

from the fetters of precedent, the Victorians have undoubtedly a good deal of the spirit which is supposed to be peculiarly American. Amongst the mercantile class the style of living is of the "fast" character, displaying itself in a taste for fast horses, and habitual consumption of "gold-top." The most prominent man in Melbourne when I was there was a doctor, whom many of his professional brethren called a quack. Be that as it may, he had made a fortune, and after the manner of popular actresses, had invested part of it in diamonds. He was said to have the finest diamonds in Australia. He was about to visit England for a time, and signalized his departure by presenting a memorial of himself to the general hospital, and selling off his diamonds. The papers were full of him. He was tendered addresses, receptions, and a grand ball, all which he modestly accepted. A coach-and-four was provided to take him to the quay, and he and a group of his admirers were photographed on the top of the vehicle. An old woman met him on the steps of the Victoria Club and tearfully blessed him, the impression being that this was part of the pre-arranged programme. Before enraptured crowds he bade a graceful farewell for a season to Melbourne. I could not find that he was to any extent a public benefactor or a public man. The whole thing was an advertising "boom," indicating that the "flashy" days of the golden city were not yet entirely passed away.

Opposite the Victoria Club is a low, unpretending building, over which, in modest letters, you may read the word "Argus." It is here that one of the best of British colonial newspapers is published. The press of Melbourne, and indeed of Australasia for the most part, is in the hands of educated men. The English universities have sent many scholars and gentlemen to the antipodes, and their influence is manifest in the press, as well as in the public institutions and the tone of a large portion of society.

We proceed with our walk, and presently find ourselves before a striking monument in bronze. Upon a lofty pedestal, at the intersection of two streets, are the colossal figures of two bearded men, the one sitting, the other standing with his hand upon his comrade's shoulder, both gazing steadfastly down the incline of Collins street into the throbbing heart of the city. They are the statues, by a colonial artist of great talent, of Burke and Wills, the two famous Australian explorers, who after crossing and recrossing the vast Australian desert, died of hunger on the very confines of the populated region.

Pausing under the figures of the heroes, and looking southward, we catch a glimpse of the Yarra, beyond it the abundant foliage of the Botanical Gardens, and a little beyond that again, Government House, which looks like a big hotel or a water-cure establishment.

The Botanical Gardens are one of the glories of Melbourne. They are nearly twice as large as the "*Jardins des Plantes*" in Paris, and are stocked with a

superb variety of plants, shrubs, and trees. The climate of Australia and New Zealand, admitting of the acclimatization of almost everything in the vegetable world, makes botanical gardens possible, and a taste for the beautiful, which is a natural growth in countries where nature is luxuriant and has not to be coaxed into smiles, has produced public gardens in all the towns. At Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Ballarat, and Geelong, the first place you are taken to is the Botanical Garden. In the same places, a wise foresight has reserved large tracts for parks, some of which will be the lungs of "mighty cities yet to be." Melbourne is surrounded with public gardens, the Fitzroy, the Treasury, the Carlton, and the Balaklava gardens, and several others, which all flourish charmingly in the semi-tropical climate. The Fitzroy Gardens are rather pretentiously ornamented with statuary, which, it must be admitted, is not equal to the best in Rome and Paris.

We may continue our walk past rows of handsome private houses, and explore the massive "Treasury" or Government Building, which looks as if it belonged to an old-world capital, and the Parliament Houses, on the floors of which many a sprightly interchange of compliment takes place. But we will turn off Collins Street, and make our way to the Public Library and National Gallery. This is the place the people of Melbourne are most proud of. Both library and art gallery are free, and it is in these institutions, which are supported by an annual grant from Government, that the influence of culture in the development of the young community happily appears. Judging from the scenes which occur in the Victorian Parliament, although Victoria does not, like New South Wales and Tasmania, suffer from the taint that infects a racial colony, coarseness and ignorance have their representatives in the National council hall. But a high enlightenment has always been represented also, and has made its weight felt to the general advantage. Some of the statutes of Victoria are monuments of sagacity and statesmanship, notably the Land Laws, which have swept away all the ancient absurdities relating to the title and transfer of land, and have made the conveyance of a landed estate as simple and inexpensive as the sale of a share in a ship. To the same benignant influences are due the free library, museums and art galleries of Melbourne. The force of a good example is strong. Every town in New Zealand and Australia which I visited had its free library. The Melbourne library is largely used by all classes of the people. An interesting study to the observer are the various disciples of the severe Muse, from the pink-checked girl of seventeen just dipping into the Pierian spring, to the shabby, wrinkled old book-worm of seventy, who looks like a shoemaker with a taste for metaphysics.

Attached to the library is the Gallery of Art. The collection of works of art is not large, but it has been made with judgment and on a right principle. When Mr. Nicodemus Boffin becomes rich, and seeks to divert