

charettes of the *habitans*, which are nothing more than hay carts on two wheels, with straw beds fastened on them, upon which we spread ourselves in humble style, clinging frantically to the slats in the sides, in order that we should not slide down upon our neighbors as the cart jolted and tossed about most unmercifully, taking away one's breath, and almost the power of speech; all contributed to make up a *tout ensemble*, so odd, so primitive, so perfectly unlike anything we had ever experienced before, that our enjoyment was almost without alloy.

Unlike our fashionable people, the Canadians do not go to the sea-side expecting the luxuries of Saratoga or Newport. Although as I have said, both Murray Bay and Cacouna boast of excellent hotels, yet the majority of city people go to these resorts with the intention of roughing it. They hire cottages from the *habitans*, just as they are, rag carpets, pine furniture, blue crockery, &c.; and probably enjoy the novelty and change from their own luxurious homes, so much the more; at least they all appear to enjoy their sojourn at Murray Bay.

But every pleasure must have an end; so in course of time we bade adieu to this pleasant sea-side town, sailed past Quebec, teeming with historic recollections, up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, and through Lake Champlain to our own beloved Hudson.

THE HUMAN HAND.

Issuing from the wrist is that wonderful organ, the human hand. "In a French book, intended," says Sir Charles Bell, "to teach young people philosophy, the pupil asks why the fingers are not of equal length? The master makes the scholar grasp a ball of ivory, to show him that the points of the fingers are then equal! It would have been better had he closed the fingers upon the palm, and then have asked whether or not they corresponded. This difference in the length of the fingers serves a thousand purposes, as in holding a rod, a switch, a sword, a hammer, a pen, a pencil, or engraving tool, in all which, a secure hold and freedom of motion are admirably combined." On the length, strength, and perfectly free movements of the thumb depends, moreover, the power of the human hand. To the thumb, indeed, has been given a special name (*Pollex*, from a Latin verb meaning, to be able, strong, mighty), because of its strength; a strength that is necessary to the power of the hand, being equal to that of all the fingers. Without the fleshy ball of the thumb the power of the fingers would be of no avail, and accordingly the large ball formed by the muscles of the thumb is the special mark of the human hand, and particularly that of a clever workman. The loss of the thumb almost amounts to the loss of the hand. Conscripts, unwilling to serve in the army of France, have been known to

disable themselves effectually by cutting off the thumb of the right hand. The loss of both thumbs would reduce a man to a miserable dependence. Nor should we overlook another peculiarity. Were the tips of the fingers and the thumbs bony instead of being covered with flesh, many things we readily do would be absolutely impossible. We now can take up what is small, soft, and round, as a millet seed, or even a particle of human hair. So exquisitely prehensile are the human fingers. The nails are often of special service; perhaps always in works of art which require nicety of execution. Their substance is just what is needed; they are easily kept at their precise length which answers every purpose; had they been placed on the tips of their fingers there would have been a loss of power, but their position ensures their highest efficiency. An interchange of power for velocity which takes place in the arm adapts the hand and fingers to a thousand arts, requiring quick or lively motions. In setting up the type of this page there have been movements on the part of the compositor of surprising rapidity to any ordinary observer, and the execution of performers on the piano-forte, as well as on many wind instruments, is often astonishing; these are among many instances of the advantage gained by this sacrifice of force for velocity of movement.—*Cassell's Popular Natural History*

AUSTRALIA.

About a week after crossing the Equator we sighted the desolate Island of Trinidad and the dangerous Martin Vez Rocks. As it was quite calm when we passed the Island some of the passengers were anxious to land, but a breeze springing up precluded a possibility of doing so.

From the time we saw Trinidad until we sighted the southern coast of Tasmania we saw very few vessels and found each day longer than the preceding. After rounding the Cape we had a hail storm and once a real good snow storm.

A speedy run during the remainder of our voyage soon brought us in sight of Tasmania, and a few days later every one was on deck having a look at Sydney light-houses. We entered Sydney harbor at sunrise on the seventh of November (1878), and soon saw the City in the distance. It is a splendid port and the scenery very grand, surpassing that of any port I have visited. The city itself is very well laid out and the buildings, almost without exception, very handsome and substantial. One of the features of Sydney is the Botanical Garden situated on the harbor, and commanding a fine view of the shipping and the various residences on the opposite shore. The Governor's mansion is close to the garden and has one of the grandest sights imaginable.

After staying in the city a month I came out to "the bush," travelling on

horseback a distance of forty-five miles, a "considerable" ride for an unpractised equestrian. Since then it has been my only means of locomotion. The roads are bridle paths, and men women and children travel about on horseback, old and young, rich and poor.

My first call to a distance occurred a few days after my arrival here, so on a borrowed horse and with a guide to show me the way, I started for a place called Bingwall Flat; the road, if road it can be called, is twenty miles in length and very hilly and swampy. On the following day I began the return journey, disregarding the warning voices of several persons who saw me starting. It had been raining for several days, and the morning of my return it was coming down in torrents and it was therefore supposed the creeks would be swollen and impassable, one, in particular, I was told, would be very dangerous. However as I wished to go to Sydney on the following day, I determined to overcome difficulties as best I could, and proceeded on my journey without much trouble, getting through numerous creeks with the water half way up the saddle flaps. At last only six miles remained. Here I was brought to a standstill by a rapid stream about twenty yards wide, which looked much more formidable than any hitherto in my path. For fully an hour I wandered up and down by the creeks trying to find a possible if not probable crossing place. Finally I took to the water hoping it would not prove unfordable. Before I had much time to reflect upon the discomfort of my situation, my horse was carried underneath, one of the stirrups having caught in something, and the force of the current turned him over. Fortunately I caught hold of some floating wood, all the while holding on to the bridle rein, and was carried some distance down the stream, luckily towards the side on which I wished to land. The crop was pulled out of the saddle and the horse carried along in the same current as myself. At last I managed to get a firm grasp of a tree as we went past, and succeeded in getting my horse ashore. I had chosen one of the very worst places on the creek; since then I have looked at the spot and wondered how I escaped at all. The water must have been twenty feet in depth and covered a tangled brush which made swimming for "man and beast" almost impossible.

The snakes proverbially so numerous a race in this part of the world, do not trouble me as the mosquitoes do. Both in city and country they exist in swarms. Another pest in Australia, the frogs; these though in general appearance similar to the American ones, have power of voice to a far greater degree, and the peculiar formation of their feet enables them to walk up the side of a wall with the ease of a fly. They get into every available crack and hole in a house and make such a mournful mid-

night croaking that sleep is out of the question.

The locusts also in millions fill the trees and keep a continual chorus from early morning till late at night. Only for a month or two in the winter do these nuisances cease their songs.

The plumage of the birds is very brilliant, but, as you know, their song is not equal to that of English or American birds.

Winter is the pleasant time of the year in Australia, the weather being then, much as you have it in New Brunswick in the summer.

[From Australia letter.]

VALEDICTORY.

"Or like a snowflake in the river,
A moment white, then, gone forever."

And is it so? doth nothing then remain
Of that which in itself so beautiful,
So pure, fit emblem to mankind
Of all that in his nature is the best and
 noblest?
And which, twin-like, from out the vast
empyreal
In silence came, to leave alike their in-
fluence
On what each, in their own sphere they
act upon,
Say not that all these feathery flakes,
When vanished from the eyes have "gone,"
Ceased to exist, or influence aught for
good or ill,
Nay, only that in form they are changed
And that on Earth and river they still
do exert
An influence of blessing; that whilst in
flaky form
They on the earth a covering warm be-
stowed,
To cover up the tender growths from nip-
ping frosts,
So, when dissolved as moisture, they do
but perfect
That service which erewhile they had
performed,
By giving life and fresh fertility to nature.

So we would hope, thy nameake
Thus doth minister, we ^{not} have lived
Our brief existence quite in vain,
But that in months gone by,
Our visits may have been, unto our read-
ers—welcome—
That we, by our bright pages, may have
helped,
In pleasant or in profitable manner,
To beguile the painful or the lovesome
hours,
Which to each life must fall,
Should this be so, then we, indeed, have
lived
To a good purpose, but if, whilst ceasing
To appear before our friends in this ma-
terial form,
We, by our words, have sown the silent
seeds of thought
In any mind, which in due time may ger-
minate
And ripen into fruit of better life, or
heartier resolve
To do and dare, for all that "Godlike" in us
Tends to higher things—then are we
Most richly compensated.
Then farewell! to one and all our friends
Of these past months; for your kind pat-
ronage
We thank you heartily,
And, with our latest breath, give you
Good wishes for your welfare and pros-
perity.

A GENUINE IRISH BULL.—Immediately after the trial for murder at the last circuit, as one of the constabulary was coming down the stairs leading from the Court House, he was accosted by an Irishman, who anxiously inquired of him what sentence had been pronounced against the prisoner, Ross? "Banishment for life," replied the constable. "Well, troth, by my soul," ejaculated Pat, "He'll never live to see the end of it."