

AUSTRALIA

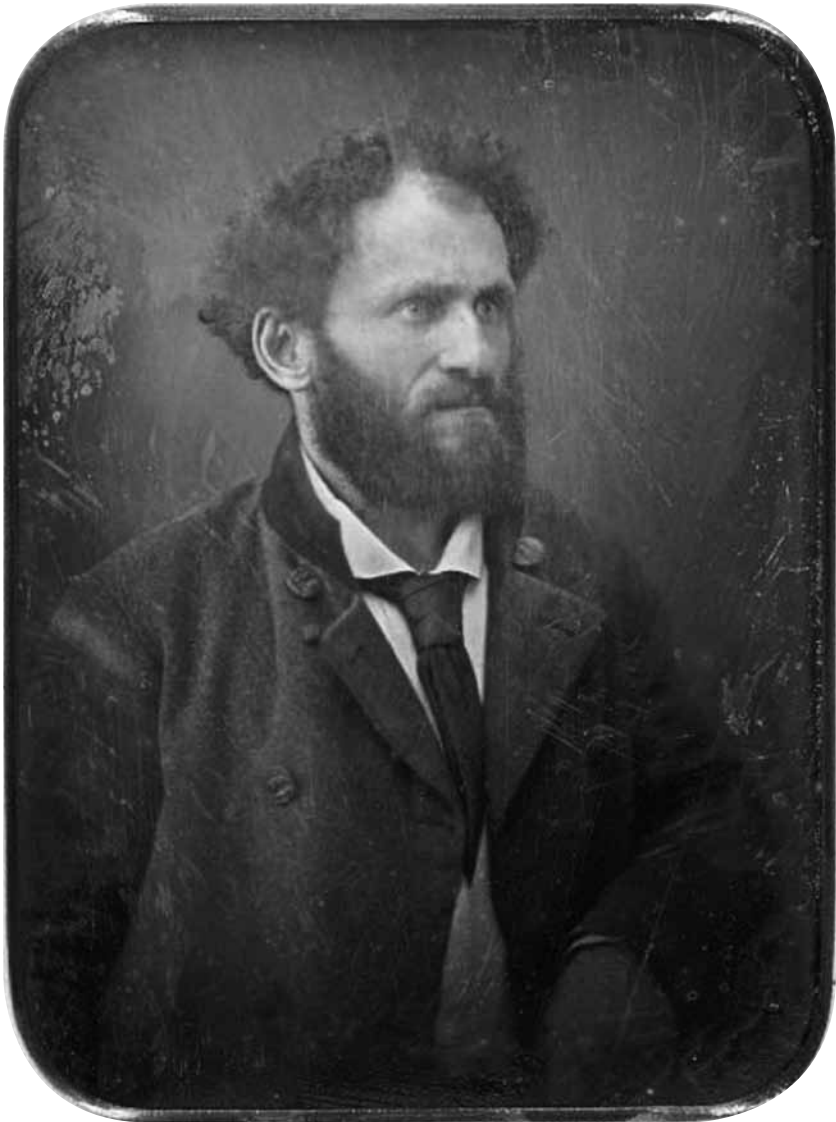
FRIEDRICH GERSTÄCKER

**A German Traveller
in the Age of Gold**

Edited by Peter Monteath



Wakefield
Press



Friedrich Gerstäcker, c. 1850

Photographic portrait by Bertha Wehnert

[Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig, F/2672/2003]

Contents

A Note on the Text	ix
Preface	xi
1. Sydney	1
2. By Mail Coach from Sydney to Albury	31
3. A Canoe Excursion on the Hume	49
4. March through the Murray Valley	61
5. March through the Murray Valley (Continued)	94
6. The Adelaide District	121
7. Tanunda	150
8. The Natives of Australia	169
9. The Manners and Customs of the South Australian Tribes	178
10. Sydney in August 1851	199
11. Voyage through Torres Strait	233
Afterword: Friedrich Gerstäcker's Australia	261
Notes	276
Acknowledgements	298
Index	300

A Note on the Text

Friedrich Gerstäcker's travels around the world in the years 1849–1852 were financed in part by the illustrious Stuttgart publishing house J.G. Cotta. The arrangement provided that after his return to Germany Gerstäcker would write a full and detailed account of his travels, which Cotta would publish. Both parties were true to their word, with the result that from 1853 Cotta published five volumes of Gerstäcker's *Reisen* (Travels). *Australien* was the fourth of those volumes, following those on his travels in South America, California and the South Sea Islands. Like the fifth and final volume in the series on Java, *Australien* appeared in 1854.

Aware of potential British and American interest in his travels, the prolific Gerstäcker also prepared an English-language manuscript based on his travels; it appeared in 1853 as a single volume titled *Narrative of a Journey Round the World*. It was not an abridged translation of the five-volume German work, but rather, it appears, Gerstäcker's own original composition in English. The section in that book dealing with Australia is much shorter than the full-length German account (some 140 pages as against 514 in the original Cotta edition of *Australien*), but it is the source of Gerstäcker's Australian travels upon which readers of English have had to rely – until now.

After Gerstäcker's death his collected works – *Gesammelte Schriften* – were published over the years 1872 to 1879 by the Jena publishing house Costenoble. A version of *Australien* was published in the sixth of altogether 43 volumes. It is, however, the original 1854 version of the text, written soon

after his travels and published by Cotta, which is translated here. Because of the size of the project, the translation was undertaken by a team of translators consisting of Peter Monteath, Aileen Ohlendorf, Harald Ohlendorf, Lois Zweck, Judith Wilson, Storm Graham and Thomas Kruckemeyer. The preparation of the final version of the manuscript was coordinated by Peter Monteath, who has also added the footnotes. The over-riding goal was to balance the need for accuracy with a desire to replicate Gerstäcker's characteristically fluent and engaging style.

There were no illustrations in Gerstäcker's original 1854 work. The camera had been invented, but as early cameras were hugely cumbersome, Gerstäcker did not travel with one. He did, however, make sketches, one of which has survived and is included here. Happily, also, it has been possible to include a reproduction of the map of Australia Gerstäcker carried with him on his travels. Complete with Gerstacker's own jottings, it is an eloquent legacy of a remarkable traveller.



'The Australian Royal Mail crossing a dry billybong', by Friedrich Gerstäcker
[Stadtarchiv Braunschweig, G IX 23/25]

Preface

In late March of 1851, Friedrich Gerstäcker, the most illustrious and prolific of Germany's travel writers, set foot in Australia. Over the preceding two years Gerstäcker had gathered enough experiences to keep his pen busy for years to come. He had sailed from Hamburg to South America, crossed the Andes, made his way to California, witnessed the madness of the gold rushes, and ventured across the Pacific.

In Australia there was to be no letting up; his desire for fresh adventure could not be quenched. From Sydney he took a mail coach to Albury, where in a feat of astonishing ingenuity he fashioned his own canoe to take him down the Murray. When his canoe sank, he travelled on foot to Adelaide and the Barossa Valley, where he was eager to check on how his countrymen had made their new lives in the Antipodes. Back on the east coast, he witnessed wide-eyed the outbreak of the Australian version of gold fever. Not until his vessel picked its way through the treacherous rocks and shoals of the Torres Strait did he finally leave Australia – and with it its multiple perils, delights and curiosities. He would never return.

He did, however, devote his bountiful energies and his considerable literary talents to writing an account of his travels which would both educate and enchant his huge readership. Countless Germans came to know Australia – and indeed many other parts of the world – through the pen of Friedrich Gerstäcker. And now, for the first time, English readers, too, can learn what befell the German adventurer on his Australian travels. More than that, they can gain a strikingly vivid image of what Australia was like on the cusp of the events that would change it forever.

1.

Sydney

Once again I am standing on solid ground, and as if by magic, country, climate, earth, scenery and people – in short everything that forms the actual world – have changed around me. It is no longer the rustling palms wafting above, no longer the thundering roar of the reefs and the murmuring and whispering of the wide banana leaves swaying in the wind, it is not the cheerful laughing and singing of the Tahitians, always happy and carefree, ringing in my ear. I am surrounded by this flat country, trimmed like a hedge of yew and studded with strangely symmetrical trees, by the city with its impressive rows of uniform houses, and the broad Irish brogue and English dialect are the only sounds offered to the ear as a substitute for the lost romantic magic.

It was altogether a curious feeling when I landed on Australian soil. *Australia* – everything that is upside down and strange, after the many descriptions of it from early childhood, is the first thing you associate with the very name Australia. Right away you want to look beyond the houses, which look exactly like those in every other civilised town, just to discover the curiosities surely lying beyond.

Kangaroo – even the name has a certain, magical ring to it, especially for a hunter. Platypus, cherries with their stones on the outside, trees that cast off their bark. For those coming directly from Europe, even the seasons are back to front. Those are all things that you certainly do not think about at that moment, but whose image we have in our minds as a muddled mass – and upside down, of course – the colours changing rapidly and flowing into one another like in a kaleidoscope. Merely having set foot on a foreign part of the world has its own charm. No matter how passionately people are attached to

their own country, they still want to see a different one, so that they can think longingly back to their own. This is especially true as this part of the world also belongs, as it were, to the Antipodes, and the people here by rights should be standing on their heads, even if we had already found out where *up* actually is.

Australia became a sort of land of promise. I arrived hungry and was fed (for 1 shilling and sixpence). I arrived there, if not entirely naked, but in very light clothing, and was dressed (for 3 pounds, 10 shillings). In fact, the whole business of staging my arrival made such a strange impression on me right from the start, that I really do not know how better to characterise it, than if I honestly confess to the reader that it would not have taken much to make me believe that it might disappear from under my feet. So I immediately broke off a piece of stone to keep as a souvenir of this place.

I was really terribly hungry, for on board there had not been anything to eat, even if I had wanted to wait for the 'breakfast', and this made me aware that I confronted a new reality, and that an inn was what I needed first before seeking anything else. This really dealt a bit of a blow to the romantic side of things.

By the way, Sydney is anything but romantic, for if in any part of the world (even notwithstanding the Yankee States, and that certainly says a great deal) there is a perfectly genuine commercial life, it is here. Pounds and shillings are the only words which, like a magic formula, can animate the features of the indifferent faces surrounding the foreigner everywhere, and when the shillings turn to pounds for these wheelers and dealers, a completely contrary phenomenon becomes evident in the foreign traveller wandering among them. It is that, providing he is bored with the never-ending discussions about wool and shipping, he learns in a quite practical way that he is not cut out to be a businessman.

The character of Sydney is purely English, and at the same time it is strange how sharply the English spoken here differs from the American version, even though they are the same language. You find the most striking example of this in the United States, where just the narrow stretch of water of the northern lakes separates America and an English colony from each other, for never have

I found two neighbouring towns that are so unlike each other in every little detail as, for example, Buffalo and Toronto.

But to come back to Sydney, the stranger arriving here usually has to overcome a kind of prejudice that has developed in him over the years and really does not diminish during his travels, especially in California. It is the prejudice of going to a criminal colony and finding oneself suddenly among an indefinite number of murderers, thieves, burglars and other dreadful, horrible characters transported to this place in particular.

Here the new arrival finds to his astonishment that, at least visibly, there is not the slightest trace of all of that. And even if he should now and again – because he is constantly looking for them – encounter suspicious-looking faces perhaps more often than anywhere else, these in no way justify the terrible expectations that he might have had of the whole population based on what has been written. The ‘Government people’ (convicts), as they are called here, have now really merged with the immigrants, so that it takes someone in the know to recognise them. One would hope that the easy access to food here has turned most of them into honest people, whatever their former crimes may have been, and that it will no longer be necessary to differentiate between them. Who knows, perhaps in future centuries this kind of deportation could lead to a mark of distinction, a type of nobility of the colony. The children of the convicts sent here in former years now in part form a considerable and respected section of the population (here and there even former convicts themselves); after centuries their children and children’s children will make up large numbers of descendants. Our European aristocracy, after all, sprang from even stranger origins.

At the beginning in Sydney I had a few problems finding a good establishment where I could live; I passed by most of them, since the bars downstairs did not look very inviting. Following the principle that in a strange city, the best thing to do is choose the best hotel – at least until one knows one’s way around better – I decided on the Royal Hotel, a large, imposing, but somewhat rambling building, and moved in. The next thing was a warm bath and then a good breakfast. After that I had to get a completely new outfit, for

during my travels I had become rather dishevelled. Here in Sydney there are lots of opportunities, because there are plenty of clothes shops, and clothes are relatively inexpensive.

On Saturday the 29th I wrote my letters, which at that time had to be dispatched to England by sailing ship. As I was sitting in my room in the evening, I suddenly heard a dull noise from one of the lower rooms, shouts of bravo, stamping of feet, drumming and the loud booming voice of a speaker in between. In any event there was a meeting going on, and when I enquired about it, I was told that it was an anti-transportation meeting.¹

The meeting was being held in the large ballroom below in the Royal Hotel, and there was a lively discussion among the numerous participants. By the way, the meeting was concerned, as I soon found out, only indirectly with the transportation of convicts at this time, and more directly with a bill proposed by the government. If passed, according to the speakers the bill would unfairly reorganise the electorates of New South Wales to favour the squatters or settlers in the interior over the people of Sydney: 'The most infamous, unjust, treacherous and diabolical measure', as one of the speakers remarked in the heat of the debate. The squatters, especially those in the north, it seems, are not so opposed to the transportation of convicts to these colonies, because in this way they get cheap labourers, while now sometimes there are none to be had. The inhabitants of Sydney, on the other hand, are vehemently trying to prevent a new shipment of these subjects. Sydney has also of course continually received a bad name from this practice, as was particularly evident a little while ago in California, where the very words 'from Sydney' had a completely abhorrent effect.²

In order to deal with this jointly with the inhabitants of Sydney, delegates from Melbourne, Adelaide and Van Diemen's Land arrived here and were treated to a sumptuous meal a few days later. In order to prove to the government that the people were serious in their opinion, they called a public meeting for the purposes of a demonstration for the following Monday. At this they intended to voice their opinion about the proposed bill and thereby express their thoughts about transportation or non-transportation.

The meeting proceeded calmly, although matters of considerable

controversy for a *royal* colony were discussed. Our German police would certainly have intervened as much as possible and would have stirred up as much trouble as they could. The local police knew better how to react – people governed by a monarch would, of course, not have allowed them to interfere.

I did not attend a later meeting, but I heard that it took place and decisions were made in the same fashion as at the preliminary meeting.

In Germany I had been recommended to a Mr A. Dreutler, quite an important German who has a business in Sydney, and I was welcomed by him most warmly.³ The following Sunday, the 30th of March, we went to the lighthouse together, one of the most popular amusement parks in Sydney, and found most of the population there. For Sydney, the lighthouse is indeed a quite romantic spot. The lighthouse is at the southern side of the harbour entrance; the coastline facing the sea is formed by rugged cliffs, two to three hundred feet high. A quarter of a mile away there is a hotel, and some Sydney-siders out for a jaunt commonly come out here on a Sunday, while others regularly visit the more interesting Botany Bay and Cook's River.

The lighthouse itself is magnificent and consists of a revolving light, formed by nine lamps with metal mirrors. The rock on which it stands may be about 120 feet above sea level, and the lighthouse is some 60 to 80 feet high. Its light can be seen from the sea at a distance of 30 and sometimes even 40 English miles, if the weather is clear.

The view from here over the calm sea is truly delightful, and from this height the background of the deep blue sea shows ships approaching from a great distance with their white, shimmering sails. Strangely enough, all the beauty of the scenery is restricted to the sea and to the nearby coast of Port Jackson. Immediately behind begin the dry, sandy plains, dotted with woody bushes, 'grass trees' and a kind of reed-like plant. Every little shrub very often has attractive flowers, and a lovely little creeper (the *Kennedia*) with its fragrant, violet flowers often fills entire bushes. Small, individual groups really look very inviting, but the entire landscape toward the interior looked desolate and sad, and the harbour with its delightful coastline lay there like an oasis in the wilderness.

I must say the pleasant company together with the exotic impressions all around me, made my day pass very quickly. It made for a refreshing change from my hitherto sometimes really dreary wandering around the world.

Having not returned from the lighthouse until late, the next day I endeavoured to find out something about the interior and the possibility of travelling by land to Adelaide. In any case, I wanted to visit the Adelaide area particularly because of emigration there, but I did not want to go there by sea.⁴ On the one hand, lately I had spent enough time sailing around on salt water, and on board I had seen nothing of the interior other than the harbour ports, which are the same the world over. On a journey through those parts of the interior hitherto explored, on the other hand, I would get to know everything, or at least a great deal of this part of the world that might be useful to me in the future, and for this reason I decided to explore it all in detail.

In fact, in the beginning, I heard barely anything positive about it all. First came the most horrific accounts of native Indians,⁵ and then followed not only a thousand other difficulties, but even the most impossible obstacles for the individual. However I was accustomed to that by now and knew what I needed to do. Above all, I thought it most important to talk to somebody who had first-hand knowledge of those areas or at least a part thereof. For this purpose I was introduced to a Mr Shepherd, who was said to have made the trip once in the past with a herd of cattle and a small caravan.

In a most friendly manner he told me everything he knew about it, but even his account was in no way encouraging. Apparently this time of year was normally the least suitable for an overland journey, but particularly so in this year, because it had not rained at all along the River Murray for the past year and probably even longer than that. So there was no grass at all – one could only make the trip on horseback, and under such circumstances the animals would find little or no fodder on the way. At night one would of course have to hobble the horses and let them roam free, because fodder in those areas is not available everywhere, in fact probably very seldom. In the mornings it was likely that one would have to spend hours or indeed half the day looking for them. Furthermore, nothing exhausts a rider more than the knowledge of

a hungry, tired and worn-out animal underneath him. The continual worry about all of this ruins the whole trip for him, so that in the end he prefers to walk rather than being dragged along by a constantly weary animal.

In view of this, Mr Shepherd thought that I could hardly expect to reach Adelaide in less than three months. I could possibly do it in slightly less time, but all in all it would end up taking three months. On top of that, I would have the pleasure of meeting almost all those tribes of often very hostile and treacherous natives along the Murray itself, where I would have to travel because of the water.

Three months in the saddle, and on top of that in such a manner, was an awfully long time, and the whole business went round in my head all day long.

That same morning I was strolling through the city streets, when suddenly an elderly gentleman addressed me in the warmest manner, but by a different name. He was taking a walk on the sunny side of the street, under an open umbrella. He was dressed in a slightly worn, but otherwise clean and proper coat and was wearing a heavy gold (perhaps gold plated) watch-chain and signet-ring of the same material. I attributed his use of the wrong name to him having mistaken me for someone else, which I would be able to rectify in a few words and then be able to go on my way; but I was not to get away so easily. The stranger of course apologised most profusely, but then indicated that because he had mistaken me for someone else, he now wished to make up for it as best he could. Fortunately, by a very great stroke of luck, he had received just a few days previously, sadly, just a very small amount of 'galvanic -' (the reader will have to forgive me, I have totally forgotten that most terrible Chaldean name), and it would indeed afford him great pleasure to let me have one of them. The price was not even worth talking about, but the item would speak for itself, and I needed merely to permit him to show me a sample and hand it over. With that he grabbed me by a button and pulled me, without any resistance on my part, into the nearest hallway.

The good man thought he had convinced me, and I let him believe this, for obviously this was something that would have to run its course before the two of us parted company. Foremost I had him show me the galvanised monstrosity

of a name, which consisted of no less than a small bottle in a Morocco leather case, which he now urged me to smell.

At first glance I had in no way done the little bottle an injustice when I took it for ammonium chloride. So I only sniffed it very carefully from the side and then, fully satisfied, was about to hand it back to the obliging stranger. He, however, urged me to take a hearty sniff, and for the first time I now viewed the man with some suspicion. Had I really taken a hearty sniff, within a few seconds I would not have been able to breathe and would have lost consciousness. He, in turn, would easily have been able ... But no, I was doing the man an injustice, that was not his business. He also looked too fragile, and I simply handed the bottle back to him and then asked him all about its use and benefits. At this very moment in time, there really was no known condition (not even shattered bones) that could resist this galvanic monstrosity of a name. It cured them all, and its effect on various ailments such as gout, toothache, inflammation of the abdomen, sprains etc., was as interesting as the means by which it was ministered – it was simply a matter of smelling it, either intensively or more lightly, depending on the severity of the illness. The price was also very low, only 3s and 6d (not quite a German *Speziestaler*).⁶

The little man finally started to get impatient, I was too gullible for him, because probably none of his victims had asked him so many questions – we would have been in the hallway for three quarters of an hour. He also told me very quickly that that very morning the English bishop had bought two samples from him and had voluntarily given him a guinea for them; it would be possible for me to do likewise. And, with a friendly nod of the head, he handed me the bottle, now closed, for the second time.

The end of the story is brief. I expressed my regret that at that moment I did not have the slightest physical pain, neither tooth- nor ear-ache, neither gout nor podagra,⁷ and no inflammation of the abdomen etc., but I gave him my firm assurance that I would approach him at the first sign of any of these symptoms. For the first time he looked surprised, glanced at me from head to toe and then amicably gave up.

He said that since he had at first only approached me by mistake as a

complete stranger, he felt obliged to offer me his invaluable galvanic medicine at a lower price than to others and was going to let me have it for half a crown. To no avail – I did not have any pain. Two shillings? Not even that. Eighteen pence? His face alone as he made this last remark said as much as: ‘I am really sorry I have to utter this miserly sum and trust you will not be so miserly.’ But I was so miserly, thanked him a thousand times that he had taken such interest in my health and left him, just as he was taking his large gold watch out from his pocket to check the time.

Regardless of how well that man knew me from the first time we met in our lives, I was a total stranger to him when I encountered him a second time.

On 3 April there was, in the Botanic Gardens, an exhibition of work by women for the benefit of the poor, and since almost the whole of Sydney flocked there, I of course headed there as well. The exhibition was held in a large tent pitched on the lawn and contained, from what I could gather, nothing special. The better articles had, I think, already been sold or raffled off, but even around the rest there was such a crowd beside the two long tables that one could only push in at one’s own peril.

All of Sydney’s fine society seemed to be here, and it was a pleasure to behold such a crowd of charming figures gathered in one place. To me it was again something quite new, and it almost reminded me of home. A strange, colourful mixture of people mingled under the fragrant flowering bushes and trees collected from all over the world; the fair sex was of course most prominent, because charity was the main reason for this event. And it had been a long time since the Botanic Gardens displayed such a magnificent array of colours and resplendent floral arrangements as seen today. Neither was there a shortage of interesting groups of people making the scene so much more lively and exotic. Here and there a young officer, in a close-fitting red uniform with tight sleeves, a happy young and beautiful lady on his arm, strolled through the crowd and tried, albeit in vain for a while, to reach one of the crowded tables. In one spot, a happy father, by the sweat of his brow, was pulling four or five of his offspring, hanging on to his hands and coat-tails, and on his arm his other half – carrying food and dressed, it seemed, in clean

clothes – along the gravel paths. In another spot a family was resting on its laurels, looking at a small cardboard cigar lighter and cigar case that they had just won for three half crowns in one of the small raffles. In yet another place, the faces of a few wild, rosy-cheeked girls flashed across the soft green grass, laughing and joking and apparently engrossed in their own company. A pious, somewhat bent figure, in a white waistcoat and necktie, respectably buttoned into a black dress-coat and shaded by a wide-brimmed hat, was slinking along the row of bushes. He seemed to be completely absorbed in godly devotions, glancing neither right nor left and appearing mildly irritated, when, again and again, he ran into the lively, jolly and happy girls.

In the meantime, the sky had become overcast; grey clouds were rising in the south-west, and pale yellow streaks of lightning flashed across the dark backdrop. Unfortunately the clouds did not seem heavy enough to fear a real downpour, for I was feeling mischievous enough to look forward to the chaos that would most certainly ensue. Notwithstanding this fact, some rain was bound to come, and so I dashed under one of the trees in order to wait for the impending moment.

Dear God, the tree was an old friend from Louisiana, a kind of acacia, with truly dagger-like thorns protruding from the trunk; once in the pursuit of a bear in the swamps of the Red River my horse, with a wild and dangerous jump, carried me between two such trees, just far enough apart to let us pass through. I still remember exactly how I shuddered with terror when I thought of what I would have looked like if, to the right or left, those dreadful thorns had caught me. In this moment I was on the banks of the Mississippi under the shady palms and cypresses, the rampant grey Spanish moss and the fragrant magnolias of that beautiful country, when I was suddenly rudely awakened from my dreams by a well-dressed gentleman, who was carrying the crudest looking piece of furniture under his arm and asked me in a low, ingratiating voice, whether I would not like to buy a raffle ticket for this 'extraordinarily beautiful object'. The ticket was only half a crown, 2s 6d, about 25 *Reichsgroschen*.⁸ But what was this 'extraordinarily beautiful object'? God knows. The reader may imagine a rectangular box, 2¼ ft. high and 1 ft.

across, slightly narrower at the bottom than at the top, with a standard lid. The box itself was covered in red Morocco paper, the lid decorated with mediocre embroidery. What could the box be used for? I straightened up and, very excited, asked the man that question. Smiling, he just shrugged his shoulders and told me that one would be able to use it for anything. His main interest, however, seemed to be to persuade me to buy a ticket, and he assured me, when I did not show any particular interest, that this was the first prize. I should just let him draw the ticket for me, because he was a very lucky person and had often won for ladies and gentlemen. At first I really did have the intention to buy a ticket, but now the danger of winning this awful object was too great, and I refused obstinately. The man gave me a pitying look and went his way.

The rain cloud, meanwhile, was approaching ever closer. Far in the distance I could already hear the wind rustling in the treetops, and what was about to come had to come soon. Here and there a few anxious couples and even whole families were already fleeing across the field, the children as light infantry, and the father following with heavy artillery. Young men flew in busy haste ahead of smaller groups of young ladies, supposedly in the hope of finding and hailing a carriage, but inwardly with the firm conviction that they would not find one at this moment. The whole scene looked like a dovecote that, with the sudden appearance of a large bird of prey, descended into total disarray. However, the largest number fled into the marquee, where people were standing side-by-side like the front of a tightly packed phalanx; it seemed to me that not even a mosquito could have penetrated it.

The rain now started to pour down. It approached over a dense group of Norfolk pines, and everybody, it seemed, had found protection and shelter, when suddenly in wild leaps the man with the 'mysterious object' came running up. The red Morocco paper was in the most serious danger, and holding the upholstered lid like a kind of battering ram in front of him, and seemingly also using it, he forced a gap in the dense throngs, until in the blink of an eye he was gone, as if the ground had opened up and swallowed him. Like the waves on the sea, the swaying crowd of people closed behind the fugitive.

The rain did not last long, and very soon the sun in all its glory was again

shining in the sky. The raffle of some of the diverse objects took place very soon after that. I was only interested in the main prize, and indeed if I had been the one to hand it out, I could not have given it to a better winner, at least not to someone who could have made less use of it. Fortune is really a jester – the lucky person was the helmsman of a whaling boat.

I wandered slowly back into the city, wrote a few letters and retired to bed early. Thoughts of the journey overland to Adelaide swirled around in my head. Again I had talked to people who advised against undertaking the journey at the present time, as the horses would hardly find anything to eat. Apparently it had not even rained once along the Murray this past winter and the drought was extreme. The old familiar thorn bush from the Red River swamps had in this connection re-awakened fond old memories. It really was a fine wild time, when I hunted deer and bears in the magnificent forests of the West, and I glided along the calm, fast-flowing waters of the mighty Red River in my sleek, light canoe. Canoe? At the very thought I sat bolt upright in bed. And what would prevent me from likewise paddling down the Murray in a canoe? The distance? If I had managed the 500 miles on the Red River back then, 2000 miles along the Murray were not impossible. The native Indians? I was carrying an excellent shotgun, and the native Indians are only too often made out to be bogeymen, and quite often very unjustly.

I knew already that from here to the Murray itself I could travel by mail coach. Once there I would be able to buy a canoe, or, if that did not work, there were enough trees along the river to cut one out myself, something that I felt I could do in a few days on my own. And the Murray? Well, there were enough people in the city who could tell me whether at this time of year there was enough water in it for me to go down it by canoe, and I only needed six to eight inches of water; I could then navigate round individual rapids and shallows. I had found a way – a journey by canoe down the Murray of a kind that no one before me had ever made, at least not as far as Adelaide. And there would be the hunting along the river itself: kangaroos and cassowaries, wild dogs and black swans. God knows what dark dreams I had during the night. The next morning I was still as enthusiastic about my plan as I had been the

night before. Enquiries I made about the river that day left me in no doubt that I would be able to make the trip – my mind was made up.

During this time I also had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of another German family (from Frankfurt), the photographer Hötzer with his charming wife.⁹ Herr Hötzer has really established photography here and was extremely busy; Frau Hötzer plays the pianoforte expertly – she also teaches it – and was kind enough to play for us. Oh it is such a special, wonderful, indeed powerful feeling to hear suddenly once again after so many years the dear, familiar tunes of home. I know of nothing else in the world that pulls at the heart stings so strongly and profoundly. How I would have liked to retreat to a quiet, private corner, where I could listen to the tunes that I had missed and yearned for so long.

The next evening I was with Consul Kirchner, a local businessman and landowner, who was particularly interested in the immigration of Germans to this country and has done a lot for this cause.¹⁰ He welcomed me most warmly, and I had the pleasure of listening to German music again at his house. Although Frau Kirchner was born of English parents in Australia, she was completely familiar with the German language and music, having lived in Germany for a few years.

The following day, a Sunday, I went out to Botany Bay, Sydney's most interesting spot, with Herr Dreutler, his niece, the captain of the *Dockenhuden*, a ship that had only just arrived a few days ago and was due to return to Hamburg, and a passenger from the same ship; and we spent a very pleasant day at Botany Bay. With its charming location on the beach of the small but friendly bay, a really excellent tourist destination has been created. Apart from its very attractive garden, this spot is particularly interesting, since the owner has a large collection of native animals, at least the most important ones, and thereby has, as it were, transformed his little spot into a zoological garden. Apart from the cassowaries or emus there are three wild dogs, quite sturdy fellows of a reddish yellow colour with heads just like German shepherds and foxes' tails, which look as if they could do considerable damage to flocks of sheep. You can also see many very beautiful large birds of prey, together with

the strangest kinds of local doves, parrots and cockatoos; furthermore there is the possum, which incidentally is quite different to the American opossum. This one is a much friendlier animal, does not have the evil appearance and bare tail of a rat, like the American one, but looks more like a fat, ponderous, retired grey squirrel. Then there are also two black swans, magnificent birds with their dark brown feathers and red beaks, Muscovite ducks, also native, and, the main attraction, five kangaroos, which live in a small enclosure with two roe deer (recently imported from Manila). Their leaps are truly comical, and they knew how to use their short front paws most skilfully to fend off the more than obliging roe deer, that usually refused to budge, when we fed them with bread on our way back. By the way, the climate did not particularly agree with the deer, because when I returned later, the buck was already dead.

But soon I would be able to observe Australian wildlife myself in its own native and much more interesting habitat and will save this description until then.

In the same enclosure there were also the following non-native animals: a young Bengal tiger, a magnificent, sleek, smooth animal, and a small black bear from the Himalayas, a small, ugly, scruffy chap, lazy and morose looking, who incidentally seemed to be quite ashamed of his ugliness, because he kept his front paw in front of his face almost all the time.

The next time I visited Botany Bay, we also crossed by boat to the other side of the bay, which is noteworthy, because Captain Cook, as well as La Perouse, the famous French navigator, set foot on Australian soil here for the first time. The beach there consists of very soft, yellow sandstone, which rises steeply into a low cliff. In memory of this event, a small copper plaque with the exact details has been inserted into the rock here.

For La Perouse, on the other hand, a small sandstone column has been erected on the left-hand side of the bay in order to commemorate him. After he had left the coast of Australia, he was never heard of again and, if I am not mistaken, only after a long time traces of him were found on the coast of New Guinea, indicating that his ship had run aground there and that the crew must have been lost or killed.¹¹