

The Journal of Vicary Gibbs Journey around the World 1883 to 1885

18 August 1883 – Saturday

I dined at the Carlton last night and came to Liverpool by the midnight train. I have a pretty good cabin in the middle of the ship - the SS Gallia - bound for New York.

29 August 1883 – Wednesday

After breakfast we were driven to the Quay and taken up the Hudson to West Point where we had a big lunch. The Scenery was very grand like the better part of the Rhine; the basaltic rocks are fine - they are called the Palisades. Came back and steamed round New York under the splendid Brooklyn Bridge. When we landed we found carriages ready. Sam Rathbone and I drove over the Brooklyn Bridge into Brooklyn and then back for a drive in the Central Park.

31 August 1883 – Friday

Left New York at 8 last night. We have come by the Erie and Great Western of Canada line and consequently had the opportunity of getting a fair view of the Falls and Rapids at Niagara.

1 September 1883 – Saturday

Reached Chicago at about 11 and went to the enormous Palace Hotel.

3 September – Monday

We got up early and went into St Paul which was decorated with arches and all in gala style. Tremendous crowds in the streets. General Grant, President Arthur, General Sheridan and other swells were present. We then went to Minneapolis where just the same sort of thing went on, only more so.

5 September – Wednesday

We reached Bismarck early this morning, a go ahead, flourishing, wooden built like all these Western towns. The great feature was the appearance of Sitting Bull, the famous Sioux Chieftain who defeated and massacred General Custer an every man who was with him but one, after which he escaped into Canada with 6000 followers all of whom ultimately surrendered unconditionally. He now lives here with 200 personal followers.

8 September 1883 – Saturday

Frederick Billings, President of the North Pacific Railroad in the 1870s made a most effective speech. The navvies laid about a quarter of a mile of track at an enormous pace, each party racing against the other to reach the point where the last spike was to be driven, and then two trains covered with flags and decorations came puffing and met, the men who were on the engines shaking hands with one another amid tremendous shouting and cheering.

12 September 1883 – Wednesday

I joined the American party going in the river boat up the Columbia River and I am very pleased I did, for it is by far the grandest scenery I have yet seen, much grander than the Hudson.

13 September 1883 Thursday

This morning I was pleased to find that the programme of the trip to Victoria had been shortened so as to get back to Portland by Saturday afternoon. This enabled me to go. I started at 9 on board the river boat. We reached Kalamazoo about 1, where we took the train through some grand forest in the distance Mount Adam and Mount St Helens, and arrived at Tacoma on Puget Sound, where there is a splendid view of a snow mountain, Mount Tacoma standing quite alone. From its shape it is an old volcano. We walked through the town and embarked on the ocean steamer 'Queen of the Pacific.

14 September 1883 – Friday

Reached Esquimault at 4 a.m. After an early breakfast we drove round Victoria. The British Squadron were in the harbour - Swiftsure, Heroine and Sappho - and to my surprise and pleasure found that Admiral Lyons was in command with whom I renewed my acquaintance. We went on board again at noon and sailed for an hour to Seattle. The sunset on the harbour with the mountains

rising on the other side was very fine. There were fireworks and illuminations, and we sailed about 10 for Tacoma.

15 September – Saturday

We reached Tacoma last night and I found that this ship was going straight down to Frisco so I preferred sticking to it instead of returning to Portland.

17 September – Monday

A splendid display of the Northern Lights last night. We passed through the Golden Gate into San Francisco Harbour about a ¼ to 7 this evening. It was indeed a fine sight with the moon rising quite Crimson in front of us and the sun setting gloriously behind. I went straight to the Palace Hotel, the biggest in the world, I believe: the entrance like the Grand at Paris, a great hall with a band playing, and seven storeys of white galleries rising up all ground - really a remarkable sight. I have a very good room at the top of the house.

19 September 1883 - Wednesday

Got up at 6 and drove to the Cliff House through the Park which is wonderfully green and pretty. The Cliff House commands a good view of the Seal Rock with a great number of sea lions basking and swimming and crawling about. At 12, I went and saw the fire patrol turn out - not so smart as New York.

20 September – Thursday

Drove all over the town with Captain White in his buggy. The endless cable cars look very pretty gliding up the tremendously stiff hills without any effort.

21 September – Friday

In the evening we went to the Chinese quarter. We went with a detective who took us to some extraordinary burrows and opium dens. We also went behind the scenes of the theatre and saw actors making up and cramming up their parts. We went to a swell Chinese restaurant where we had some very nice green tea and sweet meats which was very refreshing after the heat, noises and stinks. Then we went to Bella Union Theatre which is a sort of music hall.

22 September – Saturday

After breakfast I went walking about the town and then came on board "The City of New York". I have a large stateroom on the hurricane deck.

30 September 1883 – Sunday

We sighted Oahu about 5 a.m. and got into Honolulu about 3 p.m. It is not much of a harbour, a small bay with coral reef, the place generally very much like part of Jamaica. We chartered a carriage and drove off to a place called Pali. A rough road through pretty scenery up to the top of the hills, where we got a splendid view of the sea on both sides.

1 October 1883 – Monday

We took on board a man called Raymond who had been to see the lake of fire on Hawaii. He says it is most wonderful; a stiff, long ride to get to it but a marvellous crater: 7 or 8 acres, flames bursting to a great height all over it and swimming together and breaking out in new places every moment. I wish I had gone in the 'Mariposa' and seen it.

2 October 1883 – Tuesday

The weather is quite calm and we have caught the 'Trades' which are taking us along pretty well - we did 300 miles today. We are beginning to see plenty of flying fish now.

16 October 1883 – Tuesday

We reached Auckland about 10 a.m. It is certainly an enormous and very beautiful harbour. We drove to Mount Eden; from the top we had a very fine view. We sailed at 9 p.m., one man as near as possible missed the steamer.

18 October 1883 – Thursday

We are making very good passage from Auckland and did 316 knots today meeting the "City of Sydney" on her way to Frisco.

21 October 1883 – Sunday

Sydney. We came through the Heads about 6 a.m. Unfortunately, it was very wet and foggy so one couldn't do more than see how beautiful the harbour would be in better weather. In the afternoon we went for a good walk all through the Botanical Gardens and round the quay, and Mrs MacQuarie's Chair - where there was a fine view of the shipping.

27 October 1883 – Saturday

Sailed at 1 p.m. in the 'John Elder' - a fine boat. Have got a very good cabin to myself.

30 October 1883 – Tuesday

Arrived in Melbourne at 10 a.m. - Vine, the shipping clerk came on board and took charge of my luggage while I took the train and went up to the office. Soon the Brights came in, both looking very well, and Reggie in a high white hat and short coat, Charles on the other hand looking very respectable. Went to lunch at the Melbourne Club and was introduced to all sorts of people.

3 November 1883 – Saturday

The office shut up and the racing carnival has begun. We three went off in a wagonette to the course which is about three miles out of town on the Salt Water River. A splendid course, Grandstand: and all most admirably arranged.

6 November 1883 – Tuesday

Cup day, and all the world going to the races. Fine weather and a tremendous crowd: they say that $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whole population of Victoria were on the course.

8 November 1883 – Thursday

Dined at the Club at a large dinner given by the Melbourne Club to the Governor of Tasmania and the Governor of South Australia.

30 November 1883 – Friday

We dined at the Club. At 11 o'clock, I said goodbye to the Brights and went down with the shipping clerk by train to the tender. In the end we reached the "Sorata" all right and I at once turned in.

3 December 1883 – Monday

We anchored a little before 7 last night and Meeks (Sir Alfred Meeks) came on board. We took the train to go from the Port of Adelaide but Meeks forgot to change and as it was the last train on Sunday night - however in the end we got a buggy and arrived about midnight at the Adelaide Club.

4 December 1883 – Tuesday

I like Adelaide very much; King William Street, the main thoroughfare, is on the whole the finest place I have seen in the colonies. The place has greater natural advantages than Melbourne and finer built than Sydney. The local stone is white which makes everything bright and is in great contrast to the hideous blue-black of Melbourne and the brown stone of Sydney.

9 December 1883 – Sunday

Took the train from Victoria Square down to the harbour. Went on board the "Shannon" about 9.30 a.m. She is a splendid P&O boat built in 1881; the saloon forward and the whole width of the ship lined with white and grey marble.

11 December 1883 – Tuesday

Melbourne. Went through the heads at daylight and alongside the wharf about 7. I went straight to the office.

16 December 1883 – Sunday

I bought two cockatoos, Corellas. They are very tame but no conversation as yet. I shall get them home in a sailing ship.

18 December 1883 – Tuesday

Talked to a man named Christison nearly all day about frozen meat.

29 December 1883 – Saturday

Took the train with Keats to Lillydale, 30 miles up country: a rough, bare township something like a town in the Western States.

31 December 1883 – Monday

We went on the coach in company with an artist and government surveyor named Hall - a well informed and interesting companion. The scenery was magnificent over the hills to Narbethong, but after that and when the Great Divide was crossed it was not so good, We got to Marysville about 60 miles from Melbourne at tea time.

4 January 1884 – Friday

I inspected various wool stores with Nicholls and started at 4.30 p.m to go to "Lara", Mr Fairbairn's place near Geelong. The house is very comfortable standing on a farm of 14,000 acres.

11 January 1884 – Friday

Started at 3 p.m. for Echuca. A lot of children in the carriage who would show me all the objects of interest such as cows, rabbits and bridges. I couldn't help envying the intense enjoyment that extracted out of a hot, dusty railway journey. Chrystal met me at Echuca at 11 p.m. We had some supper and then a dusty drive in splendid moonlight to his farm house 'Torrumbarry',

14 January 1884 – Monday

The Chrystals were altogether very hospitable doing their utmost to make me comfortable. Chrystal owns about £100,000 of land and stock.

17 January 1884 – Thursday

Left between 4 and 5 for Marida Yallock the Mackinnon's place in the Western District of Victoria. It is about 150 to 160 miles from Melbourne, but the trains are very slow and I did not reach Camperdown, the terminus of the line, till after 11 p.m. My friend Donald MacKinnon was at the station to meet me. We had a 12 mile moonlit drive to get to the house.

20 January 1884 – Sunday

The country here is very fine and rich, and the climate very cool - more like England than any part of Australia. It is all valuable grazing land suitable for fattening stock and some of it sells as high as £30 an acre.

12 February 1884 – Tuesday

Sailed about noon in the "Tarawera" with George Merivale. She is a nice boat, very well fitted up. Electric light and all the latest improvements; pretty full, but we have got a four berth cabin to ourselves, so we shall do all right.

16 February 1884 – Saturday

Sighted New Zealand in the afternoon. Just before 6 p.m. We entered George's Sound, and going to the end anchored there for the night. These Sounds are very beautiful; I believe the things most like them in Europe Re the Norway Fiords. We came winding along perfectly still water with mountains rising up sheer on either side.

17 February 1884 - Sunday

George and I got up about 5 a.m. And went to the bridge, and the hills looked lovely in the clear morning light. We sailed about 1/2 hour after, and about 9 we entered Milford Sound - the enormous snow capped mountains on both sides, ragged and grand, covered with timber right down to the edge of the still water in which they were reflected. An immense height: 4 to 5 thousand feet. On both sides there were a great number of waterfalls coming right down the side of the hills and at the end of the Sound where it broadens into a bay there is a little hut where lives a man called 'Southerdon'.

18 February 1884 – Monday

We reached the Bluff early this morning.

19 February 1884 – Tuesday

We reached Port Chalmers at 8 a.m. Arthur came on board. He arranged a first class carriage run down the wharf and the train took us about 9 miles into Dunedin. The town itself is beautifully situated and well laid out; fine streets without the monotony of Melbourne.

27 February 1884 – Wednesday

Left by the 8.10 a.m. train. The journey was very beautiful as far as Oamaru along the sea coast: something like the Great Western Railway by Dawlish, only much finer cliffs. After Oamaru it was through great rolling wheat plains with snow covered mountains in the distance. We arrived at Christchurch about 8 and found a boy on the station with a letter from Crace who had taken rooms at the Club and got supper for us.

1 March 1884 Saturday

As it was very fine I went for a drive with George. The town is certainly pretty, though flat. The Avon running through it, with clear water and willows on the bank is pleasant, and the houses are not set close together, but all detached with pretty gardens. The English Cathedral is rather fine, but the East unfinished.

3 March 1884 – Monday

We went to the Museum and saw the skeletons of the gigantic bird of New Zealand - the Moa or dinoris. We drove to the frozen meat works and saw rows and rows of splendid sheep hanging up, and everything clean and very well kept.

4 March 1884 – Tuesday

Left by the 7.30 a.m. train though I barely felt up to the journey. Reached Springfield about 40 miles off in 3 hours - a fine specimen of New Zealand railway travelling. We got to Bealey for dinner and there found a roaring wood fire, which was very pleasant.

5 March 1884 – Wednesday

We were called at about 8.30 a.m. We packed and squeezed into the coach except for the hardy George who preferred the box. About 11 we stopped at a small place to change horses and I got out on the roof. The Otira Gorge is as grand as anything in Switzerland, and the growth of timber and variety of foliage and other ferns quite remarkable. We got to Kumara, a gold mining township where George, Terry and I decided to go to Greymouth. We walked down to the tramway station for Greymouth. The tramway is made of wood, and the car bumps along it through a narrow track cut straight through the forest. When we got to the Grey River, we got out and were swung over in a cage. It was 1000 feet across. We put up at Gilmer's Hotel, Greymouth and got very comfortable rooms.

6 March 1884 – Thursday

Walked about and looked at the place which is a flourishing, go-ahead sort of sea port - or rather it is on the Grey River but close to the mouth. The making of the place will be the large coal mines near - which are beginning to be worked actively - where there is an illimitable supply of good hard gas coal. There is a certain amount of gold mining in the neighbourhood. The director of the Coal Pi Heath mine offered to show us over it. We went down the shaft. The seam of coal is exceedingly thick - an average of 17 feet.

7 March 1884 – Friday

Had breakfast and left at 7.30 in the coach for Reeftown. The scenery was very fine with abundance of rivers - very like Switzerland. We reached Ahaura about noon and had a meal. We stopped and changed horses at Nelson. We reached Reeftown at 6 and had tea.

8 March 1884 – Saturday

Reeftown is a biggish mining town and not so pretty as Greymouth. Everybody one meets is more or less interested in the gold fields. We had an offer to take us over the Globe gold mine which is a particularly successful one and has paid its capital three times over in the 3 years that it has been working. We had not been able to get a coach to go on towards Nelson so we took a buggy for three, and started for Lyell.

9 March 1884 – Sunday

Lyell (I suppose named after Sir Charles) is a small mining town consisting of one long strip squeezed in between the mountain and the river. We left at 8 a.m. our horses pretty fit and were driving all day through a narrow wild gorge above the Buller River. Having come 47 miles on very bad roads, we stopped at an inn called Hope River.

10 March 1884 – Monday

We left soon after eight. We reached a little village called Belgrove about 5 p.m. to which place the railway comes from Nelson - and is in course of further extension.

11 March 1884 – Tuesday

Left at 7.30 by the train into Nelson through a fertile valley. It is a very pretty town, prosperous though quiet. At 6 o'clock we went on board the 'Wanaka', a small steamer of the Union Company. The weather calm.

12 March 1884 – Wednesday

We reached Picton at about 1 a.m. And stopped for 1 or 2 hours arriving at Wellington at 10 - a much larger and uglier place than Nelson. We went for a long walk over the hilly downs and back through the Botanical Gardens. Wellington is a horse place and depends on being the seat of government.

13 March 1884 – Thursday

After dinner George Merivale left for Sydney in the 'Wakatipu'.

15 March 1884 – Saturday

Went for a walk, then on board the 'Rotorauhama' which sailed at 4 p.m.

16 March 1884 – Sunday

Arrived after breakfast at Napier. There is no harbour only an open roadstead. We were landed at the back of the town and had to drive a mile through a gorge to get to it. The town is on the open sea. It has a parade and a beach.

17 March 1884 – Monday

Took the train and went about 20 miles to Hastings where there is a race course. We had very good racing and enjoyed it. Major George's (who was on the 'City of New York') horse came second.

18 March 1884 – Tuesday

Called at 5 a.m. And started in the coach - very full. At first the scenery was very pretty, and when we got up into the hills, very fine. I have never travelled any road like it for steepness and sharpness of curves, and the driver went at an awful pace. Reached Tarawera about 6 p.m.

19 March 1884 – Wednesday

Called at 5, but the coach rather late. We got into Taupo about 5 after a 50 mile drive. Lake Taupo is an enormous lake, the biggest in New Zealand, but no so beautiful as some I have seen.

20 March 1884 – Thursday

Left again in a new coach about 6 a.m. I got a riding horse. It was a curious sight as I rode along seeing puffs of steam coming up from the valley like white clouds. We reached Ohinemutu about 5; the air smells very strongly of sulphur, and lakes and ponds boiling up in all directions.

21 March 1884 – Friday

A pretty place and fine view from the balcony of the Maori village below and the Lake Rotorua and the mountains. We went to the Government Baths and took the priest's bath - temperature 95 degrees Fahrenheit. We stopped at a village called Whakarewarewa and saw some small geysers and hot springs. The air is very strongly charged with sulphur. We reached Wairoa and then went down to see a waterfall. After tea we went to the native meeting house to see a Haka - 15 men and 15 women.

22 March 1884 – Saturday

We walked to the lake and we were rowed across in a large boat, about 8 miles, and then in canoe to the terraces. They are wonderful; a sort of creamy white silicate with marvellously clear water flowing over it, and every now and then deep pools of clear milky blue water. At the top is a large crater of perfectly clear boiling water throwing off steam. After that we visited the other sites: the Devil's Hole - a round hole in which was a frightful noise like the engines of a ship blowing off steam; and boiling mud cauldrons and geysers. Our guide was a Maori woman named Sophia.

Then we went to the Pink Terrace and here we all bathed moving into pools of various temperatures as we felt disposed. Sophia bathed too.

28 March – Friday

Called at 5, breakfast at 5.30 and started at 6 to ride to Tauranga. I had a capital horse, a much better walker than the one I had at Taupo, which is very important in a long journey. We reached Tauranga at 2. After 2 hours in Tauranga we started in the S.S. Wellington for Auckland. Tauranga is a pretty place with a great rocky island standing up in the entrance to the harbour. On our way we went through Gate Pah where British troops were massacred.

29 March – Saturday

We had a fine passage and reached Auckland. Early in the morning I went to the Club. I have got a very comfortable bed room.

1 April 1884 - Tuesday

The Tarawera's sailing was put off until 8 p.m. so I had time for a comfortable dinner on shore. I have a small cabin to myself.

2nd April 1884 – Wednesday

Tawhiao, the King of the Maoris is on board with his suite. He is tattooed very elaborately on the face, the only part being left clear being the cheek bones and the centre of the forehead. We lay to all day in the Bay of Islands coaling.

7 April 1884 – Monday

We got alongside in Sydney about 7.00 a.m. The Merivales have kindly asked me to stay with them at their little house on Darling Point.

12 April 1884 – Saturday

Went for a walk with Reginald Bright to the Botanical Gardens, where the hibiscuses and amaranthuses look gorgeous. The gardens are not so well laid out as Melbourne, but what a sight; the blue harbour with the English fleet lying at anchor and the fortified island.

14 April 1884 – Tuesday

Reggie and I went to the races. A beautiful day, and the Randwick course is very well arranged. Good racing, and the match between the two crack horses of the year - Le Grand and Martini Henry - produced extraordinary excitement.

23 April 1884 – Wednesday

At 11 p.m. I started on the Kembla for Newcastle - a decent little cabin on the deck.

24 April 1884 – Thursday

A quiet passage and reached Newcastle at 5 a.m we drove about the town and inspected the wool stores, wharves and water works.

25 April 1884 – Friday

Left at 6 a.m. In the train for the north, and reached Armidale - which is as far as the train goes at present.

26 April 1884 – Saturday

I got up about 7 and booked my seat on the coach to Tenterfield. We dined at a place called Bolivia, but it was not until 9.30 p.m. that we got to Tenterfield.

27 April 1884 – Sunday

Left in the coach at 7 a.m. and luckily got a box seat. We crossed the Queensland frontier about noon and got into Stanhope at 2.30. A clean little inn. We had one of those gorgeous red sunsets or after glows - the new moon, in the middle of the rich crimson, looking quite white - and a heavy bank of black rain clouds above.

28 April 1884 – Monday

I telegraphed Mason to say I was coming to his place on the Darling Downs, and left by train at 9 and reached Clifton Railway Station about 2. After lunch Mr. Mason took me to see the stables and

stock yards. This station, all freehold; about 40,000 acres of as rich land for grazing as there is in the Colony.

30 April 1884 – Wednesday

Left about noon after lunch and reached Brisbane a little after 10 p.m.

7 May 1884 – Wednesday

Walked in the botanical reserve - some beautiful varieties of amaranthus, but the gardens might be better kept.

8 May 1884 – Thursday

Brisbane is not a bad looking town but a good deal of it is unbuilt or has old ramshackle hovels. The river twists about it in a most confusing way.

12 May 1884 – Monday

Hart called for me in a cab at 5 a.m. for the station. The train was crowded. We got to Roma after 10 p.m. I thought the Toowoomba ranges even finer seeing them for a second time - such an extensive panorama.

13 May 1884 – Tuesday

We had to start at 4.30 a.m. by train to Amby Crossing. In the afternoon we drove over four in hand to Eurelia and met Fred and Rob Dunsmere, the managers.

15 May 1884 – Thursday

We started for a kangaroo drive. Owing to the wallaby fencing and the law giving 8d a scalp, the marsupials have been wonderfully cleared off.

16 May 1884 – Friday

Started at 9 o'clock driving the 4 in hand to Roma. We passed 3 mobs of travelling sheep from New South Wales - walking skeletons and the dead and dying lying all about.

17 May 1884 – Saturday

We left Roma by train at 5 am and reached Brisbane at 10.30.

28 May 1884 - Wednesday

At 9.30 I went on board the 'Lyeemoon' which is very fast; she was one of the old opium runners. I have a comfortable cabin to myself.

30 May 1884 - Friday

Arrived early in the morning in Sydney and at the office by 9.

4 June 1884 – Wednesday

Left Sydney with Hart and Bell about 5 p.m.

5 June 1884 – Thursday

Breakfasted at Albury and changed carriages at Wodonga on the Victoria frontier, the idiots having a different gauge in the two colonies.

26 June 1884 – Thursday

At the last moment I decided I would go to Fiji as there was nothing particular doing and Reggie pressed me very strongly to do so. I left Melbourne at 5 p.m. Supper at Albury and then a sleeping car.

27 June 1884 - Friday

Sailed by 5 p.m. On the 'Waihora' for Auckland.

2 July 1884 – Wednesday

Got in at 10 o'clock and found the Club full and the town too, the elections being on.

7 July 1884 – Monday

I went on board the 'Wairarapa' at 5 p.m. I have a comfortable large cabin amidships shared with a Major Mair. We have made a capital start in calm weather.

11 July 1884 – Friday

We sighted land about 7, and landed at Suva at half past two. The place has the ordinary tropical beauty which palms, crotons and hibiscuses always give. On the shore there is a fine range of mountains on the other side of the bay, and the sunlight on the coral reefs and the change of colour in the shallow water has a pleasant effect. Suva is the modern capital of Fiji and is on the biggest island of the group.

13 July 1884 – Sunday

We left Suva about 9. We reached Levuka, the harbour full of small craft, as there are no roads and all the communication is by water. Levuka is a far prettier place than Suva, and we walked through the town and up a high hill whence we got a very fine view of the bay.

14 July 1884 – Monday

Up at 7. We road up a gorge to a waterfall, and there bathed in a deliciously cool pool. We went for another ride with Cave along the coast to a native village. Here we went to the chief's house. I tasted some native grog which tasted like soapy water. I also brought some of their tappa or native cloth made out of tree fibre - rather pretty.

15 July 1884 – Tuesday

We reached Taviuna, another island in the Fiji group. There is an open roadstead and a large sugar mill to which everybody went.

16 July 1884 - Wednesday

Today we reached the small island of Mango about noon. It is an open roadstead, but the island looks very pretty. We walked through some large coconut plantations and then to some cotton fields which I had never seen growing before. Now sugar has pretty well replaced it. We visited the sugar mill and then I walked across the middle of the island to a beautiful land locked lagoon. After rowing on the lagoon and then we walked up the hill to a coffee plantation. There was a fine view from the planters house.

19 July 1884 – Saturday

We reached Apia, the chief town of the Samoan Group on the island of Upolu. It is the most beautiful place we have been to yet, and by far the wildest and most primitive. The Germans are supposed to have the most influence and to be jealous of English interference. There are several largish German stores and a good bit of German shipping in the port. The natives are very handsome - especially the men, but some of the women have beautiful eyes. We dined on board and went to a wild native dance by torch light in the open air afterwards.

21 July 1884 - Monday

We rowed out in a boat at low tide to the reef and walked about it. It was very beautiful, the coral being mostly brown with a violet crown, and far down in the still deep water one could see the red bits. There were small fish swimming about in pools like carp - a brilliant, vivid ultra marine blue in colour.

22 July 1884 - Tuesday

We reached the harbour of Paugo Paugo in Tutuila at 8 a.m. There are no white people, but two native villages. The harbour is a fine one with steep thick wooded sides. After dinner on board we went off in a canoe to see a native dance. Two or three girls very handsome - one like Cleopatra. The noble savage went wild in the woods in his best style.

23 July 1884 - Wednesday

We started again about 10 a great many natives around the ship in their curious double canoes.

24 July 1884 – Thursday

A headwind: but we reached the island of Vavau in the Tongan group before night, but too late to go in.

25 July 1884 – Friday

Entered the long winding harbour, very fine - as good as Sydney - and the colours of the water splendid. We went on shore; the town not very pretty, but splendid orange groves loaded with fruit.

We went off in boats to visit some caves which were beautiful, the finest about 70 feet every way and very deep, intensely blue, clear water. Those who had seen both said it was much superior to the Blue Grotto of Capri.

27 July 1884 – Sunday

We left Vavau at 7 a.m. We passed an active volcano at distance. We could just see the smoke rising and a curious conical mount - Kao, 5000 feet high. During the trip we have seen ever so many wrecks.

28 July 1884 – Monday

We reached Tonga Tabu at 9 a.m. We visited the English Consul, Simons. He has a beautiful house built in the native fashion of reeds and thatch over a frame of very handsome beams, or rather poles braided with fibre. We all started off inland to visit the wonderful monumental stones. We first visited a banyan tree said to be 120 feet round and the biggest in the Southern Pacific. Then we went to some stones called the Pyramids which are burial places of great antiquity. They consist of 3 tiers of large slabs of coralline stone about 20 feet by 12 and one foot through. After riding on for some time and passing two native villages with earthwork fortifications and then some way further we came to the strange Stonehenge type monument called Koe Ha Amoga A Maui. The stones were about 4 feet square and 16 feet high. The length of the top stone was about 20 feet

29 July 1884 – Tuesday

We left about 3 p.m.

2 August 1884

We reached Auckland at 11 o'clock. We sailed at 6.

5 August 1884 – Tuesday

We came alongside the wharf at Port Chalmers at 10 o'clock last night. I decided to sleep on board and come up to town by an early train this morning. Bell met us at Dunedin Station.

6 August 1884 - Wednesday

I went for a walk in the afternoon watching a high sea coming in. Fine rollers and grey sea with sand hills and gorse.

7 August 1884 – Thursday

Set sail. I have a comfortable cabin to myself.

13 August 1884 – Wednesday

Reached Sandridge (Port Melbourne) at 9.30 p.m. And Campbell took us off the boat at once and we went to the Melbourne Club

1 November 1884 – Saturday

On reaching the office, I found a telegram feeling me to go at once to Ceylon. Very much worried, both at having to go and at the cause, as I fear there must be some serious trouble there.

4 November 1884 – Tuesday

Cup Day. General holiday, beautiful weather. The Club crammed with people most of whom I knew. I went to the races with Maclaren whom I knew up at Exeter. A great crowd at the course and the Cup proved an exciting race. Malay won - Lumley Hill and I had a modest fiver on between us, otherwise I didn't bet.

20 November 1884 - Thursday

22 November 1884 – Saturday

We arrived early at Glenelg (Adelaide). I arranged to go to the office first. I found Meeks very busy and flourishing. I had a long talk with him and went to see the new offices. I went to the Chief Justice's (Sir Samuel Way) house for lunch. His house is done up with great taste, and a lovely garden full of birds. He gave me a lot of American books to read on the voyage. Dinner about 5 p.m. We sailed about midnight.

26 November 1884 - Wednesday

Reached King George's Sound about 10 o'clock and went on shore. Albany looks a forsaken little

town. The Captain made up a picnic, to which he asked me and two or three more, and we climbed up Mount Clarence and got a fine view of the harbour. We started about 4 p.m.

19 December 1884 – Friday

Left Colombo at 6 a.m. With Howell and Porter by train. Reached some unspellable station, then a drive in a coach to a village where Jardine the Superintendent met us. The 7 miles on foot to the Rock Estate. They rigged up a chair of bamboos on which four coolies carried me. The place is planted with cocoa and Liberian coffee. We went back to the station and I travelled on through Kandy to a place called Matale where we arrived at 8 p.m. and slept the night. In the Rest House, I found Antony Crawley-Boevey (He married the daughter of Sir Samuel White Baker)

20 December 1884 – Saturday

Up very early and gout better. Drove to within 2 miles of Ellagalla and walked the estate. The Superintendent a quiet, sensible young man called Peto. The place seemed in good order. The chinchona, tea and cardamoms looked healthy but what coffee remained was in an awful state. A grand view extended all round

21 December 1884 – Sunday

Took the early train to Kandy which we reached about 9 a.m. It is a beautiful city - a lovely lake with a drive all round and the hills rising up close on every side. There is also a very fine Singhalese Temple with curious frescoes representing the sorts of hell torture that await various breaches of Buddhist Law. The carvings too were very rich and quaint, somewhat like the Moorish. Heavy elaborate rounded arches I was much struck by it. We breakfasted at the Club. Then Porter drove me out 2 or 3 miles to the Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya; in their way I should think the most lovely in the World. Not well kept and little or no flowers. But such foliage and the giant bamboos by the river side as high as a house waving and crackling in the wind.

22 December 1884 – Monday

Left early by train for Gampola for Nawalapitya and there we hired a carriage and drove to our estate of Honooctua. We were met by the Superintendent, one Paxton, a superior respectable Scotsman. Went over a good bit of the land; the young tea coming along well and generally I thought better of the place than Ellagalla. The coffee of course is doomed. Porter thinks very well of Paxton and is going to put the adjoining estate of Hennewelle under his charge.

23 December 1884 – Tuesday

Got up very early and walked over to Hennewelle, not so valuable or well kept as the other. The manager is under notice to leave.

24 December 1884 - Wednesday.

Drove away early to Nawalapitya where I parted with Porter, he going back by train to Colombo and I driving on another 10 miles to Banagalla where Blackett met me. Rode with Blackett to his estate at Penylan and had breakfast with his superintendent Crowther. The tea on Penylan is splendid; the machinery in the tea houses good and elaborate; in fact, the estate is valuable and well cared for. Our Monet is safe here in Ceylon unless anything happens to Blackett.

25 December 1884 -Thursday

A beautiful Christmas Day; up early with Blackett. Riding over the estate which is large and fine with a great deal of forest land which could be brought under cultivation. There is a lot of succiruba (chinchona) fit to cut and I am very pleased. Rode over in the evening to spend Xmas with the Smiths. I played blind man's buff, and there were a lot of crackers.

26 December 1884 - Friday

Left about 11 a.m.; a magnificent drive through the hills to Nawalapitya. The scenery almost if not quite passes Jamaica. Took the train there to Colombo.

28 December 1884 – Sunday

I took a drive with Freudenberg, an intelligent German merchant, and sucked his brains about Ceylon. He thinks that tea, too, will be overdone.

31 December 1884 - Wednesday

Left Colombo at 7 a.m. Hot, dull journey; slept a great deal and picked up Blackett at Nawalapitya and together as far as the terminus where we took the coach for 20 miles to Nuwera Eliya - a sort of health resort. A great change in the climate from the sluggish heat of Colombo, to cold nights, blankets and fires. We put up at Barnes Hall, Downall's, or rather our property, Moa a hotel - and a very expensive one. The

1 January 1885 - Thursday

Left early and drove to Newabudde to breakfast, and had a look at the native coffee garden. Rode thence to Moonerackanda.

3 January 1885 - Saturday

Visited Lamostotte, the next estate. Everything is done as if everybody was rolling in money instead of bankrupt.

4 January 1885 - Sunday

Rode to Dambetenne, the 3rd estate of the Group and breakfasted with Chamberlain, a pleasant fellow and seems to know his work.

5 January 1885 - Monday

Left at 8. I fear Blackett's estimate of these properties will be very low. Rode to Hiagalla, one of Duff's estates.

6 January 1885 - Tuesday

Drove to Newera Eliya about 12 miles in the pouring rain. In the afternoon visited the Oliphant tea estate belonging to Brook's. Aitken manager.

8 January 1885 - Thursday

Blackett came at 5 a.m. - still very lame with gout, but he persuaded me to try and get down to Colombo. I was carried to the coach, and managed the journey somehow on cushions.

12 January 1885 - Monday

Engaged to lunch at Mount Lavinia with Law - a merchant here.

18 January 1885 - Sunday

With Howell to the cathedral. Lunched at Freudenberg's. I can't possibly go on this steamer - I am much too seedy.

21 January 1885 - Wednesday

Freudenberg has asked me to come and live at his house. He is a clever, well informed German. I think I shall very likely go if he will agree to my paying my share of expenses.

22 January 1885 - Thursday

Moved to Freudenberg's house in Cinnamon Gardens, taking my servant Sinnatambi with me. I am comfortable here at "Glen Esk".

7 February 1885 - Saturday

Heard of the fall of Khartoum, and fear Gordon must be killed. I hope Gladstone's Government will be held responsible for his blood. I wish Gladstone and Gordon could change places - so would it be better for England.

17 February 1885 -

I went on board the steamer 'Brindisi' at 4 o'clock. Freudenberg. came to see me off. I have a fair cabin to myself on deck.

24 February 1885 - Tuesday

Reached the barren Isle of Aden between 5 and 6 p.m. I did not go ashore as there was nothing to see.

27 February 1885 - Friday

We are having a delightful passage through the Red Sea. A pleasant breeze and just the perfection of temperature and the moon being about full makes the nights lovely?

1 March 1885 - Sunday

About 5 p.m. Into Suez Harbour. Decided to change my route and go home via Brindisi.

2 March 1885 - Monday

The first part of the rail journey was sandy desert and we recognised the masts of the Yarra and the Brindisi in the canal. At 9 we reached the Hotel Abbat with a welcome supper and be

3 March 1885 - Tuesday

Hired a dragoman after breakfast, and Wilson and I went round the town looking through the bazaars. The principal Place is well laid out with an equestrian statue of Mehemed Ali. We went to the forts, then to the principal mosque and out to see Pompey's Pillar. Went on board the 'Mongolia' at six to dinner, and have a good cabin to myself on the hurricane deck.