are held steadily all through the winter months, and the effect is certainly very admirable. Certainly we, of all people, should sing heartily "as to the Lord," for singing with the understanding is such a different matter from the conventional chanting of the Churches.

Mother was not too much exhausted after her rather trying day, and continues remarkably well and cheerful, as all will be pleased to hear.

We have not yet secured a house, but expect to stay under the hospitable roof of brother and sister Walker for another month or so, until various matters have been arranged.

It is convenient as regards the office being here, for there is quite as much work as can be comfortably got through, without any time being taken up in journeying to and fro. However, this is a specially busy time, and by-and-bye it may be necessary to have a central office; this, of course, will be duly notified in the *Christadelphian* if it is so.

It is pleasant to be in active service, whether in England or Australia; there were some regrets in coming away, as will readily be imagined, but we get to regard nothing as permanent here, and hold ourselves ready for any change that may come, longing greatly that the next one for us all may be the one dear to the heart of every true brother and sister of Christ—the coming again of their Lord and Master, whom they are daily striving to serve.
