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978-1-108-05977-0 - Narrative of the Circumnavigation of the Globe by the Austrian Frigate *Novara*:
Undertaken by Order of the Imperial Government, in the Years 1857, 1858, & 1859: Volume 3

Karl Von Scherzer

Excerpt

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STAY FROM 5TH NOVEMBER TO 7TH DECEMBER,
1858.

The politico-economical importance to England of her colonies.—

Extraordinary growth of Sydney.—Public buildings.—Expeditions of discovery into the interior of Australia.—Scientific endeavours in Sydney.—Macleay's Seat at Elizabeth Bay.—Sir Daniel Cooper.—Rickety Dick.—Monument to La Pérouse at Botany Bay.—The Botanical Garden.—Journey by rail to Campbelton.—Camden Park.—German emigrants.—Wine cultivation in Australia.—Odd Fellows' Lodge at Campbelton.—Appin.—Wulongong.—Mr. Hill.—The aborigines.—Kangaroo hunting.—Coal mines in the Keira range.—An adventure in the woods.—Return to Sydney.—The Australian club.—Excursion up Hunter River as far as Ash Island.—“Nuggets.”—The *Novara* in the dry dock at Cockatoo Island.—Reformation among the prisoners in the colony.—Serenade by the Germans in Sydney, in honour of the Expedition.—Ball on board the frigate.—Political life in Sydney.—Excursion for craniological purposes to Cook River Bay, and Long Bay.—Intercourse with natives.—Wool growing.—Attempts to introduce the Llama and Alpaca from Bolivia.—The gold-fields of the colony of New South Wales.—Is Australia the youngest or oldest part of the globe?—The convict-system and transportation as a punishment.—Departure from Sydney.—Barrier Island.—Arrival at Huraka Gulf, New Zealand.

WHOEVER wishes to form an accurate idea of the power and
might of the British nation, and is desirous to discover the

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sources of the all-important influence the “island race” exercise over the destinies of humanity, should visit, not England, but her colonies in America, Africa, Asia, and Australia. In these he will see in full and beneficial operation, that system which one of the greatest of German political economists, the ingenious Fredrick List, recommended more than thirty years ago to the German Government, when he spoke of the serious detriment the Northern country sustained year after year by the emigration *en masse* of skilled German labourers, and when he repeatedly urged to make agriculture under the tropics reciprocally beneficial to the manufacturing industry of the temperate zone.*

England has comprehended better than Germany how to utilize the energies of such of her children as emigrate to distant quarters of the globe, and to make them subservient to her own advancement as well; she evinced the most anxious solicitude for these pioneers of progress, extended her protection to them, flung the ægis of her own power over their adopted home, regarding each new settlement as but an extension of the limit of her empire, as an enlargement of the sources whence she drew the materials for her industrial handicrafts, as a new market for her manufactures! In all parts of the inhabited earth English activity has thus displayed itself, busily engaged in supplying the demand for raw materials in her home market, by exchanging for them her own manufactures, till English ships have become the all but

* A National System of Political Economy. Stuttgart, 1840. (J. C. Cotton.)

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universal carriers of the commerce of the globe, while the English language has been adopted as the medium of intercommunication of all seafarers.

Australia, or New Holland,* as it was originally termed by its first discoverers, proud of their nationality, furnishes of all the British colonies the most conspicuous and instructive example of this policy. England has not merely thrown open this immense continent to European civilization, peopled it with hundreds of thousands of her sons, and created a new market for herself and all navigating nations,—she has also in this colony furnished the solution of a psychological problem, namely, that it is by no means an innate natural propensity to do evil, but rather the force of circumstances which drives man to vice and crime, and that the diviner portion of his nature forthwith re-asserts itself, so soon as he is provided with another more favourable sphere of action, and a fair opportunity is offered to him of earning his livelihood in an honourable, independent manner by the free, unshackled development of his mental and physical powers.

Originally founded as a penal settlement for convicts sentenced to transportation for long periods of years, and in fact composed at first of such unpromising elements, this splendid country is at present one of the wealthiest and most important colonies of the British Crown, and close to that spot where, on 28th January, 1788, 850 criminals were landed, there to take up their involuntary abode, there now rises in one of the nu-

* In an old map of the year 1542, the Australian continent is named New Java.

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merous coves of the splendidly situate Bay of Port Jackson, a city of such magnificence, so large and so beautiful, that it has been called the “Queen of the South,” or even, with more enthusiasm than accuracy, “Little London.” The population of the city and environs is estimated at 93,000, that of this single colony at 350,000, while its trade has increased to such an extent that it keeps employed 1000 ships and 18,000 men, the value of exports of raw, and import of manufactured products, amounting for this one port to upwards of £12,000,000 per annum. The discovery of abundant gold-fields in the adjacent colony of Victoria has undoubtedly materially contributed to this enormous expansion, and has perceptibly increased the immigration, but the development of the capabilities of the land itself has not been less steadily increasing, wherever the population have pursued the surer and more solid occupation of agriculture and cattle-rearing. The wool growth of Australia, which in 1820 was barely 50 tons, has since then risen to nearly 25,000 tons, rivalling in bulk and quality that of the Cape, and rapidly becoming a dangerous competitor with those countries of Europe, whose wools have hitherto commanded their own terms in the English market.

A continent of such immeasurable natural resources, with a climate,* especially on its southern coasts, remarkable for its

* The mean of thermometrical readings on the north coast is 80°. 6 Fahr. ;—at Port McQuarrie, in S.E. Australia (31° S.), 63° Fahr. ; at Port Jackson (34° S.) 66°. 5 Fahr. ; at Port Philip on the south coast (33° S.), 61°. 3 Fahr. ; at Perth on the west coast (32° S.) 62°. 6 to 64°. 4 Fahr. The annual rain-fall in New South Wales is 45 inches.

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mildness, equability, and salubrity, and a population so limited * in proportion to the extent of surface, was naturally an object of deep interest for the members of the *Novara* Expedition. Accordingly during their stay of thirty-two days they set diligently to work, not only to enlarge their acquaintance with the scientific idiosyncrasies of this vast portion of the globe, but also to examine minutely the prospects it holds out to German commerce and German emigration, and to investigate the influence which has been exercised on the development of the colony by the system of transporting convicts thither. And it is not less significant of the high repute enjoyed by the Imperial Expedition in foreign countries, as honourable to its members, to record, that the then Governor-General of New South Wales, Sir William Denison, who has since been transferred to the much more important and lucrative post of Governor of the Madras Presidency, and who enjoys no slight reputation in scientific circles as a conchyliologist, expressed his anxious desire that the geologist of the *Novara* should thoroughly examine the geological formation of the province of Auckland in New Zealand, and exerted himself vigorously to forward the accomplishment of this project.

* The total superficial area of the somewhat oval-shaped continent lying between 10° and 45° S. and 112° and 154° E., is about 2,100,000 geographical square miles in extent, the coast outline of which is about 7000 miles, so that for each mile of coast there are about 300 square miles of surface, or rather more than double the proportion in Europe. The united English population of the different colonies founded in Australia (exclusive of Tasmania or Van Diemen's Land) and New Zealand amounts to about 1,400,000 souls. Within twenty years the population has increased six-fold, and the value of the exports twenty-fold.

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From the German residents in Sydney, as well as from all the officials and the inhabitants generally, we received the utmost assistance and most cordial co-operation in our various inquiries. The former received the Expedition with a most enthusiastic welcome, and it was truly gratifying to learn that some of the more keenly susceptible of home-influences had weeks before made the beach their favourite promenade, in order that they might be the first to see and welcome the long-expected German man-of-war at her arrival! The German newspaper "*Australische Zeitung*" (published by a native of Grätz, named Degotardi) of November 6th was quite filled with advertisements and notices relating to the *Novara*, and the festivities which had been prepared in her honour. Every member of the staff received a copy on board, so that before even we set foot on shore, we were apprized of the old German hospitality which awaited us on our arrival in this the fifth quarter of the globe. As, however, it was imperatively necessary to have the frigate taken to the Government dock, in order to repair the damages she sustained in the typhoon, the contemplated rejoicings had to stand over for the moment, till the *Novara* could come forth in renewed splendour, and was fit to give a proper reception to the homage intended to be offered in her honour. These rather extensive repairs would require three weeks to complete, and after the first few days had passed in making and receiving official visits, as also in sight-seeing in the city and environs, the greater portion of

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their stay was employed by the scientific staff in excursions into the interior of the colony.

Sydney at present has with its suburbs attained already to the dimensions of a European city. Only thirty years ago there stood but a few herdsmen's huts, where now the visitor beholds block after block of handsome stone private residences, or magnificent shops. There is not one article of luxury or comfort which cannot be supplied here. The chief building stone of the locality, sandstone, is chiefly used in the erection of churches, public buildings, and private dwellings. The Exchange, the Bank, the Houses of Assembly, Government House, &c., are stately buildings erected in a solid, massive style, and if "Hyde Park," a treeless meadow in the centre of the city, by no means answers to its sounding title, the Botanic Garden, on the other hand, the park known as "Lady McQuarrie's Chair," "Kissing-Point," and "Lovers' Walk," form promenades as delightful as any capital of Europe can show in such immediate proximity. Sydney, moreover, is amply supplied with gas and water, as well as with every means of conveyance that can facilitate intercourse in a large town, such as omnibuses, cabs, steamers, &c.

The theatres hitherto, whether as regards scenery or performance, have hardly exceeded mediocrity, but on the other hand educational establishments, public libraries, and hospitals, are of singular excellence. It is truly marvellous, and especially makes a profound impression upon the

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denizens of old Europe, to observe what handsome, imposing, costly buildings have been run up among this comparatively youthful community. The Sydney University, founded in 1851, is built in the Gothic style, at an expense of £50,000, and is maintained by an annual grant of £5000. It is far the finest memorial erected by European civilization in honour of science, throughout the southern hemisphere. Its internal organization is somewhat analogous with that of those of the mother country. All the high schools of Sydney accord academic degrees in the various branches, and by a Royal Patent of 27th of February, 1858, holders of honours are raised to the same rank with those in the other universities of the Empire. Although only secular education is provided by the University, there have been founded four colleges in immediate proximity with each other, for the four principal religious denominations in the colony, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist, in which the scholars may, without prejudice to the secular character* of the University proper, receive instruction in their various beliefs. The erection of these four adjuncts cost about £40,000 more. At the period of our visit there were only 38 scholars enrolled, whose instruction cost the state a rather round sum. A commencement had been made with a library, a museum of natural history, and a numismatic collection.

* The fundamental principle of the University is, "The association of students without respect of religious creed, in the cultivation of secular knowledge." (See Sydney University Calendar for 1858, p. 15.)

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Besides the University, there are in Sydney a considerable number of very important educational establishments and public schools. The most strenuous exertions are made to keep the public schools in a high state of efficiency, and there is scarcely a hamlet, where the rising generation may not be instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and geography.*

An observatory is also in course of erection, but meteorological observations had long since been carried on in the principal places of the colony, and from the favourable natural conditions of the continent for conducting such investigations, the results must greatly contribute to our acquaintance with the laws regulating atmospherical phenomena.

One very deserving institution dedicated to the noble object of awakening a sense of the beautiful, and furthering the interests of science, is the Australian Museum. All that this glorious country presents of interesting and useful in the three great divisions of nature is here being gradually classified in scientific order, and displayed in elegant cases in spacious handsome apartments, the whole thrown open to the public for amusement and instruction, free of cost. Al ready an excellent start has been made with valuable collections of conchylia and birds, as well as numerous ethnographical specimens and fossil remains. The management of the Museum has been confided to the most distinguished

* The fixed salary of the teacher varies from £120 to £140 per annum.

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scientific men of the colony,* and owing to the deep interest taken by these gentlemen in this truly national undertaking, the sphere of its activity is likely ere long to be extended to scientific publications, the appearance of which will be doubly valuable and important in a country which presents so many different objects for investigation and elucidation.

If, however, our knowledge of Australia and its black aboriginal tribes is as yet very scanty, it has not assuredly been due to any cold indifference on the part of the new settlers for the history of a country and a race of men who are rapidly disappearing from the face of the country. It is rather to be found in the physical conditions of the continent, and especially in the great scarcity of perennial springs. In fact, there is hardly any country, with the exception of Africa, the exploration of which has cost the lives of so many scientific travellers as this fifth quarter of the world. What manly devotion, ardour, and perseverance, characterize such names as Leichhardt, Oxley, Kennedy, Eyre, Mitchell, Cunningham, Strut, Babbage, Warburton, Stuart, Gregory, Selwyn, MacDonnell, &c.! And it may fill a German with honest pride, that one of his race has attained the pinnacle of scientific eminence here! The name

* At the period of our visit to the colony, the post of secretary was filled by Mr. G. French Angus, distinguished as an artist, and widely known for his valuable ethnological studies upon the Caffers, New Zealanders, and South Australian aborigines. Unfortunately his health gave way, owing to his exertions, and he now lives in retirement at Collingwood, in South Australia, where however he is still animated by the most intense zeal for science.