

**A VISIT TO
AUSTRALIA AND ITS
GOLD REGIONS**

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SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

**A VISIT TO
AUSTRALIA AND ITS
GOLD REGIONS**

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Rev. W. James. Vicar
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VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

W. J. P.

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Its Gold Regions.

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AUSTRALIA AND ITS GOLD REGIONS.

CHAPTER I.

FAREWELL TO ENGLAND—THE DEPARTURE—THE SEA—THE
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TROPICS—A DEAD CALM—THE CORYPHENE—THE PORPOISE—
THE WHITE SHARK—MEETING A SHIP—WRITING HOME—THE
CAPE—THE ISLAND OF ST. PAUL—LAND HO!—ARRIVAL AT
ADELAIDE.

It was about eight o'clock on a fine summer's evening when we went on board our vessel at Plymouth. The sun had set in all his

splendour; the new moon, red with the hues of evening, hung just over Mount Edgecombe; twilight was gathering around us, and all nature was so still and beautiful, that we forgot to think how many were quitting the shores of their native country, perhaps for ever. The little groups of friends, assembled on the beach to catch the last farewell glimpse, were soon lost to our sight, and the sombre shades of night gathered around us. In a few minutes more we exchanged this scene of repose for the bustle ever attendant on the first evening of the departure of an emigrant ship.

The next morning, about four o'clock, we were awakened by the noise of the sailors above our heads, hoisting sail, and raising the anchor; and when we went on deck, at eight o'clock, we found that the vessel was outside the Breakwater, and that we had really commenced our voyage; and in the evening, although the wind was rather against us, the shores of Old England could scarcely be distinguished from the clouds that were gathered along the horizon.

Everything in a life on board ship being new to us, our attention was fully occupied for the first few days. We felt ourselves, as it were, in a new world, and we scanned every feature of it with the same relish with which a child

inspects a fresh toy; or rather, perhaps, with the same deep interest with which a philosopher examines an unknown specimen of nature's works. The novelty, however, was soon over; we were speedily accustomed to the change, and we then began to think of the many weeks which would elapse ere we should reach our destination, and of the probable dreariness of such a lengthened absence from the land.

There is scarcely any conceivable position, however, in which we can be placed, wherein an intelligent mind may not find ample source of interest and instruction; and a sea voyage, so far from being the monotonous thing we should at first imagine, offers the most delightful opportunities "to look through nature up to nature's God" that an observing man can desire. It is the more delightful, inasmuch as there is such a total absence of all the ordinary cares of this life: all things are provided for you; you have only to eat, drink, and be merry, and you have ample time to observe and ponder on the vast beauties of the mighty deep. The change from one climate to another, so marked because so sudden; the daily companionship with creatures strange and wonderful, that constantly surround the ship; the grandeur and ever-varying loveliness of the vast expanse of sea and sky; the occasional

meeting with other vessels, and the deep excitement felt when approaching within sight of land—be it but a solitary and barren island—all contribute to render a few months' sojourn on the waters a source of extreme gratification.

We had not proceeded far on our path across the trackless waste, before we were enlivened by the visits of those cheerful little birds, the Petrels,—the constant companions of the sailor, by whom they are familiarly called "Mother Carey's Chickens." They are peculiarly ocean birds, rarely approaching the shores, except when they seek gloomy and inaccessible rocks for the purpose of incubation. Scarcely larger than the swallow, one wonders that so frail a bird should dare to brave the fury of the tempest; but when the masts are creaking, and the cordage shrieking in the fierce blast, and when the sea is lashed into mountainous waves, whose foaming crests are torn off in mists by the fury of the gale, the little petrel flits hither and thither, now treading the brow of the watery hills, now sweeping through the valley, piping its singular note with as much glee as if it were the very spirit of the storm which the superstitious mariner attributes to its evil agency. Flocks of these little birds often accompany ships for many days successively;